PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: IDENTIFYING LEADERSHIP SKILLS TO INCLUDE IN MID-LEVEL ADMINISTRATOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TRAINING SIMULATIONS

by

Richard R. Seiler

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Has been approved

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APPROVED:

Mark D. Mrozinski, EdD
Committee Chair

Norma Nerstrom, EdD
Committee Member

Diana L. Sharp, PhD
Committee Member

Dissertation Committee

ACCEPTED:

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

ABSTRACT

It is well documented that community colleges are facing a leadership crisis resulting from retiring baby boomers who occupy senior leadership positions. Community colleges are faced with a shortage of qualified leaders who possess the skills and competencies necessary to step into executive-level positions. The American Association of Community Colleges recommends that institutions strengthen their leadership pipeline by developing grow-your-own leadership development programs and leadership simulations designed to develop the skills and competencies of faculty and mid-level administrators.

This qualitative multiple case study was designed to identify the skills, competencies, and types of scenarios that would be best to include in leadership development simulations that are incorporated into institutional grow-your-own leadership programs. Data were collected in two phases. The first phase included data collected from questionnaire responses received from 11 Illinois community college chief human resource officers and executive administrator job descriptions collected from nine Illinois community colleges. Quantitative methods were not applied to the questionnaire data collected. Phase two included face-to-face interviews with eight Illinois community college executive administrators purposely selected to provide maximum variation with the participants.

The study discovered that many Illinois community colleges were not offering grow-your-own leadership programs, and those that did were not making use of leadership simulations. Based on the data collected, it was determined that executive administrators felt

that there were certain aspects of the job that they were not prepared for. Including the skills, competencies, scenarios, and situations identified by this research could help prepare future executive leaders for the position. The two most important skills identified were the ability to lead people and solve problems. Examples of the type of scenarios identified included presenting to a board of trustees, collective bargaining sessions, and conflict resolution.

KEY WORDS: Professional development, leadership development, leadership simulation, leadership training, leadership skills, leadership competencies

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Evelyn, whose encouragement and support helped me complete this program. Thank you for allowing me to take this journey with you. I love you with all my heart.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

American community colleges are faced with a leadership crisis, and it is imperative that they find solutions to address it (American Association of Community Colleges, 2013). The "graying of community college leadership" (Ebbers, Conover, & Samuels, 2010, p. 59) has been well documented. In 2013, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) reported that 75% of current chief executive officers and many senior administrators planned to retire within the next 10 years. The exodus of presidents and senior administrators has created a void in leadership capacity that needs to be filled. However, there is a shortage in the pool of candidates who possess the skills and competencies necessary to move into these positions (AACC, 2013; Ebbers et al., 2010; Reille & Kezar, 2010). This has created a leadership gap, which Molinaro and Weiss (2005) defined as a shortfall in the leadership capacity that is necessary to drive successful organizational results.

Strengthening the leadership pipeline is necessary if community colleges are to address the leadership gap. Community colleges need to prepare future leaders with the skills necessary to understand the unique mission of community colleges and successfully lead those colleges into the future (Boggs, 2003). According to McPhail (2014), looking internally for leadership talent is important for community colleges to consider if they want to strengthen their leadership pipeline. The senior leadership of a community college often come from the faculty

ranks (Nevarez & Wood, 2010). They serve as a major source of potential leadership that can fill the leadership pipeline; however, they are educated in the fields they teach and may not be trained in the skills and competencies required of administrative leadership positions (Nevarez & Wood, 2010). Additionally, mid-level administrators who are promoted from within have reached their current position as a result of hard work and excellent technical skills (Rosser, 2000). They may lack the conceptual and human skills that are critical to executive-level positions (Katz, 1974). Developing the leadership skills and competencies of those who aspire to move into executive-level positions to deal with complexities of the community college mission is critical if the institutions they work for are to achieve the transformational changes that are necessary to obtain high student success rates (AACC, 2013).

Developing internal talent through in-house "grow-your-own" leadership development programs is one strategy for developing the skills and competencies of aspiring leaders. The AACC recognized this in their report on the competencies of community college leaders in 2013 and recommended that community colleges create grow-your-own leadership programs to help mid-level administrators prepare for the skills and competencies required of an executive leader (AACC, 2013).

Incorporating leadership development simulations into "grow-your-own" leadership programs can strengthen the effectiveness of the program. A properly designed leadership simulation is an effective tool for preparing and developing the skills and competencies of mid-level administrators (Conine, 2014; Lisk, Kaplancali, & Riggio, 2012; Olson, 2007; Sparks, 2011). Simulations provide a place where aspiring leaders can practice being a leader in a safe environment without the consequences that can result from acting poorly or making bad

decisions (Boggs, 2003; Johnson, Adams Becker, Estrade, & Freeman, 2014). There is plenty of existing evidence that demonstrates how simulations have been used successfully by education systems and the business world to develop the leadership skills of their leaders. However, there is little evidence of community colleges integrating leadership simulations into their grow-your-own leadership programs. Two examples outside of community colleges include the National Institute for School Leadership's (NISL) executive training simulation for school principals, which has been used by K-12 schools in Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, and Pennsylvania (Olson, 2007), and TRI Corporation's virtual simulations for leadership education used by Dell, GE, and Stanley Black and Decker to train financial professionals (Conine, 2014).

Creating an effective simulation requires that the outcomes of the program be well defined (Conine, 2014). Preparing simulation participants for the complex challenges that community college leaders might face would appear to be an appropriate outcome for a community college leadership simulation. Aspiring leaders would benefit from practicing scenarios designed around that outcome and from developing the skills and competencies that were utilized to deal with those scenarios.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to discover (a) the skills and competencies that leadership simulations designed for mid-level community college administrators should focus on developing, and (b) what type of scenarios to include in leadership simulations that would help prepare mid-level community college administrators for an executive-level position. Additionally, the study explored the types of leadership programs supported by Illinois community colleges and if they use leadership simulations with grow-your-own programs.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions for this study are:

1. How are Illinois community colleges preparing mid-level administrators for executive-level positions?
2. How are simulations being integrated into Illinois community college administrator leadership development programs?
3. How prepared did Illinois community college executive administrators feel they were when they entered their current position?
4. What scenarios, discussions, and other thematic elements should be included in the design of an Illinois community college administrator leadership development program?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There is plenty of literature that discusses how community colleges can use grow-your-own leadership programs to develop their leadership pipeline (AACC, 2013; Ebbers et al., 2010; McPhail, 2014; Nevarez & Wood, 2010; Reille & Kezar, 2010; Robison, Sugar, & Miller, 2010). It is also recommended that leadership simulations be used as a method for aspiring leaders to practice situations that leaders might face (Boggs, 2003). Yet there is little evidence that leadership simulations are being utilized by community colleges with their grow-your-own programs. The results of this study will add to the body of knowledge regarding the use of grow-your-own leadership development programs and simulations as tools for developing aspiring mid-level administrators. It is hoped that this will encourage community colleges and community college systems to explore using leadership simulations with existing leadership programs. Identifying the skills and competencies that executive administrators feel are necessary to be successful in the position, as well as the leadership scenarios that should be practiced, will provide valuable information for recommending content to include in a

leadership simulation that is tailored to the unique challenges of community colleges. Including these in a simulation will provide a powerful tool for aspiring leaders to cultivate their leadership capabilities and for community colleges to develop their leadership pipeline and fill the leadership gap.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Academic affairs – a functional area of the college that is usually responsible for the faculty and any area of the college directly related to curriculum and instruction for degree-granting educational programs.

Administrative services – a functional area of the college that is usually responsible for accounting services, business services, facilities, human resources, information technology, or any operational area in a support role for the college.

Continuing education – a functional area of the college that may be responsible for community learning, lifelong learning, personal enrichment, non-credit or non-degree educational programs.

Grow-your-own (GYO) leadership program – a program that focuses on "developing future college leaders from among the existing ranks of mid-level administrators and faculty" (AACC, n.d., p. 1). For the purpose of this study, it will primarily include institutionally based programs.

Executive administrator – administrator level position that reports directly to the president of the college.

Gamification – the use of game design elements in non-game contexts (Deterding, Dixon, Khaled, & Nacke, 2011).

Institutional advancement – a functional area of the college that may be responsible for fundraising, grant management, marketing, and public relations.

Leadership institute – a program designed to develop leadership skills and competencies of participants. For this study, it includes leadership suites, leadership series, fellows programs, and future leaders programs.

Locale – classification of community colleges based on the degree of urbanization as defined by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) locale framework composed of four basic types (city, suburban, town, and rural) (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.).

Mid-level administrator – any manager, dean, or director who reports directly to a vice president or executive administrator.

Retention program – a proactive and holistic approach to retain employees that includes employee recruitment, an equitable compensation and performance process, work environment, and employee motivation and commitment (Phillips & Connell, 2003).

Simulation – an imitation of a real process, system, or experience.

Student affairs – a functional area of the college that may be responsible for admissions, advising, athletics, counseling, disability services, financial aid, recruitment, registration, student activities, and any areas directly involved with supporting student success and engagement.

Urbanicity – the degree to which a geographic area is urban. For the purpose of this study, the geographic area is the area surrounding the community college. The degrees of urbanicity, from least urban to most urban, will include rural, town, suburb, and city.

Virtual simulation – a simulation where humans play a central role in a computer-controlled simulated system that provides a real-world experience for the user in a virtual setting. It can include, but is not limited to, three-dimensional and virtual reality systems.

Workforce development – a functional area of the college that may be responsible for occupational- and workforce-related educational programs, or apprenticeship programs.

CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY

Reviewing the context for this study will provide the background that explains the complex environment in which Illinois community college administrators work. This will provide insights to the types of challenges administrators face, and what aspiring mid-level administrators will face when they move into executive administrator positions. A brief overview of the pertinent literature will be presented, which will be covered in more detail in chapter two. The context will review (a) what an American community college is, (b) the issues that face community colleges, and (c) the leadership gap that exists in community colleges.

The American Community College

American community colleges are comprehensive institutions that offer a myriad of educational and community services. They are defined as not-for-profit colleges that offer an associate degree as their highest degree (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014). They are committed to an open-door policy that serves nearly everyone who seeks an education (Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015; Boggs & McPhail, 2016; Cohen et al., 2014). They are not tied to the traditions found at other institutions of higher education, which allows them to be nimble institutions

that continually change and seek new programs to meet the needs of the community (Cohen et al., 2014).

Community colleges are facing a growing number of issues that are challenging the leadership tasked with operating these complex institutions. Some community colleges are straying from the definition of a community college and are expanding their program offerings to include baccalaureate degrees to meet the needs of the community and growing demand for baccalaureate degrees. This move toward offering baccalaureate degrees is not always received positively by other colleges and universities (Nardulli, 2015). Along with other colleges and universities, community colleges are faced with increased accountability and administration needs to demonstrate that the educational services provided are worth the tax dollars they receive. Performance-based funding initiatives are in place in many states, which determines the amount of funding colleges receive based on performance measures, such as student achievement and completion rates (Jones, 2015).

Community colleges' commitment to open access means admitting students who may not be academically prepared for college-level course work, who attend part-time and may need more than six semesters to complete a degree, or who already have a degree and are interested only in taking one or two classes to brush up on work skills (Cohen et al., 2014). As a result, the open-access policy can conflict with performance measures that evaluate the colleges based on student completion rates (Cohen et al., 2014). Community colleges provide education opportunities for students with diverse backgrounds that vary in age, ethnicity, financial status, and academic preparation. They serve non-traditional students who are over 25 years of age, work full-time, are financially independent, have children, or are single parents.

These students require low-cost access to education at times that are convenient, at locations that are easy to get to, and in multiple formats that meet their needs. Students "demand access to education when they want it, how they want it, and where they want it" (Eddy, Sydow, Alfred, & Garza Mitchell, 2015, p. 6). Students may even take courses at multiple institutions (Cohen et al., 2014). It will be necessary for community college leaders to be open minded and creative in finding solutions that meet the needs of a diverse group of students, be able to provide pathways to student completion, and provide accessible education.

Community colleges are challenged with reductions in public funding and increased competition from public and private four-year colleges and universities (Eddy et al., 2015). Many community college are faced with aging facilities that were built in the 1960s and 1970s (Eddy et al., 2015; Mullin, Baime, & Honeyman, 2015). Facilities are reaching the end of their useful life and will need to be replaced, remodeled, or repaired at substantial costs. The facilities infrastructure that was built decades ago was not designed to meet today's student and educational needs (Mullin et al., 2015). Libraries need to be updated to accommodate the new digital environment, technology in the classroom needs to be updated to fit how the current generation of students prefers to learn, and improvements to the technological infrastructure are needed to meet student demand for bandwidth resulting from increased use of social media, cell phones, and tablets. The limited financial resources available to community colleges require that future leaders be creative in finding new sources of funding (Mullin et al., 2015).

The challenges community colleges face require qualified leaders who can make the transformational changes necessary for community colleges to continue to be successful

institutions. Aspiring leaders will need to be prepared with the leadership skills and competencies necessary to address these challenges.

Leadership Gap in Community Colleges

> Institutional transformation cannot take place without the development and continual improvement of a college's leadership. (AACC, 2013, p. 2)

Community colleges need qualified leaders who have the vision and conceptual skills to get them through the challenges they will face. Unfortunately, many community college leaders at the executive and presidential levels are exiting, and individuals replacing them may not have the necessary qualifications to accomplish the transformations needed to achieve high student success rates (AACC, 2013). Aspiring leaders in community colleges are not prepared for higher-level positions (Eddy et al., 2015). They are often promoted to their current position because of their human and technical skills (Rosser, 2000) rather than the conceptual skills required of executive administrators (Katz, 1974). It is critical that community colleges do something to deliberately prepare future leaders to maintain a pipeline of qualified leaders to fill executive leadership vacancies (McPhail, 2014). Many mid-level administrators are frustrated with the limited career mobility and lack of career development that can help prepare them for senior-level administrative positions (Eddy et al., 2015; Nevarez & Wood, 2010; Rosser, 2000).

One method for preparing aspiring community college leaders is to create "grow-your-own" leadership development programs (AACC, 2013; McPhail, 2014). These programs can focus on the local issues and challenges that a community college aspiring leader might face. It is recommended that these programs include simulations to provide real-world situations to expose aspiring leaders to issues and trends in community colleges (AACC, 2013; Boggs, 2003).

Identifying the skills, competencies, and scenarios to include in leadership simulations is necessary to focus development efforts and effectively meet the outcome for developing aspiring leaders for executive-level positions.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK BEHIND LEADERSHIP SIMULATIONS

To understand why leadership simulations can be used for developing the skills and competencies of mid-level administrators, one must understand how leaders learn and what elements of a simulation contribute to learning. It must first be established that leadership can be learned. The Skills-Based Leadership Theory is based on the concept that leadership can be learned and provides a reason for spending resources to developing leaders (Katz, 1955). "Supposing that leadership is innate, why should we bother developing leaders?" (Metz, 2015, p. 9). The Skills-Based Leadership Theory establishes that leadership skills can be learned, but how do leaders learn? The Experiential Learning Theory is based on the concept that leaders learn best through experience and is the preferred pedagogy for developing skills and competencies of aspiring leaders (Kolb, 1984). In addition to leaders preferring experiential learning, the concept of using gamification in the learning process, which is based on using elements of games in a non-game context, engages and motivates learners (Deterding, 2012; Villagrasa, Fonseca, Redondo, & Duran, 2014). Together, these concepts provide a framework for why the use of leadership simulations is effective for developing the skills and competencies of aspiring leaders. This study was focused on identifying skills and competencies required of executive leaders, which can be developed based on the Skills-Based Leadership Theory. Leadership simulations can be used to develop those skills and competencies through an

experiential learning environment that uses game elements to keep learners motivated and engaged.

Skills-Based Leadership Theory

Robert Katz (1955) first published his theory on skills-based leadership in 1955. The basic premise behind the Skills-Based Leadership Theory is that leadership can be acquired or learned. Individuals are not born with leadership abilities, and they are not inherent as is the case with the "Great Man" and Trait Theory of Leadership. Katz stated that leaders are more effective when they develop sufficient ability in the following three basic skills:

- Technical – ability in specific methods, processes, procedures, and techniques.
- Human – ability to working effectively with people, be aware of one's self, understand others, and be sensitive to others' needs.
- Conceptual – ability to see the entire picture, understand the mission and vision of the organization, and understand how departments or groups interact and depend on each other.

According to Katz (1974), a leader's required level of proficiency in each of these basic skills depends on their level of management within the organization. As administrators move higher in the organization, technical skills become less important, since they are further removed from actual operations. However, conceptual skills become more important for coordinating the efforts of various departments under their responsibility and ensuring that those efforts support the mission and vision of the organization. Human skills, the ability to work with people and work effectively as a group, are important for administrators and managers at all levels of an organization.

Experiential Learning Theory

> Knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. (Kolb & Kolb, 2009, p. 298)

The contemporary theory of experiential learning has its roots in the works of John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, and Jean Piaget, who are responsible for identifying that learning is cognitive, people learn from experience, and experiences can be integrated into the classroom (Kolb, 1984). The concept of combining experience with the learning environment would lead to learning formats that include apprenticeship programs, internships, and work-study (Kolb, 1984). David Kolb (1984) took this concept further and developed the experiential learning cycle, which is based on the elements of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation, or simply experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting. Experiential learning has merits as an approach for developing the leadership skills of employees within organizations. It pulls together on-the-job experiences, life experiences, and specific skill development to improve leadership skills, rather than more traditional class-based learning formats (Thomas & Cheese, 2005).

Gamification of the Learning Systems

Gamification has been used in higher education for many years and is gaining attention as a method of learning. Gamification can be confused with playing games. However, gamification places a focus on the use of elements of games rather than playing games (Teräs, Teräs, & Reiners, 2014). Deterding et al. (2011) provided a definition of gamification, which is commonly accepted today as "the use of game design elements in non-game contexts" (p. 2). Including game elements in the design of teaching and learning can increase engagement and

motivation with students (Villagrasa et al., 2014). Engagement and motivation are achieved through many elements of gaming that can be employed in gamified systems. Reiners, Wood, Gregory, and Teräs (2015) classified these elements into four groups, which include the following:

- Intention or desired outcomes, including objectives, targets, and performance indicators;
- Dynamic interactions between learner and system, including storyline narratives, scenarios, settings, and interactions that create emotions to engage and motivate the learner;
- Mechanics, including random events, feedback on success and progress, resources that can be acquired, transactions between learners, and learning tasks or goals; and
- Components, including points for tracking progress, badges awarded for achievements, leaderboards for comparing between different learners, increasing levels of difficulty, and virtual goods.

In addition to the elements above, Reiners et al. (2015) recommended several other gaming mechanisms that can be beneficial for the learner, including:

- ghost imaging, which allows the recording of an expert's or learner's efforts in the system for later observation;
- multiplayer, which allows for collaborative interactions with other learners;
- non-player characters, which provide learner interactions with authentic, simulated characters;
- rewind, which allows learners to repeat critical situations and build confidence in how to deal with the situation;
- save points, which marks the beginning or end of a phase and allows for quick access to restart at a learning sequence;
- unlimited lives, which allows learners to respawn in a situation after a critical failure without having to restart from the beginning; and
- slow motion, which allows time to be adjusted.

The gamified systems being used today have provided positive experiences and are proven to be effective with encouraging engagement and providing an active learning experience. According to Johnson et al (2014), “Educational gameplay has proven to foster engagement in critical thinking, creative problem solving, and teamwork—skills that lead to solutions for complex social and environmental dilemmas” (p. 42). Advances in technology, including virtual reality and 3D visualization, have opened new methods of applying gaming elements in the learning process. Virtual simulations, which are currently used in both the education and business sectors, are able to provide real-world experiences (Johnson et al., 2014). They present a virtual environment where learners can perform tasks and make decisions without the physical consequences of a bad decision or action.

METHODOLOGY

This two-phased qualitative study used multiple case study methodology. The case was an executive administrator from an Illinois community college that agreed to participate in the study. The case was bounded by place, time, and roles of the participants. Phase one of the study collected and codified the skills and competencies required by participating Illinois community colleges for executive-level administrator positions. Phase one also included identifying what types of leadership development programs were available at the participating Illinois community colleges. Data in phase one were collected through a questionnaire sent to the chief human resource officers (CHRO) of participating Illinois community colleges and through job descriptions of the executive administrator positions at those same institutions. Phase two of the study collected data on the challenges and experiences of eight executive administrators who were purposefully selected to provide maximum variation among the

participants. The data were collected through interviews with participants who were selected based on responses to a pre-interview questionnaire prepared by the researcher and completed by the participant.

Participating College Selection

The participating community colleges were selected from 36 of the 48 community colleges in the state of Illinois that were listed on the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) website. Illinois community colleges were chosen because they represent a broad range of community colleges of varying sizes and degrees of urbanicity. Community colleges that were part of two community college systems, as well as the researcher's home institution, were not included in the study. The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education was used to classify each college for size and degree of urbanicity for the locale where the college resides. The degree of urbanicity for this study is a measure of how urban the geographic area surrounding the community college is. An introductory email was sent to the president of each of the 36 community colleges requesting approval for their institution to participate in the study. The study included only community colleges with presidential approval.

Participant Selection

The participants that were interviewed included executive administrators who reported directly to the president of the college and who had been in their current position from 1 to 6 years. The restriction for the years of experience was intended to allow the participant to be on the job long enough to experience many of the difficulties of the job, but not so long that they could not reliably recall those early experiences and challenges. Maximum variation was

achieved by selecting administrators with diversity in functional areas of the college worked, educational backgrounds, gender, race, and age. Additionally, the administrators were selected from institutions that represented various sizes and degrees of urbanicity.

Data Collection

Data were collected from multiple sources, including (a) documents, (b) questionnaires, (c) interviews with people, and (d) field notes. Documents included executive administrator job descriptions collected from participating colleges that were used to identify skills and competencies required of the position. The data from the job descriptions were used to triangulate with data collected from interviews. Two questionnaires were used for the study. The first questionnaire was sent to the CHRO of participating colleges and gathered data about the demographics of the college, executive administrators, leadership development programs supported by college, and the inclusion of simulations as a development tool. The second questionnaire was a pre-interview questionnaire that was used to gather demographic data about potential interview participants. This was used for identifying who was included in the interview. The interviews were semistructured with a standardized set of open-ended questions designed to gather data about the challenges a participant faced when first entering their position, participant preparedness for the position, the skills and competencies that would have helped the participant when first in the position, and participant experiences with professional development programs.

Data Analysis

Yin's (2016) five phases for analyzing data were used for this study, which included (a) compiling the data, (b) disassembling the data, (c) reassembling the data, (d) interpreting the data, and (e) preparing conclusions based on the interpretations of the data.

Data from the two questionnaires were compiled in SurveyMonkey®. Documents, interview transcripts, and field notes were compiled using NVivo 11 software. Data were disassembled by assigning codes and themes to the data. Merriam and Tisdell's (2016) method for coding by assigning designations to various aspects of the data and organizing the data for easy retrieval was used. Coding was focused on words and key phrases from the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). These were then grouped into categories or themes, which also were reviewed for any patterns and relationships.

ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION

Chapter Two provides a review of the literature that is related to the study and the philosophical framework that provides an understanding of why leadership simulations included with grow-your-own leadership programs are effective for developing the skills and competencies of aspiring leaders. It will include a brief history of community colleges, their organizational structure, the challenges that executive leaders face, and the leadership gap that exists.

Chapter Three will provide a detailed description of the methods used to conduct the study and discuss why the qualitative paradigm and case study methodology were selected for this study. The chapter will provide details on how participants were selected for the study, the

protocols followed to contact them, how data were managed and analyzed, and how credibility and validity were maintained in the study.

Chapter Four will provide details of the data that were collected from documents, surveys, and interviews. It will detail the strategies used for analyzing data and provide a summary of the results of the analysis.

Chapter Five will discuss the results from the data analysis and provide conclusions for the findings. The study findings and the conclusions drawn were used to recommend the skills, competencies, scenarios, and thematic elements to include in the design of the simulation. Recommendations were provided for future research based on the findings and gaps in the data that were identified.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The AACC (2013) recommends that community colleges create grow-your-own leadership development programs to address a leadership gap that exists at the executive administrator level within these institutions. Adding leadership simulations to grow-your-own programs will improve the effectiveness of these programs and help prepare mid-level administrators for executive-level positions. This study used qualitative methodology to collect data that provided insights into the leadership skills and competencies that Illinois community college mid-level administrators should possess if they aspire to move into executive-level positions. The data collected will be useful for recommending the skills, competencies, topics, and scenarios to include in a leadership simulation. Additionally, the study gathered data on the types of leadership development programs currently utilized by Illinois community colleges and the use of leadership simulations with institutional grow-your-own leadership programs. This

information will be useful for determining where there is potential for creating new leadership development simulations and encouraging their use in grow-your-own leadership programs.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Qualified and effective executive leaders are critical for the success of any organization. Effective leaders provide the inspiration, motivation, direction, and vision that help move organizations forward with achieving their goals and objectives (Molinaro & Weiss, 2005). Many organizations, including community colleges, are finding a growing need to replace executive leaders due to retiring baby boomers (Ebbers et al., 2010). The pool of qualified candidates who have the skills and competencies necessary to perform in an executive-level position is shrinking and unable to keep up with the vacancies created (AACC, 2013; Leslie, 2009; Molinaro & Weiss, 2005). As a result, a leadership crisis or leadership gap exists that threatens the ability of organizations to be successful.

The leadership gap in community colleges threatens the ability of these organizations to achieve high levels of student success, and, as a result, it is necessary for them to be proactive and deliberate in training mid-level administrators (AACC, 2013). The leadership in community colleges typically do not do a good job of succession planning or developing aspiring leaders (Nevarez & Wood, 2010). So how do community colleges train their mid-level administrators? Initiatives to develop mid-level administrators to be able to take on the role of an executive leader typically include mentoring, professional development programs, paid tuition for college-level course work, job swapping, and in-house training. Scholars often mention mentoring as a way of developing aspiring leaders for higher-level positions (AACC, 2013;

Andrade, 2011; Bell, 2016; Conine, 2014; Frederick, 2015; Koronkiewicz, 2016; Leslie, 2009; Nguyen, 2014; Reille & Kezar, 2010); however, mentoring programs are difficult to coordinate and require a significant time commitment from the mentor and mentee (Bell, 2016; Frederick, 2015; Reille & Kezar, 2010). Leadership programs offered by degree-granting colleges, leadership institutes, and professional conferences or seminars tend to focus on national issues and theory, but not on local and regional issues that a leader might face (Eddy et al., 2015; Nevarez & Wood, 2010).

The American Association of Community Colleges (2013) recommends that institutions create grow-your-own programs, also known as in-house leadership development programs, to supplement national leadership development programs for aspiring leaders. Offering grow-your-own leadership programs expands the number of available opportunities for aspiring leaders to hone their skills and help address the shortage of qualified leaders who can step into executive leader roles. The American Association of Community Colleges also recommends that aspiring leaders be given the opportunity to participate in real-world simulations that create situations executive administrators might face during their career. Real-world simulations can be incorporated into grow-your-own leadership programs to supplement the topics covered in those programs. They can be used as a capstone to the grow-your-own leadership program where aspiring leaders can practice and develop the skills and competencies that are needed to face the situations presented in the simulation. There is an abundant amount of existing literature that explores the skills and competencies that executive leaders of organizations should have to be successful. Some of these will be explored later in this chapter.

THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The concept of American community colleges that developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries called for junior colleges to take on the burden of providing general education to students and allow universities to become research and professional development centers (Cohen et al., 2014). Educators such as William Rainey Harper, Edmund J. James, and David Starr Jordan envisioned schools that modeled the European education system, with lower-level colleges providing general and vocational education (Cohen et al., 2014). Junior colleges became institutions that were different from that original concept and became alternative institutions that developed outside of the mainstream education system (Cohen et al., 2014). Their growth was fueled by the need for trained workers who could meet the workforce demand created by the industrial expansion and a social need for equal access to higher education (Cohen et al., 2014). Junior colleges gradually became known as community colleges in the 1950s and 1960s. Community colleges have become open-access institutions that serve their community by providing comprehensive educational programs, community programming, and lifelong learning (Nevarez & Wood, 2010).

LEADERSHIP IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The leadership for an Illinois community college starts with the board of trustees of the college, who are individuals elected by the residents of the district in which the college resides. The board of trustees is responsible for establishing college policy and making sure that the mission and vision of the college is in sync with the needs of the community. Carver and Carver (2001) developed the Policy Governance Model that is intended to guide an organization's board on how to operate effectively. The model states that the board is the voice of the

"owners" or, in the case of a community college, the community that it serves. Additionally, the board should always act as a whole unit and have one voice through the board chair on all matters. The model requires that, to be effective, a board of trustees should delegate to the president/CEO all the authority necessary to meet the board's expectations for performance of the organization. The board should provide clear expectations and hold the president/CEO accountable. Additionally, the board has total authority and accountability over the organization, but it should be focused on policy and strategic issues rather than dealing with the operational details of the organization.

Leadership in community colleges is typically organized around an executive leadership team who, along with the president, provide the strategic direction for the college (Cohen et al., 2014). The executive leadership team is typically composed of the vice presidents, provosts, or vice chancellors who provide leadership to major functional areas of the college, like administrative services, student affairs, and academic affairs (Cohen et al., 2014). Additionally, larger institutions may have multiple levels including vice presidents, deans, associate deans, directors, department managers, and chairs, whereas smaller colleges may have managers and chairs reporting directly to the vice president. The deans are the mid-level administrators that typically function as the line officers of the college (Cohen et al., 2014). Many of the top administrators come from the faculty ranks or from outside the institution (Rosser, 2000). They are responsible for deciding matters that are significant to the college.

Mid-level administrators and managers are the largest administrative group at many institutions of higher education (Rosser, 2000). They are the academic and non-academic support personnel who typically report to a top-level or executive administrator. They can be

responsible for one or more specialized departments in a functional area of the college and make sure that those departments are synced to the mission and vision of the college. Their jobs can be more technical than strategic, and many have been promoted to their position because of their technical and human skills (Rosser, 2000). A community college can have one or more levels of mid-level administrators depending on the size of the institution (Cohen et al., 2014). They can be technical specialists, department managers, deans, directors, and professionals that serve diverse areas such as accounting, advising, business services, human resources, information technology, institutional advancement, registration, student affairs, and campus facilities. Career paths for mid-level administrators in higher education are typically not well defined and advancement opportunities can be limited (Rosser, 2000).

Leadership Challenges

Community college executive leaders are faced with many challenges. Nevarez & Wood (2010) stated: "Leaders must address the changing needs of the students they serve with fluctuating resources; tenuous relationships with faculty; financial uncertainties; ever-changing community needs; external stakeholder demands; and shifting federal, state, and local support" (p. 53). Current and future leaders will be required to make fundamental changes in how community colleges approach education and may need to shift away from the traditional cafeteria-style of course offerings that have been firmly ingrained in the campus culture (Bailey et al., 2015).

Challenges that community college leaders face include improving completion rates of degree-seeking students and student transfer rates to four-year institutions (AACC, 2012; Bailey et al., 2015; Boggs & McPhail, 2016; Nevarez & Wood, 2010; O'Banion, 2011). Leaders will be

faced with increased demands for transparency and accountability (Boggs & McPhail, 2016). It will be necessary for institutions to show that the funding they receive is used appropriately, especially as more community colleges are faced with meeting performance-based funding measures that affect how much funding the college will receive (Bailey et al., 2015; Boggs & McPhail, 2016). Performance measures include factors such as the number of students who successfully complete college. This presents a challenge for community college leaders who also need to support an open-door admissions policy. Community colleges enroll a high number of students who are not college-ready and non-traditional students who may not complete a degree in the traditional time frame typically used by states for measuring performance (Bailey et al., 2015). Many students entering the community college do not know how to navigate college and may make choices that do not lead to successful college completion (Bailey et al., 2015). Additionally, many students may not be seeking a degree or certificate, but looking only to take a few classes to improve their job skills or meet some other need. It is recommended that community college leadership work with legislators to ensure that performance funding criteria are properly designed and that performance metrics used are aligned with the mission of community colleges (Boggs & McPhail, 2016). Otherwise, community colleges may not successfully meet the state's performance funding criteria, even though they have successfully met the needs of the student.

According to Bartem and Manning (2001), effective leaders are able to navigate within an academic culture that is typically steeped in tradition and resists change. However, community college leadership will be faced with a future that will be more diverse, complex, and fast-paced (Boggs & McPhail, 2016). The traditional ways of providing education in the past

may not be the best way to move forward in the future, which will require educational executive leaders to understand how to manage change within their organizations (Boggs & McPhail, 2016). Executive administrators will be expected to have the skills and competencies necessary to make informed decisions and lead their institution to achieve its vision and mission.

Organization of Community Colleges

Community colleges can be organized in many ways. According to Cohen et al. (2014), most are formed into a single college district with the leadership structure previously discussed. Some community colleges are formed into multi-college districts, which tend to be more complex, structured, formalized, and centralized with regard to decision making (Cohen et al., 2014). According to Cohen et al., a typical organization for a multi-college district will have a district president or chancellor that reports to the board of trustees and individual college presidents who report to the district president or chancellor. Additionally, district vice presidents or vice chancellors who report to the district president oversee various areas that centralize functions such as academic affairs, student development, human resources, and business affairs. The organizational differences of a multi-college district and single-district college may result in unique challenges for college leaders that are not shared between the two types of organizations.

The organization of community colleges vary from school to school depending on the needs of the institution; however, they are typically organized around the primary functional areas of business affairs, student affairs, and academic instruction (Cohen et al., 2014; Nevarez & Wood, 2010). The business affairs or administrative side of the college typically includes

operational functions that support the college, like accounting, auxiliary services, facilities management, information technology, institutional advancement, human resources, and public or community affairs (Nevarez & Wood, 2010). The academic side of the college typically includes the instructional departments, curriculum development, academic standards, and academic support (Cohen et al., 2014; Nevarez & Wood, 2010). Student affairs is primarily focused on student development and engagement, campus life, and technical functions that can include areas such as registration, admissions, and financial aid (Nevarez & Wood, 2010). However, even these separations in function are not absolute. Some community colleges may further delineate functional areas such as continuing education, technical education, and workforce development. Departments such as the campus bookstores may report to administrative services at some institutions and to student affairs at others, depending on whether campus leadership views the service as a business function or a student support function. Reporting relationships are flexible and can change over time as the needs of the college and leadership change.

Leadership Gap

A leadership gap is defined as the "shortfall between required leadership capacity and the current and forecasted leadership capacity" (Weiss & Molinaro, 2005, p. 5). A leadership gap is not only a shortage in the number of individuals who aspire to move into senior leadership roles, but is also a deficiency in the skills and competencies that aspiring leaders must have to effectively do the job (Leslie, 2009).

A leadership gap exists in community colleges. According to the AACC (2013), community college executive leaders are exiting in large numbers and there is a shortage of

qualified mid-level managers to take their place. The leadership gap is not unique to community colleges. It exists in businesses, government, and non-profits around the world (Leslie, 2009). Organizations are challenged with identifying ways to develop mid-level administrators and the skills they need to be successful in executive-level positions. Although many of the challenges for community colleges are different from the business world, community colleges can still look to the corporate world to identify skills and competencies that are transferable to community college leaders.

A study was conducted from 2006 to 2007 by the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) to identify how widespread the leadership gap was. The study included 2,200 managers from 15 companies located in Singapore, India, and the United States. The study identified the most important skills that managers should have to be successful in an organization and the strengths that managers possessed. Of seven skills identified as most important to be a successful leader, four were among the weakest competencies possessed by the managers. Table 1 shows the skills identified by managers as most important to be successful, and the top seven skills that managers identified that they need to develop.

Table 1: *Leadership Skills Identified by Managers as Most Important for Success and as Needing Development*

Skills Rated Most Important for Success	Skills Identified as Need Development
• Lead employees • Strategic planning • Inspiring commitment • Managing change • Resourcefulness • Quick learner • Do what it takes	• Inspiring commitment • Strategic planning • Leading people • Resourcefulness • Employee development • Managing change • Participative management

(Leslie, 2009)

Identifying and developing the skills and competencies that leaders will need in the future is essential for their success (Boggs, 2003), which makes it essential to include these as outcomes for any leadership development program. There is a plethora of research on skills and competencies that leaders should possess to be successful in an executive-level position. A summary of some of the relevant articles follows. Ebrahimi Mehrabani and Azmi Mohamad (2015) identified the seven best skills to include in leadership development programs for their research that proposed a leadership development model illustrating the relationship between leadership skills development and organizational effectiveness. Plinske and Packard (2010) did a study of Illinois community college trustees to determine the skills and competencies that they valued most in community college presidential candidates. Nevarez and Keyes (as cited in Nevarez & Wood, 2010, p. 257) identified five skills needed by community college leaders. Leslie (2009) analyzed survey data collected by the Center for Creative Leadership from 2,200 middle, senior, and top managers of 15 organizations in three countries that identified the top

10 skills leaders need in the future to be effective. Although Leslie's (2009) study does not include community colleges, there are similarities in the leadership skills that are needed for executive-level positions in the business world that can be transferred. The AACC (2013) identified five major competencies that community college emerging leaders and new presidents should develop to be effective with making the transformational changes needed in community colleges. Table 2 summarizes the skills identified above.

Table 2: *Required Leadership Skills and Competencies for Executive-Level Positions*

Ebrahimi Mehrabani & Azmi Mohamad (2015)	Plinske & Packard (2010)	Nevarez & Keyes (Nevarez & Wood, 2010)	Leslie (2009)	AACC (2013)
• Creativity and problem solving • Inspiring a shared vision • Developing environment of trust • Communications • Motivating others • Developing teamwork • Empowering others	• Vision • Passion for education • Good moral character • Articulate • Dependable • Good listener • Establishing trust • Team-player	• Strategic planning • Interpersonal communication • Budgeting and fund development • Laws and legal issues • Technology training	• Strategic planning • Managing change • Leading people • Inspiring commitment • Participative management • Employee development • Resourcefulness • Quick learner • Doing what it takes • Balancing personal life and work	• Understand organizational strategy • Community college advocacy • Communications • Collaboration • Understand institutional finance, research, fundraising, and resource management

Although there are differences in the skills and competencies with each of the studies listed in Table 2, there also some common themes. All five of the studies require a leader to

think at a high level by requiring an understanding of vision or organizational strategy. Communications or being articulate is required by four out of the five of the studies. Teamwork, collaboration, or participative management is also required by four out of five of the studies.

Brief History of Executive Development Programs

Crotty and Soule (1997) provided a history of executive development programs. They describe that the early executive education was created in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to address a need for higher-level manager education. This was when the first MBA programs were created, which were primarily intended for younger participants (Crotty & Soule, 1997). During and after the Second World War, the need to provide programs for older experienced managers gave rise to short-duration, non-degree executive development programs that included the broad-based functional topics of an MBA program (Crotty & Soule, 1997). In-house executive training can be traced to 1950s and 1960s when companies started creating their own executive development programs that were designed to meet organizational interests and could be made available to a greater number of managers (Crotty & Soule, 1997).

Crotty and Soule (1997) described the digital age that brought fast-paced changes and new challenges to organizations. This fundamentally changed executive development programs. Executive administrators in the digital age need to be able to deal with global economies, workforce diversity, social media, empowered workers, and the rapid changes in technology. Starting in the 1980s and 1990s, programs became more learner-centered and company-centered to deal with the specific problems of an organization (Conger & Xin, 2000; Crotty & Soule, 1997). Executive development programs started to be tailor-made to the

organization and were more strategic in nature (Conger & Xin, 2000). Organizations were using professional development not only to develop the skills and competencies of leaders, but also to help drive change and implement organizational strategy (Conger & Xin, 2000; Wuestewald, 2016). There was also a shift away from the cognitive pedagogy to more experiential-based learning and humanistic learning pedagogies (Wuestewald, 2016). Programs moved from teaching leadership theory to developing leaders to think strategically, think critically, and deal with how to change an organization.

Leadership Development

Leadership development programs provide the means for preparing aspiring mid-level administrators to move up to higher-level positions and for executive administrators to hone their leadership skills. According to Weiss and Molinaro (2005), there are four types of leadership development. These include assessing, coaching, learning, and experience. Assessing evaluates current and potential leaders' strengths and weaknesses to gain an understanding of the organization's leadership capacity. Coaching utilizes internal and external leaders to mentor and help develop aspiring leaders. Learning includes strategies such as formal leadership education and technology-based learning that teach theoretical and practical leadership concepts. Experience uses stretch assignments and projects to help develop skills and competencies of leaders. Effective leadership development programs do not rely on a single solution to increase leadership capacity, but rely on a multi-solution approach that includes various strategies from the four types of professional development (Weiss & Molinaro, 2005).

A study done by Ebrahimi Mehrabani and Azmi Mohamad (2015) supports the importance of leadership development programs that develop the skills of leaders. Their study

demonstrated the relationship between leadership development and organizational effectiveness when transformational, transactional, and servant leadership skills are developed. They created a leadership skills development model based on their research that includes knowledge sharing as part of leadership development to increase program outcomes. When knowledge is shared among participants as part of leadership development, organizational effectiveness can increase.

Developing leaders through learning is the most common type of leadership development used by organizations. In-house or grow-your-own leadership programs, programs offered by companies specializing in leadership training, professional association leadership institutes, and university degree and non-degree programs are all examples of the use of learning in leadership development. A few of the leadership programs offered by professional associations in higher education include:

- League for Innovation in the Community College's Executive Leadership Institute
- National Association of College Auxiliary Services' Leadership Series
- National Association of College and University Business Officers' Fellows Program and Future Business Officers Program
- American Association of Community Colleges' Leadership Suite

There are many university-based doctoral programs that focus on leadership in community colleges. Some of institutions offering these include:

- Ferris State University
- Northern Illinois University
- Oregon State University
- University of Texas at Austin

- Walden University
- University of Illinois

For leadership development programs to be successful, it is important that they focus on what weaknesses exist in the organization or industry (Conger & Xin, 2000). It is essential for program designers to identify the challenges that exist and teach executives how to deal with them. According to Conger and Xin (2000), there are three objectives that executive development programs should meet:

- To build awareness and support strategic transitions,
- To facilitate large-scale organizational change necessary to realize new strategic directions, and
- To build depth of leadership talent.

A grow-your-own leadership development program is one method recommended by the AACC (2013) to address the leadership gap that exists and develop aspiring leaders. Creating grow-your-own leadership programs may be the best way for community colleges to offer leadership development opportunities for their faculty and staff (Boggs, 2003). The advantages of grow-your-own programs are that they can be customized to the unique needs of the institution (Nevarez & Wood, 2010), expose aspiring leaders to the trends and issues that face community colleges (AACC, 2013), and eliminate the need for costly travel to attend professional association conferences and leadership programs. When combined with simulations, they provide opportunities for future leaders to practice the skills and competencies that are essential for their success (Boggs, 2003).

This section reviewed that leadership development programs are essential for addressing the leadership gap that has been identified in community colleges. Using multiple

methods of delivering professional development is important, and effective programs focus on the skills and competencies that leaders will need in the future. Grow-your-own leadership development programs provide community colleges with a method for developing the skills and competencies of future leaders from among their existing ranks of mid-level administrators and faculty (AACC, n.d.).

Related Research in Leadership Development in Community Colleges

There has been much written that explores leadership development in community colleges. A few research articles that are relevant and emphasize the importance of grow-your-own leadership programs are noted below.

A study by Greg Robinson, William Sugar, and Brian Miller (2010) examined the leadership development programs offered by community colleges in North Carolina and evaluated the leadership development efforts of a single community college in the system. The study confirmed the effectiveness of offering grow-your-own leadership development activities, recommended creating cohort-based learning communities to enhance grow-your-own leadership development activities, and stressed the importance of focusing on leadership topics that are significant to participants.

Kay Nguyen (2014) did a dissertation study to understand the experiences of mid-level administrators in California community colleges and the learning process they engaged in to develop their leadership skills. The research included a look at the skills and competencies that mid-level administrators felt they needed to have to be effective in their careers. Her study found that mid-level administrators who might seek to become a vice president or president needed to have skills in (a) managing personnel, (b) understanding community colleges,

(c) resolving conflicts, and (d) navigating the political climate of a college campus. Her study also concluded that California community colleges were not doing enough to develop aspiring leaders, and that doctoral leadership programs provided a more positive experience than grow-your-own programs. However, the emphasis of grow-your-own development programs at California community colleges was not aligned with the needs of the mid-level administrators, which emphasizes the importance of focusing on topics that are significant to the participants.

A dissertation study by Talia Lynn Koronkiewicz (2016) investigated the professional development preferences of community college student affairs mid-level managers. The study surveyed 48 Illinois community college student affairs professionals. The study found that professional development is valued by mid-level managers and that in-service programs were the most preferred type of internal professional development program. The study also found that time and funding were the biggest factors in determining what professional development programs mid-level managers attended. For internal programs, it was important for mid-level managers to be able to put what they learned to practice and to have the ability to interact with colleagues throughout the institution. The relevance of this study is that it supports the use of grow-your-own leadership programs and the use of leadership simulations, which can provide participants with the opportunity to put theory to practice.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR LEADERSHIP SIMULATIONS

The purpose of this study is to identify the skills and competencies to include in simulations intended to develop the leadership abilities of mid-level administrators who aspire to move into executive-level positions, and the type of scenarios to include in leadership simulations. Three theories or concepts provide an understanding of why leadership

simulations are effective for developing the skills and competencies of aspiring leaders. The three theories or concepts include (a) Skills-Based Leadership Theory, (b) Experiential Learning Theory, and (c) the concept of gamification. Skills-Based Leadership Theory provides the foundation that leadership skills and competencies are learned and acquired (Amanchukwu, Stanley, & Ololube, 2015). Experiential Learning Theory describes a preferred method of learning for adults that is achieved through experiences (Kolb, 1984). The concept of gamification identifies that the use of gaming elements in non-game contexts increases motivation and engagement (Deterding, 2012). Figure 1 shows that together these theories and concepts form the basic framework that supports the concept of developing leadership skills and competencies of mid-level administrators using simulations.

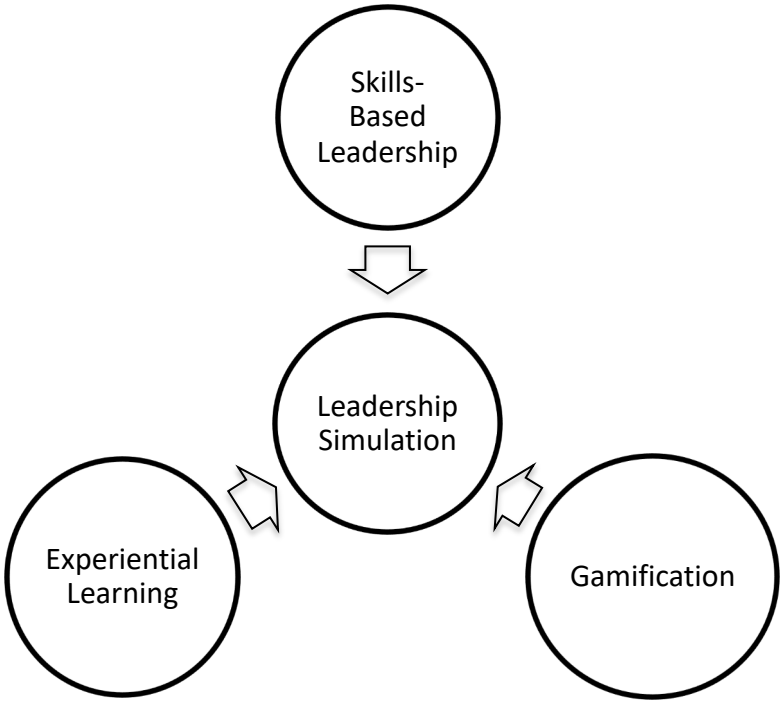

Figure 1. Concept Model of Leadership Simulation.

This study will identify the skills and competencies that mid-level administrators should have proficiency in to be effective. These skills and competencies can be included in leadership development simulations that make use of gaming elements and encourage experiential learning by putting participants through real-world experiences. The simulations will allow participants to experiment with decision making without the consequences of making a bad decision.

Skills-Based Leadership Theory

There has been much debate over the question of whether leadership can be taught or whether leaders are born. According to Amanchukwu et al. (2015), the Skills-Based Leadership Theory is based on the belief that leadership abilities can be acquired through learning skills. They explained that this is similar to Behavioral Leadership Theory, which is also based on the belief that leaders are made; however, it differs from Skills-Based Leadership Theory in that it focuses on the actions of leaders and not the intellectual qualities. At the other extreme are the "Great Man" and Trait theories of leadership, which are based on the concept that leadership is innate and leaders are born with the ability to be effective leaders (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). Some would argue that leadership is both innate and learned. For a master's thesis, Metz (2015) interviewed eight individuals who were active in leadership education. Participants of that study argued that most people have a leadership potential, leadership is a combination of traits and characteristics, and leadership can be taught to a certain extent. While the Skills-Based Leadership Theory is based on the concept that development of leadership skills and competencies improves leadership effectiveness, it does not discount the idea that there is a

connection between inherent capabilities and leadership effectiveness (Amanchukwu et al., 2015).

Other leadership theories exist that seek to explain leadership effectiveness; however, they are not focused on training and developing skills and competencies. For example, according to Amanchukwu et al. (2015), Contingency and Participative leadership theories are based on the use of different leadership styles depending on the situation. Amanchukwu et al. (2015) also stated that Participative, Transactional, and Transformational leadership theories are based on relationships and interactions between leaders and followers. Although these leadership styles might be able to be presented through training, it is the skills and competencies that are the focus of the data collected. Table 3 shows the different leadership theories and the basic premise of the theory.

Robert Katz (1955) published the theory of skills-based leadership. This theory is based on the principle that effective leadership is based on levels of proficiency in technical skills, human skills, and conceptual skills. He believed a successful leader needs to have sufficient skills in these three basic areas to allow them to function effectively at the level of management they hold an organization, and the level of proficiency changes depending on the level of management. According to Katz (1955), an effective low-level administrator must have high-level technical skills but may have low-level conceptual skills to function within the department they are responsible for. Additionally, a high-level administrator does not need to have high-level technical skills but must have high-level conceptual skills to understand the organization and have the vision to move the organization forward. They can rely on subordinates to have the necessary technical expertise. Katz stated that all levels of administration need to have

human skills, but conceptual skills become more important than human skills at higher levels of administration.

Table 3: Leadership Theories and Characteristics

LEADERSHIP THEORY	CHARACTERISTICS
Skills-Based	• Can be learned • Acquired skills are significant factors for effective leadership
Behavioral	• Can be learned • Focus on actions of leaders
"Great Man"	• Great leaders are born • Cannot be learned • Portray leaders as heroic, mythic, and destined to rise to leadership
Trait	• Leadership qualities are inherited • Cannot be learned • Certain behavioral and personality characteristics are shared by leaders
Contingency	• No single leadership style is appropriate in all situations • The leader's style should match the situation
Situational	• Leaders choose the leadership style based on the situation • The leader adapts to the situation
Participative	• Effective leaders seek input from others • Encourages participation and contributions from the group
Transactional/Management	• Focused on exchanges between leaders and followers • Based on rewards and punishments • Set clear expectations and consequences
Relationship/Transformational	• Focus on connections between leaders and followers • Leaders engage with followers • Leaders focus on performance of the group and the individual fulfilling their potential

(Amanchukwu et al., 2015)

Katz (1974) would later modify his concept to say that (a) only in large organizations can high-level administrators get by with low-level technical skills, and in smaller organizations a higher level of technical skill is necessary; (b) thinking conceptually is learned early in life, and developing this skill later in life is more difficult; and (c) human skills are equally important for all levels of administration but can be subdivided into intragroup skills and intergroup skills. He explained that intergroup human skills are important for lower-level administrators who interact mostly within their department, and intragroup human skills are more important for higher-level administrators who need to interact throughout the organization.

Since the research in this dissertation is focused on developing the skills and competencies of an aspiring leader, the Skills-Based Leadership Theory is an appropriate framework. The theory places emphasis on training and development of skills and competencies as a key to leadership performance ("All About Leadership: How Do I Lead?" n.d.). If mid-level administrators are unable to learn leadership skills emphasized in the Skills-Based Leadership Theory, then only those mid-level administrators that already possess the appropriate skills will be able to successfully move into executive-level positions. Organizations spend considerable resources for training and leadership development, and why would we bother developing leaders if leadership was innate as in the “Great Man” and Trait leadership theories (Metz, 2015)? The behaviors of a good leader can also be learned through training and observation (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). Although some of the leadership abilities identified during this study could be considered behavioral characteristics, Skills-Based Leadership Theory is better suited for the study because it focuses on skills and competencies rather than the actions of a leader.

Experiential Learning Theory

David Kolb (1984) defined experiential learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience" (p. 41). Learning from experience can be traced back to primitive cultures when adolescents practiced certain skills to gain experience and proficiency prior to demonstrating them in a rite of manhood (O'Banion, 1997). There are many contributors to the theory of experiential learning. However, David Kolb stated that John Dewey's ideas on learning through experience, Kurt Lewin's integrating classroom theories with practice, and Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development lay the foundation to the contemporary theory of experiential learning. John Dewey's work on learning through experience contributed much to traditional experiential learning methods such as apprenticeship programs, internships, and work-study (Kolb, 1984). David Kolb has contributed much to the theory over the years and stated that experiential learning is widely accepted and a preferred method of learning for mature adults (Kolb, 1984). He further said that experiential learning takes on several forms that are designed to create personal experiences and combines experience, perception, cognition, and behavior. These can include internships, field projects, work study, structured exercises, role playing, and gaming simulations. Kolb described several characteristics of experiential learning. These include:

- Learning is best conceived as a process.
- Learning is a continuous process grounded in experience.
- Learning requires resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adaption to the world.
- Learning is a holistic process of adaption to the world.

- Learning consists of transactions between the person and the environment.
- Learning is a process of creating knowledge.

Kolb's (1984) work includes the Experiential Learning Cycle, which is shown in Figure 2. There are four learning modes that learners cycle through to create a learning experience. The four learning modes include concrete experience (CE) and abstract conceptualization (AC), which provide a "grasping" experience, and reflective observation (RO) and active experimentation (AE), which provide a transforming experience (Kolb & Kolb, 2009). Knowledge is constructed as learners spiral through the four modes.

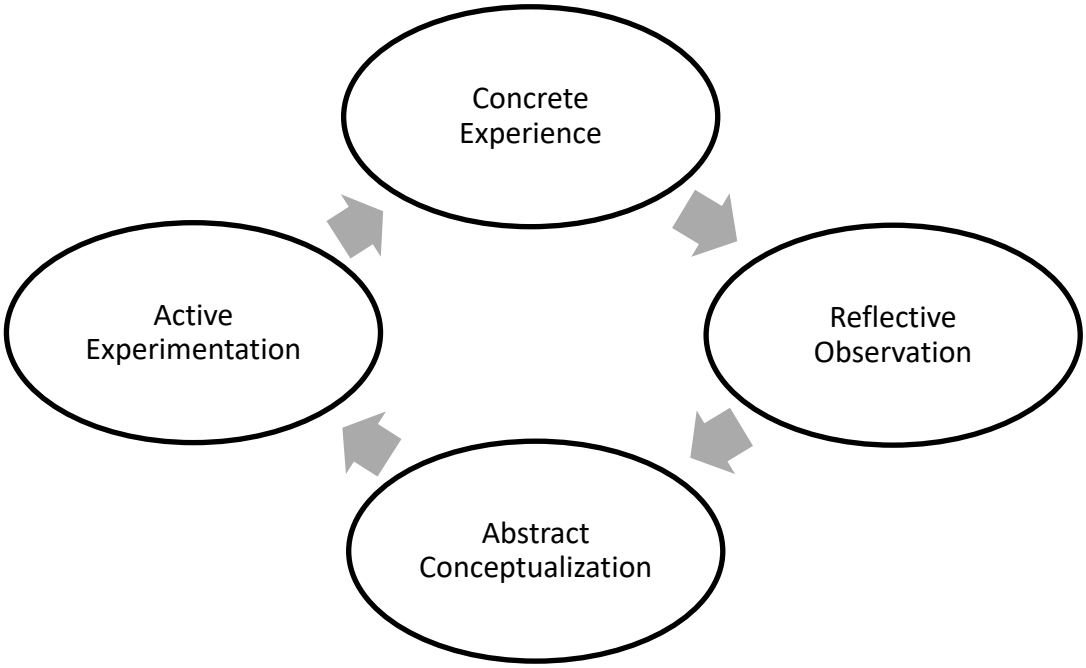

Figure 2. Kolb's (1984) Cycle of Experiential Learning.

Kolb and Kolb (2009) identified nine individual learning preferences based on the Experiential Learning Cycle, and each style emphasizes one or more of the learning modes.

- Experiencing Style (CE) – hands on, careful observation;

- Reflective Style (RO) – deep reflection, like exploring why things are the way they are;
- Acting Style (AE) – finding solutions based on technical analysis;
- Thinking Style (AC) – deep thinkers, able to develop concepts and ideas;
- Diverging Style (CE and RO) – view concrete situations and explore points of view;
- Assimilating Style (AC and RO) – understand wide range of information and put in logical form;
- Converging Style (AC and AE) – finding practical uses for ideas and theories;
- Accommodation Style (AE and CE) – learn from hands on, and function in uncertain situations;
- Balancing Style (CE, RO, AC, and AE) – see different perspectives, creative, difficulty reaching decisions.

Turesky (2005) stated that learning from experience is important, and that although every individual has a preferred learning style, development of all four styles in Kolb's model will provide the highest level of learning. Additionally, individuals are motivated to learn when preferred learning styles match the learning climate within the organization or academic setting, thereby resulting in successful learning.

According to Thomas (2008), "Leaders learn how to lead from experience" (p. 15) and when faced with crucible experiences that provide moments of deep, self-reflection. Crucible experiences are critical moments in time that define who leaders are and their path to leadership (Bell, 2016). Experiences that are unusual or put someone into an extraordinary situation provide crucible experiences that stretch a leader's abilities and prepare them for future situations (Thomas, 2008). Thomas discussed how crucible experiences are used by the Church of Latter-Day Saints and Hells Angels to develop potential leaders. He described how the Church of Latter-Day Saints uses mission work to develop the leadership abilities of its

members. A potential leader needs to experience mission work before they can fully understand the mission of the organization and be able to support other members. Thomas also described how the Hells Angels, who rarely go outside the organization for top leadership positions, creates a pipeline of leaders by requiring potential leaders to organize motorcycle runs. Motorcycle runs require a great deal of organizing and coordination to be successful, and the experience received from planning one provides the development and growth required to be a successful leader of the organization.

Experiential Learning Theory is important as a framework for demonstrating the effectiveness of leadership simulations. The literature tells us that adult learners are more engaged and motivated when experiential learning methods are applied for developing leaders (Conger & Xin, 2000; Kolb, 1984; Wuestewald, 2016). Simulations are useful for creating experiences and follow Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle when included as part of a larger program that allows participants time to reflect and experiment. Simulations can be designed to create crucible experiences, which Thomas (2008) has said are important for developing leaders.

Gamification of the Learning Process

Many who are not familiar with the concept of gamification might think that it is about playing games. However, gamification is not about playing games but is about including gaming elements into a system or process (Deterding et al., 2011). According to Deterding et al. (2011), the first documented use of the term *gamification* was in 2008, and it started to become widely used in the second half of 2010. In 2011, at the Association for Computing Machinery's (ACM) Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI), Sebastian Deterding, Dan Dixon,

Rilla Khaled, and Lennart E. Nacke made the first academic attempt to prepare a definition of gamification. Their definition has become commonly accepted and defines gamification as "the use of game design elements in non-game contexts" (Deterding et al., 2011, p. 2).

The increase in popularity of computer gaming, the ability to use cheap sensors to track everyday activities, and the ability to track individual behaviors through web analytics has driven an interest in gamification that has worked its way into many applications of everyday life (Deterding, 2012). Two examples provided by Deterding (2012) include mobile applications like Foursquare Swarm that uses location intelligence to build consumer experiences and Nike+ that tracks the distance and pace of runners.

- Foursquare Swarm – makes a game of life. Connect and earn coins as you visit locations. Compete with friends (leaderboards), earn bragging rights, and collect stickers (badges). (https://foursquare.com/about)
- Nike+ – tracks the distance and pace of a runner though a device that is attached or imbedded in the shoe. Allows friends to connect and compete. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nike%2B)

Heick (2011) provided a brief evolution of computer gaming from 1985 to 2005. He described that computer games were created for entertainment purposes and early games involved mostly individuals playing them. Any type of social interaction that would have resulted from playing early computer games might be from someone watching over the shoulder of the user. It was an individual experience with the computer game telling a story. Some games did require critical thinking to solve the problems presented by the game; however, the lack of social interaction and the amount of time participants were spending playing them caused many to view them negatively (Griffiths & Davies, 2002). Game developers

eventually created games that drew from the user's previous game experience, making them interdependent, and continuing storylines with the user's gaming preferences.

According to Heick (2011), it wasn't until 2005 that computer gaming started to become more social with the use of the internet to connect players with others. The internet allowed players to compete against each other, chase after achievements, receive rewards, and share accomplishments with others in the gaming community. He went on to explain that gamers became authors. Rather than playing a game that followed a storyline, the gamer created the storyline. Computer games were still primarily for entertainment purposes, but the benefits that computer games had toward encouraging engagement and critical thinking were being realized and included in games that were not designed purely for entertainment.

The internet paved the way for Massive Multiplayer Online (MMO) games like EVE Online (EVE), and World of Warcraft (WOW) to become popular. They allow large numbers of players to team up with others and interact in a virtual world or universe to share resources and chase after objectives that can take days, weeks, or even months to achieve. The mechanism used by these games to build teams is through the creation of guilds, clans, corporations, and alliances. The skills required of participants who played MMOs are far more complicated than previous computer games and could lead to developing important leadership skills. For example, players in EVE may want to build a large ship that can be used for a specific task. The size of the ship requires collecting a large amount of in-game resources and a production schedule that cannot be effectively completed by a single player in a reasonable amount of time. As a result, many players need to collaborate to plan and organize teams to accomplish the multiple tasks needed to complete the ship. Additionally, players live in

different time zones, which further complicates the planning and organizing. Lisk et al. (2012) explored the self-reported transformational leadership abilities demonstrated by players of three MMOs. They found that players of EVE, WOW, and Guild Wars who held leadership roles in clans or guilds were more likely to rely on transformational leadership skills than those who were not. They concluded that a growing number of leaders will have developed leadership skills from online groups or games like EVE and WOW where in-game leaders often need to deal with the technological, cultural, and geographical differences of those in the group. MMOs can serve as an excellent tool to train leaders on essential skills such as teamwork, leadership, goal-setting, and logistics. MMOs demonstrate that gaming elements used in virtual environments motivate players and encourage critical thinking skills.

According to Deterding et al. (2011), serious games involve the "use of complete games for non-entertainment purposes" (p. 2). "Serious games" started to be used in the early 2000s for training and education, and at the same time research topics included investigating human-computer interaction and how the computer experience motivates participants (Deterding, 2012).

Gamification should be taken seriously, and its full potential should be considered as a lens to "identify and facilitate the motivation behind activities" (Deterding, 2012, p. 17). Advances in technology have increased interest in the use of gamification in computerized learning applications. This is improving the quality of learning provided. An example of this can be seen with the use of 3D technology used in simulations. A study by Reiners, Bastieans, and Wood (2014) looked at the correlation between the quality of the fidelity of a simulation and learning. They defined the fidelity of a simulation as to how much the simulation mimics real

life. The study used a virtual simulation called Second Life and various devices such as the Oculus Rift Head-mounted display (HMD) and virtual reality gloves that provided sensory feedback to increase the fidelity of the participant's experience. The study found that providing high-fidelity experiences in a simulation added to a higher perceptual immersion, which created an authentic environment and encouraged better engagement and learning. The study also identified that creators of simulations need to consider how deep learners need to be immersed in a program to achieve the desired results since the cost of creating a simulation increases as fidelity increases.

There are many examples of how gamification and the use of game elements have been applied to teaching and learning. Reiners et al. (2015) of Curtain University and the University of New England in Australia explored the use of gamification in several business education simulations. Kingsley and Grabner-Hagen (2015) explored the use of gamification in the K-12 classroom using 3D GameLab (3dgamelab.com) software. Their study found that students preferred the use of gamified methods in the classroom and it encouraged the learning of critical thinking, creativity, innovation, communication, and collaboration. Giannetto, Chao, and Fontana (2013) used game elements in a program called QizBox at Bowling Green University in Ohio, which was designed to improve engagement of learners by creating a social learning environment for large lecture classes. Villagrasa et al. (2014) created a program called GLABS that provides tools for faculty to incorporate gamification into university classes in Barcelona, Spain. They acknowledged that it takes longer to incorporate gamification into the classroom; however, student performance increases when it is used.

Reiners et al. (2015), who have incorporated gamification into various educational programs, classified the gaming elements of gamification into four main groups:

- Intention or desired outcomes;
- Dynamics, including emotions, narrative, and storylines;
- Mechanics, including stochastic and random events, feedback on success and progress, resources that can be acquired, transactions between learners, and learning tasks or goals; and
- Components, including points for tracking progress, badges awarded for achievements, leaderboards for comparing between different learners, increasing levels of difficulty, and virtual goods.

The generation of workers now entering the workforce has grown up using technology and playing computer games. They are familiar with the gaming elements that are incorporated into applications and should be comfortable when game elements are used in professional development simulations.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Community colleges have developed over the years to become dynamic organizations that provide education to a diverse population of students. The executive administrators that work at these institutions are faced with many unique challenges. As a result of retirements, executive administrators are exiting community colleges in large numbers, and the mid-level administrators that can replace them lack the skills and competencies that are necessary to meet the challenges. It will be necessary for community colleges to provide training and development for the next generation of executive administrators if they are to continue to be effective. Training of mid-level administrators can be provided at the institutional level with grow-your-own programs, and simulations can be used to supplement these programs.

Identifying the skills and competencies that are necessary to be effective as an executive administrator is essential for determining outcomes for a leadership development program for mid-level administrators. Identifying those skills and competencies that can be included in a simulation is the purpose of this study. The Skills-Based Leadership Theory identifies that leadership skills and competencies can be developed. Simulations provide an experiential learning and gamified environment that is effective for developing leadership skills.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will explain (a) why the qualitative paradigm and case study methodology were selected for this study, (b) the criteria and protocols that were used for selecting and recruiting participants, (c) how data were collected and analyzed, (d) how credibility was established, and (e) the limitations of the study that were identified. The study was done in two phases and used multiple case study methodology. Each phase will be described in detail and a description for the cases will be provided.

The purpose of this study was to explore the skills and competencies to include in leadership simulations designed for mid-level administrators who aspire to move into a community college executive-level position. Identifying the skills and competencies was done through an investigation of how prepared community college executive administrators were for an executive-level position and the challenges they faced when first entering the position. Additionally, the study explored (a) how Illinois community colleges are providing professional development to improve the leadership skills and competencies of mid-level administrators, (b) whether they are using leadership simulations as part of grow-your-own leadership development programs, and (c) the scenarios and thematic elements that can be included in the design of leadership development simulations for Illinois community college administrators. Leadership simulations can be designed to provide scenarios that are tailored to the unique challenges of community colleges and provide a powerful tool for aspiring leaders to cultivate

their leadership capabilities. The study was intended to provide a better understanding of the extent to which simulations are used and the topics that should be included with simulation scenarios. Four research questions were developed based on the purpose of the study:

1. How are Illinois community colleges preparing mid-level administrators for executive-level positions?
2. How are simulations being integrated into Illinois community college administrator leadership development programs?
3. How prepared did Illinois community college executive administrators feel they were when they entered their current position?
4. What scenarios, discussions, and other thematic elements should be included in the design of an Illinois community college administrator leadership development program?

The study was done in two phases. Phase one of the study collected data from chief human resource officers (CHRO) about the use of leadership development programs in Illinois community colleges. Additionally, it collected data about required leadership skills and competencies from the job descriptions of executive administrators from participating Illinois community colleges. The information gathered was used to triangulate with data collected during phase two of the study and identify what the potential need is for including simulations with grow-your-own leadership development programs. Phase one informed the study for phase two by providing the list of executive administrators who were contacted in that phase. Phase two collected data (a) regarding the preparedness of participating executive administrators when they first entered their current job, (b) identifying what helped executive administrators prepare for the job, and (c) identifying the challenges executive administrators faced when first entering the position. The information gathered was used to recommend the

skills, competencies, situations, and scenarios to include in the design of leadership development simulations.

QUALITATIVE PARADIGM

Qualitative research is used when the researcher wants to understand the experiences of the participants and provide a final product that uses words to provide a rich description of the interpretation of the results of data collected (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Qualitative research "avoids or downplays statistical techniques and the mechanics of the kinds of quantitative methods used in, say, survey research or epidemiology" (Silverman, 2000, p. 1). This contrasts with the quantitative paradigm, which is used when the researcher is focused on numbers and frequency and is usually looking to reject or accept a hypothesis rather than generating one (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The final product of a quantitative study is represented by statistical data collected from a large representation of a study population to provide a precise interpretation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In contrast, the final product of a qualitative study uses words as data and provides a rich description of the results. The number of participants in a qualitative study is small but is focused on gaining a deep understanding of the data gathered from those few.

The qualitative paradigm was selected because it allows the researcher to obtain a deeper, more complex understanding of the issue and the context in which participants address it (Creswell, 2007). It was important for this study to obtain a deep understanding of the challenges faced by community college executive leadership. It was through a deep understanding of these challenges that the researcher hoped to make sense of the real-life issues faced by participants, how they interpret their experiences, the world they work in, and

how they dealt with the problems and issues they faced. Understanding the real-life issues that are related to an educational objective is essential when developing leadership simulations (Conine, 2014). The qualitative paradigm provided the researcher with the means to collect the real-life issues and experiences of executive administrators that can then be used as design parameters and objectives for effective leadership training simulations. The leadership simulation will then be used to train and prepare mid-level administrators and managers with the leadership skills and competencies needed to step into executive administrator positions.

CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY

Multiple case study methodology was used for this study and was selected because it allows for an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon within a bounded system. It is the bounded system that distinguishes a case study from other methods of qualitative research. Bounded systems in a case study usually involve a person, group, program, event, or activity (Creswell, 2007). Case studies share characteristics with other types of qualitative research, including the search for meaning and understanding, the researcher as the primary tool, an inductive investigative strategy, and being highly descriptive (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Each case for this study was an executive administrator from an Illinois community college. This study was bounded in three ways. The place was bounded within Illinois community colleges, the role of participants was bounded to those of executive administrators who reported to the president or CEO, and time was bounded by selecting participants who had been in their current leadership role from 1 to 6 years. The use of a case study allowed for the exploration of the bounded systems through the collection of detailed data, which is typically done from multiple sources (Creswell, 2007).

Case Selection

Purposeful sampling is an appropriate strategy when it is necessary to obtain data that is rich in description and that will provide a deep understanding of a phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Purposeful sampling requires that the researcher deliberately select participants so that the data collected are most relevant for the case (Yin, 2016) and places emphasis on collecting data from information-rich sources (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2016). It "demands we think critically about the parameters of the population" (Silverman, 2000, p. 104) or data sources to be used. The participants selected to participate in the study were able to provide a deep understanding of the problem (Creswell, 2007). The problem selected for this case was to identify the challenges faced by new executive administrators, which in turn was used to identify the leadership skills and competencies that are important for middle managers to possess so that they can successfully move into executive leadership positions. Administrators who recently moved into executive leadership roles should be able to provide a deep understanding of their experiences as a new executive administrator and the leadership skills and competencies that were needed to be successful. Administrators were intentionally selected to have 1 to 6 years' experience in their current role so that they were in the position long enough to experience the challenges of the position and have not been in the position so long that they were not able to accurately remember what those experiences were.

Maximum variation sampling is the most common type of purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2007) and is the type of sampling that was used in selecting participants for this study. It provided data that were of particular interest when common patterns emerged from varied sources (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For this study, the researcher selected the size and

the degree of urbanicity of a community college as variables for the sample of executive administrators. The complexity of a college and how it operates varies with the size and degree of urbanicity of the institution. According to Cohen et al. (2014), the size of a community college is the biggest characteristic that differentiates publicly supported institutions. Larger institutions may have a higher number of administrators and additional levels of management that have lower-level administrators or managers specializing in specific operations, whereas at smaller institutions the senior administrators may be more directly involved in managing the operations in their area of responsibility.

The degree of urbanicity or locale where the college resides affects how it draws its enrollment and makes programs accessible to students. Community colleges in urban areas typically draw enrollment from within a short distance of the college (Cohen et al., 2014), whereas rural schools are often challenged with how to make programs accessible to students who live farther from the college. The differences in areas served can be seen, for example, with the College of Lake County located in Grayslake, Illinois, that has a Carnegie locale classification of suburban and a district that covers 442 square miles (Illinois Community College Board, 2017b), whereas Carl Sandburg College located in Galesburg, Illinois, has a locale classification of rural and a district that covers 2,834 square miles. The locale for a community college was looked at to see if the various locations were a variable for any differences in the data collected. Purposely selecting executive administrators from community colleges with varied degrees of urbanicity and size was intended to show if any similarities or differences exist in how prepared executive leaders were for their current position.

Participating College Selection

Illinois community colleges were deliberately selected as a source of participants for this study, and the colleges were determined from those listed on the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) website. Illinois community colleges were chosen because most of the public community colleges are organized in a single district, which is typical across the nation (Cohen et al., 2014). They also represent a broad and diverse range of community colleges with sizes ranging from a total headcount of just over 1,000 to over 28,000 students, and have various degrees of urbanicity, including rural, town, metropolitan suburban, and urban locations (Illinois Community College Board, 2016).

According to the ICCB website (https://www.iccb.org), Illinois has 48 community colleges, located in 39 districts. Each community college district has a single college except for the City Colleges of Chicago, which has seven colleges, and Illinois Eastern, which has four colleges. The two multi-college districts were not included in the study because they are more complex, are more formalized, have a different administrative organization, and represent a smaller number of colleges nationally (Cohen et al., 2014). Harper College resides in a single college district; however, it was not included in the study since the researcher is an employee of the college. The remaining 36 community colleges were invited to participate in the study, and those that agreed were separated into categories representing the degree of urbanicity and size of institution based on their 2014 fall semester full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment as reported in the most recent 2015 Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, 2016). The degree of urbanicity and size of the institution were used to differentiate colleges to see if there were any variances in data

across these factors and if size and location of an institution might be a factor in how prepared executive administrators were when new to the position.

For this study, the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education was used as the basis for classifying each college for degree of urbanicity and size of the institution. The National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) locale classifications and criteria shown in Table 4 were used to define the degrees of urbanicity. The classifications are based on methodology developed by the U.S Census Bureau's Population Division in 2005 (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Only the major locale classifications of city, suburb, town, and rural were used in the study. Table 4 also includes the number of single-district Illinois community colleges for each locale that fit the criteria to be included in the study.

Table 5 shows the Carnegie size classifications that were used for this study and the number of single-district Illinois community colleges that fit the criteria to be included in the study. The classifications are based on Fall 2014 FTE enrollment, which, for two-year schools, is calculated as full-time headcount plus one third of the part-time headcount and includes all undergraduates. Enrollment data for institutions are taken from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Fall 2014 enrollment data.

Table 4: *NCES Locale Classifications, Criteria for Degree of Urbanicity, and Number of Selected Single District Illinois Community Colleges in Each Classification*

Locale		IPEDS Code	Criteria	Number of Illinois Community Colleges
City	Large	11	Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population of 250,000 or more.	0
	Midsize	12	Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000.	3
	Small	13	Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population less than 100,000.	6
Suburb	Large	21	Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with a population of 250,000 or more.	10
	Midsize	22	Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with a population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000.	1
	Small	23	Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with a population less than 100,000.	1
Town	Fringe	31	Territory inside an urban cluster that is less than or equal to 10 miles from an urbanized area.	0
	Distant	32	Territory inside an urban cluster that is more than 10 miles and less than or equal to 35 miles from an urbanized area.	2
	Remote	33	Territory inside an urban cluster that is more than 35 miles from an urbanized area.	0
Rural	Fringe	41	Census-defined rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an urban cluster.	10

Locale		IPEDS Code	Criteria	Number of Illinois Community Colleges
	Distant	42	Census-defined rural territory that is more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster.	3
	Remote	43	Census-defined rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an urbanized area, and more than 10 miles from an urban cluster.	0

(Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, 2016; U.S. Department of Education, n.d.)

Table 5: *Carnegie Size Classification of Institutions of Higher Education and Number of Selected Single District Illinois Community Colleges in Each Classification*

Size Classification	Fall 2014 FTE Enrollment	Number of Illinois Community Colleges
Very small two-year	Less than 500	0
Small two-year	500 to 1,999	10
Medium two-year	2000 to 4,999	15
Large two-year	5,000 to 9,999	10
Very large two-year	Greater than 9,999	1

(Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2017; Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, 2016)

Selecting participating colleges from each category of degree of urbanicity and size of institution allowed for maximum sampling by including data from various types of institutions. Any common patterns that emerged from the data collected and based on the degree of urbanization or size of institution were able to be identified.

Executive Administrator Selection Criteria

Executive administrator interview participants were purposely and pragmatically selected from a larger group of Illinois community college executive administrators who reported directly to the president or CEO of the college. They had between 1 and 6 years of experience at the college in the current executive administrator position at the time they were interviewed. This was intentional so that the participant was on the job long enough to experience many of the difficulties of the job, but not so long that they could not reliably recall those early experiences and challenges.

Maximum variation of sampling was achieved by selecting executive administrators based on select demographic attributes. The first set of demographic criteria used to select the participants was based on the size classification and degree of urbanicity (locale) of the college where they worked. At least one but preferably two executive administrators were selected from each of the small/medium size classifications, large/very large size classifications, rural/town locale, and city/suburban locale. These categories were further divided, and the matrix shown in Table 6 was created that provides for 16 possible category combinations where an Illinois community college could be classified (i.e., small/rural, small/town, etc.). Five of the category combinations of size and locale did not have Illinois community colleges that fit the classifications. The sample size for executive administrators to participate in an interview was limited by the researcher's time and the number of colleges that responded to recruitment attempts. As a result, eight participating executive administrators were selected from the remaining 11 demographic combinations. No more than one participant was selected from

each combination of size classification and locale on the matrix to maintain maximum variation in the sample.

It should be noted that colleges from three of the demographic combinations are not represented in the study. The administration at the six colleges in these demographic combinations did not respond to two recruitment requests sent to the president's office. The president's office at the seventh college agreed to participate, but three recruitment requests sent to the CHRO were unsuccessful.

Table 6: *Community College Demographics of Participating Executive Administrators*

INSTITUTION SIZE / LOCALE[A]	RURAL	TOWN	SUBURBAN	CITY
SMALL	1 participant out of 7 colleges	0 participants out of 1 college	No schools	1 participant out of 2 colleges
MEDIUM	1 participant out of 5 colleges	1 participant out of 1 college	0 participants out of 5 colleges	1 participant out of 4 colleges
LARGE	0 participants out of 1 college	No schools	1 participant out of 6 colleges	1 participant out of 3 colleges
VERY LARGE	No schools	No schools	1 participant out of 1 college	No schools

[a]Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, 2016).

The second set of criteria used to select participants was based on individual demographic attributes. These attributes were used to provide further variation in the sample of executive administrators after their college's demographic attributes were identified. The information for the attributes was gathered from the pre-interview questionnaire. The attributes used include (a) current functional area of responsibility, (b) previous functional areas of responsibility, (c) gender, (d) race/ethnicity, (e) age group, and (f) highest degree of

education achieved. The demographic attribute questions and responses were based on recommendations from the Williams Institute (Herman, 2014) and templates provided by SurveyMonkey. Table 7 summarizes the demographic attributes requested in the questionnaire and the possible responses for each. This rigorous selection process resulted in eight participants that were selected for the interviews.

Table 7: *Executive Administrator Pre-interview Questionnaire Demographics and Possible Responses*

QUESTIONNAIRE DEMOGRAPHIC	POSSIBLE RESPONSES
Race	• American Indian or Alaskan Native • Asian/Pacific Islander • Black or African American • Hispanic • White/Caucasian • Multiple ethnicity/Other (please specify) • Prefer not to answer
Age	• 20 or younger • 21-29 • 30-39 • 40-49 • 50-59 • 60 or older • Prefer not to answer
Gender	• Female • Male • Transgender female/Trans woman • Transgender male/Trans man • Genderqueer/gender non-conforming • Different identity (please specify) • Prefer not to answer
Highest Level of Education	• Associate's Degree • Bachelor's Degree • Master's Degree • Doctoral Degree • Professional Degree • Other (please specify)

QUESTIONNAIRE DEMOGRAPHIC	POSSIBLE RESPONSES
Area of College Previously Employed	• Academic Affairs • Administrative Services • Continuing Education • Institutional Advancement • Student Affairs • Workforce Development • Did not work at a college or university • Other (please specify)

The first executive administrator responding from each size/locale was initially selected. A respondent was intentionally skipped, and priority was given to another if it allowed an underrepresented demographic attribute to be included. Respondents who did not want to be interviewed or did not meet the years of experience requirement were not eligible to be interviewed. Table 8 summarizes the demographic attributes for the eligible pre-interview questionnaire respondents and identifies the ones who were selected for the interview.

Table 8. *Summary of Demographics Attributes from Eligible Pre-interview Questionnaire Respondents and Participants Selected*

ELIGIBLE SURVEY RESPONSE	CURRENT FUNCTIONAL AREA	PREVIOUS FUNCTIONAL AREA	GENDER	RACE/ ETHNICITY	AGE GROUP	HIGHEST DEGREE EARNED
1	**AA**	**AA**	**Female**	**White**	**60-69**	**Doctorate**
2	**Other**	**NC**	**Female**	**Black**	**30-39**	**Master's**
3	**AS**	**AS**	**Female**	**White**	**40-49**	**Master's**
4	IA	Multiple	Female	Multi/Other	30-39	Doctorate
5	IA	AA	Female	White	40-49	Master's
6	AA/SA	AA	Male	White	30-39	Doctorate
7	**IA**	**IA**	**Female**	**White**	**50-59**	**Master's**
8	**Other**	**AS**	**Male**	**Black**	**40-49**	**Master's**
9	IA	CE	Female	White	20-29	Bachelor's
10	AS	IA	Female	White	40-49	Master's
11	**AS**	**AS**	**Male**	**White**	**40-49**	**ABD**
12	SA	AA/SA	Male	Black	50-59	Doctorate

Eligible Survey Response	Current Functional Area	Previous Functional Area	Gender	Race/ Ethnicity	Age Group	Highest Degree Earned
13	Other	Other	Male	White	30-39	Master's
14	AS	AS	Male	White	50-59	Doctorate
15	**SA/IA**	**SA**	**Male**	**White**	**60-69**	**Master's**
16	**AA**	**Multiple**	**Female**	**White**	**40-49**	**Doctorate**

Note. Participants selected are represented in bold. Functional area codes: AA-academic affairs, AS-administrative services, CE-continuing education, IA-institutional advancement, NC-not with community college, SA-student affairs.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

Three methods of data collection were used: surveys, interviews, and document collection. The difficulties associated with collecting data through these methods involve gaining the trust and credibility with the participant and getting participants to respond to surveys (Creswell, 2007). To help gain the trust and credibility with participants, it was important to establish a good rapport with them, identify how they would benefit from the study, and avoid being intrusive as much as possible to help overcome these difficulties. The researcher initially sought approval and support from the college president with an email that described the study and how the results would be used. Communications with the CHRO and executive administrators reiterated the college's support for the study and the intended use of the results. Additionally, the emails included a statement indicating that the identity of the institutions and the participating administrators would be kept confidential. Participants were given an estimate of the time needed to complete the survey to encourage them to complete it.

The questions that were asked with the surveys and during interviews focused on the purpose of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and answering the research questions. The four research questions are:

1. How are Illinois community colleges preparing mid-level administrators for executive-level positions?
2. How are simulations being integrated into Illinois community college administrator leadership development programs?
3. How prepared did Illinois community college executive administrators feel they were when they entered their current position?
4. What scenarios, discussions, and other thematic elements should be included in the design of an Illinois community college administrator leadership development program?

Table 9 shows the sources for collecting data, the method used to collect data, what data were collected, and which research questions were intended to be answered after analysis of the data collected.

Table 9. *Data Sources and Methods Employed for the Study Matched to Research Questions*

Data Source	Method	Data Collected	Research Questions Answered
Phase one: Chief human resource officers	Questionnaire	Leadership development programs, acceptance of simulations, administrator list	1,2
	Document	Job descriptions, job skills	4
Phase two: Executive administrators	Pre-interview questionnaire	Demographics, job preparedness, leadership development programs taken	3
	Interview	Job preparedness, leadership development programs taken, required leadership skills	3,4

Permission to proceed with the study was obtained from all participating institutions and individuals before proceeding with the collection of any data. Obtaining permission to gain access to data is expected in a qualitative study (Stake, 1995). Prior to the start of data collection, permission was obtained from Ferris State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Since data were collected at multiple educational institutions, approval was requested from the president or CEO of each institution and, when necessary, from their IRB. An informed consent was obtained from each participant of the human resource questionnaire, executive administrator questionnaire, and interview.

Informed Consent and Confidentiality Procedures

Permission was secured from all organizations and individuals participating in the study. Following the recommendation of Creswell (2007), an informed consent form was sent to each participant that included the purpose of the study, the procedures used for data collection, the expected benefits of the study, the right of the participant to withdraw from the study, and the participant's signature.

Since data collection used audio recordings during the interview process, the recordings were transcribed. A confidentiality agreement was required to be signed by anyone or any service that was hired to provide transcription services.

Contact Protocol

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) recommended that researchers act with credibility for a study to be trustworthy. One method used by this study to achieve credibility was through providing a detailed explanation of the contact protocol that was followed. The contact

protocol that was used for contacting participants provided the method for (a) getting approval to conduct the study at the community college, (b) obtaining a list of executive administrators who report to the president, (c) distributing the CHRO and pre-interview surveys, and (d) recruiting executive administrators to participate in the study. During phase one, college presidents and CHROs were contacted to obtain approval for the study and obtain contact information. During phase two, executive administrators were contacted to seek participation in a pre-interview questionnaire and an interview.

Phase One

1. *Introductory email* (Appendix A). An email was sent to the president/CEO of 36 Illinois community colleges describing the nature of the study being conducted, seeking approval for the college to participate in the study, and requesting the name and email address of the CHRO officer. The names of the presidents and their administrative or executive assistants were obtained from information published by the ICCB. The president and their administrative or executive assistant was verified with the college's website.

2. *Email to CHRO* (Appendix B). The email described the nature of the study being conducted, requested the appropriate contact information of the executive administrators who have been in their positions from 1 to 6 years, requested contact information for administrative assistants to the administrators, and requested job descriptions for the executive administrators. Additionally, the email requested the CHRO to complete a short questionnaire hosted on SurveyMonkey.com. An informed consent form was sent as an attachment with the email and secured as part of the questionnaire.

Phase Two

1. *Email to executive administrator* (Appendix C). The email described the nature of the study being conducted, provided a link to the pre-interview questionnaire hosted on SurveyMonkey.com, and provided a PIN to enter in the survey when asked. The PIN was cross-referenced to a table with the administrator's name, job title, and community college. An informed consent form was sent as an attachment with the email and secured as part of the pre-interview questionnaire.

2. *Email to executive administrator interview participant* (Appendix D). The email thanked the administrator for participating in the interview, let them know the time

frame for when interviews would be scheduled, and requested their preferred dates and times for the interview. A copy of the informed consent form was sent as an attachment with the email and collected prior to the interview.

Phase One

Institutional Approval

Email invitations requesting participation in the study were sent to 36 Illinois community college presidents on March 6, 2018. Responses were received from 20 of the 36 colleges contacted. Two of the college presidents requested the researcher to contact the college's Institutional Research Board (IRB) for approval before proceeding with the study. One president forwarded the request directly to the college's IRB, who then contacted the researcher. IRB approval was received verbally or through a formal application process from the three colleges requiring IRB review (Appendix G). Two presidents requested that their institutions not participate in the study. The institutional approval process resulted in 18 colleges that were approved for the study.

Chief Human Resource Officer Contact

The CHROs of the approved colleges were contacted by email between March 8, 2018, and July 31, 2018. Eleven of the CHROs completed the questionnaire, 12 provided executive administrator contact information, and nine provided job descriptions. The contact information for 50 executive administrators was collected from the CHROs.

Chief Human Resource Officer Document Collection

Documents collected were relevant to the study as recommended by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) and were used to help triangulate the data received from interviews. Documents collected included job descriptions for executive leadership positions filled by community

colleges within the last 1 to 6 years, which was useful to identify the skills and competencies required by the institutions for those positions. The skills and competencies identified in the job descriptions were used to triangulate the skills and competencies identified by executive administrators during the interview process. Using only job descriptions for positions filled within the last 1 to 6 years provided the best chance that they were current, since they are often reviewed and updated when a job search is initiated.

Chief Human Resource Officer Questionnaire

A questionnaire was sent to the CHRO of the Illinois community colleges that were approved by their president or CEO to participate in the study. These questionnaires were designed to collect data about any leadership development programs that were intended to improve the leadership skills and competencies of mid-level administrators. The questionnaire also inquired about the institution's acceptance of using simulations as a tool for these development programs. The questionnaire was used to identify and collect the contact information of eligible executive administrator participants. The questionnaire was administered using SurveyMonkey, which is an online survey tool.

SurveyMonkey was selected as the host for the questionnaire because of the site's ability to provide participant confidentiality and ease of use. It is an internet-based survey tool that is widely used by about 3 million people every day (SurveyMonkey, 2018). SurveyMonkey provided the tools that were necessary for this study and was able to collect, track, and assist with analyzing questionnaire responses. Security features include the ability to turn on Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) encryption and turn off Internet Protocol (IP) address tracking to ensure

that all data collected and transferred with SurveyMonkey remained confidential and anonymous.

Phase Two

Executive Administrator Pre-Interview Questionnaire

From March 25, 2018, to September 2, 2018, email communications were sent to 49 of the 50 executive administrators identified from the CHRO questionnaire, requesting them to participate in the pre-interview questionnaire. One executive administrator informed the researcher prior to contact emails being sent that they did not want to participate in the study. Emails were sent to their work address from the researcher's personal email account set up specifically for this study. The email asked them to participate in this study and provided a link to a pre-interview questionnaire. Twenty-seven executive administrators responded to the questionnaire. Out of the 27 administrators, 22 were willing to participate in the interview. Five administrators had been in their positions more than 6 years, and one had been in their position less than 1 year. This made them ineligible to participate. Eight were selected from the remaining 16 administrators to be included in the study based on their college's and individual demographic attributes.

The pre-interview questionnaire served four purposes: (a) to gather basic demographic, professional, and organizational information about executive administrators; (b) to gather information on the types of leadership development programs taken; (c) to gather information on how prepared they felt they were for their current position; and (d) to recruit them to participate in an interview. Demographic questions collected data about their previous position, education (highest degree level and discipline), and professional background (academic,

administrative, or other). Leadership development questions asked about the types of programs they completed, whether any of the programs included simulations, and how important the simulations were toward achieving the desired outcome of the development program. The questionnaire also inquired whether the administrator felt prepared for their current position, if the leadership development programs they may have taken were a factor for being prepared, and what skills or experience would have helped them during the first year in the position.

Each participant was issued a unique personal identification number, known only to the researcher, which needed to be entered in the questionnaire. This allowed the researcher to match the questionnaire response with the demographics of the school. This ensured that all data collected or stored temporarily on the third-party survey application was not traceable to the individual. The questionnaire was administered using SurveyMonkey. An informed consent form was included with email, and one question in the questionnaire asked the participant to acknowledge that they received and read the informed consent (Appendix E).

Executive Administrator Interviews

A pragmatic approach was used to select participants for interviews. Creswell (2007) recommended that following a pragmatic approach is a strategy that is needed with a qualitative study to obtain a purposeful sample of participants from a larger group. To achieve maximum variation in the sample of participants, selection was based on the size and locale of the community college where the executive administrator worked and on individual demographic attributes. The demographic attributes used for selecting participants included (a) current functional area of responsibility, (b) previous functional areas of responsibility,

(c) gender, (d) race/ethnicity, (e) age group, and (f) highest degree of education achieved. The sample size of interview participants was limited by the researcher's time and the number of colleges that responded to recruitment attempts. As a result, no more than one participant was selected from each college size and locale classification combination.

The process used for selecting participants began with the pre-interview questionnaires sent to executive administrators. Questionnaire participants were asked if they would be interested in participating in an interview. A pool of interview candidates was created from those who responded "yes" to the question. Candidates were assigned a number based on the order in which the questionnaire response was received. Next, the candidates were categorized into one of the 16 possible community college size and locale classifications. To avoid selecting candidates based on convenience or other biases, the candidate with the lowest assigned number from each community college size and locale classification combination was potentially identified for an interview. Then the candidate's demographic attributes were considered and a different candidate in the size and locale classification was selected if any attributes were duplicated, and it allowed for an underrepresented demographic attribute to be included. Eight candidates with the lowest assigned number that provided for maximum diversity in the demographic attributes were asked to be interviewed.

The eight executive administrators selected were sent an email inviting them to participate in the interview. The eight administrators agreed to participate, and the interviews were scheduled. A confirmation email with the scheduled date and time was sent along with a copy of the informed consent to each administrator before the interview. The interviews were conducted from June 19, 2018, to October 8, 2018. Seven interviews were held at the

participant's college campus. One interview was held in a restaurant near the participant's college campus.

Data collected from interviews offers a way to portray and discover multiple views of reality (Stake, 1995). Interviews were conducted using a semistructured format, which, according to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), is used when specific information is required from all participants, when questions are used flexibly and have no predetermined wording or order. Interviewing is usually done on the participant's home grounds (Stake, 1995), and that was the preferred method for these interviews. Audio recordings were used during interviews rather than video recordings to avoid the complication of setting up equipment and to be less intrusive for the participant (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Two audio devices were used to avoid lost data should one device fail. A transcription service was used to transcribe the audio recordings, which were reviewed by the researcher for accuracy soon after interview and transcription was completed. Participants were then asked to review and confirm the accuracy of the transcripts.

Creswell (2007) suggested that building a good rapport with the participant early in the interview is important to facilitate collecting good data. The researcher followed Stake's (1995) recommendation of explaining how the participant was selected, the purpose of the study, and how it would benefit the participant to in order to build a good rapport and trust with the participant. As recommended by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the questions that were asked during the interview were carefully designed to minimize bias, be open-ended, focus on the purpose of the study, and answer the research questions. The types of questions asked included background questions designed to obtain the demographic attributes of the

participant and open-ended questions that would be useful in getting quality information from participants. Questions were designed to identify the preparedness of executive administrators for their current position and the type of leadership skills and competencies they felt were necessary for the job. As recommended by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) and (Yin, 2016), an interview guide was used and was useful in assisting the researcher with the interview process. As recommended by Yin (2016), the guide was not be used as a questionnaire and contained only key words or phrases that reminded the researcher of interview questions and follow-up probing questions.

Field Notes

Field notes were used to supplement the interview transcript. They were usually written by the researcher within an hour after each interview was completed to document any key ideas from the interview. The timing of when field notes are written is important since the ability to accurately recall what transpired during the interview becomes poorer as time passes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As recommended by Stake (1995), the field notes were used to document key ideas from the interview, identify any nonverbal cues that occurred during the interview, fill any gaps in the data, and make adjustments to questions for subsequent interviews. The notes included the place of the interview, the name and title of the participant, date and time of the interview, and the time that the notes were written.

CASE MANAGEMENT DOCUMENTS

Multiple logs were maintained to retain the integrity of the study and document the complex process of collecting data from multiple sources. Logs were maintained to document

communications, data received, pseudonyms, and work tasks. Table 10 shows the various logs that were maintained and the information they tracked.

Table 10. *Summary of Where Communications and Data Collection Were Tracked*

LOG	PURPOSE OF LOG
Illinois community college demographics log	Document the size and locale classifications of Illinois community colleges.
President communication log	Document the dates of recruitment communications and responses.
Chief Human Resource Officer communication log	Document the dates of communications with CHROs, receipt of Chief Human Resource Officer Questionnaires, and receipt of job descriptions.
Executive administrator communications log	Document the dates of communications with executive administrators, PIN number assignments, receipt of pre-interview questionnaire, and acceptance of interview.
Interview log	Document the scheduling of interviews, confirmations, interview dates, and transcription.
Pseudonym log	Tracking pseudonyms assigned to community colleges and executive administrators.
Node log – Job descriptions	Document process of reducing or consolidating the number of nodes (themes) for job descriptions.
Research work Log	Document the tasks completed while actively collecting data.

DATA COLLECTION PILOT

The CHRO questionnaire, pre-interview questionnaire, and interview were piloted with test participants. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), data collection pilots are useful for practicing and gaining experience conducting the interview and for determining if the questions are right for the study. The purposes for the pilots were to (a) test participant understanding of questions asked in the questionnaires and interview, (b) practice the interview, and (c) test the recording technology that would be used in the interview. Additionally, it provided an

opportunity for the researcher to become familiar with how to operate the recording devices and uploading audio files from the device to a secure computer for storage. Both devices worked properly during the pilot interview.

The CHRO questionnaire and executive administrator pre-interview questionnaire was piloted with an Illinois community college executive administrator and a peer worker. The interview pilot was conducted with an Illinois community college executive administrator. The executive administrators and peer worker who participated in the pilot were from the Illinois community college where the researcher works. The pilots resulted in minor changes in terminology and additional responses added to several questions in both questionnaires. More conversation was added to the beginning of the interview to put the interviewee more at ease before getting into the primary interview questions. This included talking about how the interviewee got to their present position.

DATA MANAGEMENT

Computer and Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) was used to assist with organizing and analyzing the data that were collected, but it should be noted that the software does not analyze the data for the researcher (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2016). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the advantages for using CAQDAS is in providing an efficient and organized filing system for easy retrieval of data and encourages a deeper analysis since less time is needed compiling data as compared to other methods of organizing data.

NVivo version 11 was the computer and qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) program used for the study. The version was upgraded to 12 later in the study. NVivo was used to assist with managing data files and for performing the first three phases of Yin's (2016) five-

phased approach to analyzing qualitative data. This included compiling, disassembling, and reassembling the data from job descriptions, interviews, and field notes. This was accomplished through tools in the software that assisted with coding and categorizing data that were collected.

The ability to manage data collected from various sources was important to maintaining reliability of the study. NVivo served as a central data storage point for managing documents received during the study. Data files and documents imported into NVivo included (a) responses from the chief human resource officer (CHRO) questionnaire, (b) responses from the pre-interview questionnaire, (c) job descriptions, (d) audio files from interviews, (e) transcripts of audio files, and (f) field notes. The completed questionnaires that were collected through SurveyMonkey were converted to Portable Document File (PDF) files, downloaded to Microsoft One Drive on the researcher's home computer, and then imported into NVivo. Job descriptions and interview audio files were downloaded in their original file formats to Microsoft One Drive on the researcher's home computer, and then imported to NVivo. Handwritten field notes were scanned, saved to Microsoft One Drive on the researcher's home computer as a PDF file, and then imported to NVivo.

Audio files were created by the digital recorders using Windows Media Audio (WMA) file format. The transcription of the WMA files was managed through the NVivo software. Transcription services were provided by TranscribeMe and ordered through NVivo after the WMA files were imported to NVivo. WMA files were uploaded to TranscribeMe directly from the NVivo software. The completed transcripts were then downloaded back into NVivo for coding. NVivo synced the transcript with the original WMA file, which allowed the researcher to

listen to the interview while viewing the transcripts. This allowed for transcripts to be easily reviewed for accuracy, which added to the reliability of the data. The researcher was able to select specific text in the transcript and then be linked to that part of the audio file. This assisted the researcher with clarifying any areas of the transcript and provided a better understanding of the data that were collected from the interview.

The last WMA file that needed transcription was ordered directly through TranscribeMe because NVivo changed transcription services. The completed transcript was manually imported to NVivo. The transcript could be coded but was not able to be synced with the WMA file.

DATA STORAGE

Data need to be handled correctly and safely stored in an organized way so that the researcher can recall data efficiently when it is needed. Following the recommendation of Creswell (2007), the names of all participants included in the study were masked. A personal log of everything related to the study was kept, including contacts, phone numbers, and calendars, as recommended by Yin (2016). A master list of the data collected was kept as recommended by Creswell (2007). The master list included a description of the data and time those data were collected or received from participants.

Audio recordings from the interviews were recorded using digital devices to ensure high quality playback, to facilitate digital storing of the recordings, and to accommodate transcription. All electronic data were stored in the cloud using Microsoft OneDrive (OneDrive) and in a folder that was not open or shared with the public. Storing data in the cloud lessened the chance of data loss from a failure of data storage devices. OneDrive facilitates having copies

of data files saved to the researcher's laptop and desktop computer. Any files that contained participant information was password protected. Data collected by SurveyMonkey.com were transferred to OneDrive and deleted from the SurveyMonkey server after data analysis was completed. Data collected by SurveyMonkey were collected with Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) Encryption protocol turned on, and Internet Protocol (IP) address tracking turned off to ensure that the data remained confidential and anonymous. All paper documents, including field notes, transcripts, and informed consent forms were scanned and saved to OneDrive. The original documents were shredded with a cross-cut shredder after scanning.

Transcription services were provided by TranscribeMe, which is an internet-based company using crowdsourcing to transcribe audio files. Audio files were uploaded to TranscribeMe using an "order transcript" feature in NVivo 11. The completed transcript from TranscribeMe was downloaded directly into NVivo 11. A Portable Document File (PDF) copy of the transcript was saved to Microsoft OneDrive. All audio and transcript files were deleted from the TranscribeMe server after the transcript was successfully downloaded to NVivo 11. All data analysis files from NVivo 11 and any files related to the research were saved to OneDrive.

DATA ANALYSIS

Yin's (2016) five phases for analyzing data were used to analyze the data collected from the documents and interviews in the study. The five phases are compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding. This section focuses on how data were compiled, disassembled, and reassembled. The compiled, disassembled, and reassembled data is summarized and interpreted in chapter four. Conclusions drawn from the interpretation of the data will be covered in chapter five.

In a case study, the researcher relies on data obtained from direct interpretation of individual instances and the aggregation of instances until something can be determined from it (Stake, 1995). Care must be taken while preparing for and during the data analysis process of a case study because of the large amount of data that can be collected, the range of sources from which the data are received, and the potential for the collection of data that might be disparate, contradictory, and incompatible with the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

A systematic approach to data analysis began early in the data collection process and was simultaneous with the collection of data. Data analysis conducted early and simultaneous with data collection helps keep the process manageable (Creswell, 2007; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Miles & Huberman, 1994). It allows for the development of strategies and adjustments to be made for later data collection (Miles & Huberman, 1994). It allows for a deeper analysis of the data during later stages of the research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). It helps organize data for easy retrieval when it is needed (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The quality of data should also be improved with early analysis since it reduces the tendency to forget relevant information collected from interviews as time passes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Data from the CHRO and executive administrator pre-interview questionnaires were used to collect demographic data about the participating colleges and executive administrators. The questionnaires were intended to help identity and provide a purposeful sampling of participants for the interviews and to generalize how Illinois community colleges are supporting professional development. The data collected from the questionnaires provided descriptive results that summarized the data collected and was not intended to generate theories or

hypotheses. Questionnaire data were presented in summary form through tables and simple graphics. Table 11 describes how each of the data sources was collected and analyzed.

Table 11. *Data Sources, Methods Employed for the Study, Data Collected, and Method of Analysis*

Data Source	Method	Data Collected	Method of Analysis
Phase one: Chief Human Resource Officer	Questionnaire	Leadership development programs, acceptance of simulations, administrator list	Summary of results through simple tables and graphics
	Document	Job descriptions, job skills	Coding – compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding
Phase two: Executive administrators	Pre-interview questionnaire	Demographics, job preparedness, leadership development programs taken	Summary of results through simple tables and graphics
	Interview	Job preparedness, leadership development programs taken, required leadership skills	Coding – compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding

Compiling Data

Data were collected from various sources, including questionnaires, interviews, and documents. The data from each of these were stored in the CAQDAS system and coded with relevant demographics of the participant and institution. As recommended by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the coding scheme was relevant to the study and incorporated the literature reviewed regarding skills and competencies of leaders.

Questionnaires and job descriptions were the first sources of data to be collected from participants. The date and time of receipt of responses were recorded, and demographic attributes were coded and used to determine participants for the next phase of the study. Demographic attributes included the participant's educational background, work background,

number of years in the current position, gender, and race. The demographics of the institution included the Carnegie classifications for size and locale.

Data from interviews included field notes, a contact summary sheet, a transcript of the audio record from the interview, and time stamps. Data were coded for the demographics of the participant and their institution using the same coding as described above for the questionnaires and documents. Field notes, taken shortly after the interview, were reviewed for any gaps in the data and for any adjustments to questions for the next interview.

Disassembling the Data

Disassembling data is done by breaking down the data into smaller segments and then assigning codes or themes to the smaller segments (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2016). This process of assigning themes, or coding, focuses on words and key phrases in the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The data collected in this study were disassembled and coded in this way. The job descriptions and interview transcripts were scanned for any key words or phrases that were relevant to the purpose of the study and coded in NVivo 11. The coding in NVivo 11 was then reviewed and grouped where possible into categories or themes. “Categories are conceptual elements that ‘cover’ or span many individual examples (or bits or units of the data you previously identified) of the category” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 206). Each job description and interview were scanned in the same manner and the categories were combined into a master set.

Reassembling the Data

Following Creswell's (2007) recommendation, throughout the process of coding each job description and interview, the categories within the master set continued to be developed, sorted, combined, and reduced. As recommended by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), categories in the master set (a) were responsive to the purpose of the study, (b) covered all of the relevant data, (c) were mutually exclusive so that all bits of data fit into only one category, (d) were sensitive to the data, and (e) were conceptually congruent with all categories at the same level of abstraction. Creswell (2007) preferred that categories be reduced so that there are no more than five or six themes. The researcher reduced the categories as much as possible; however, more than five or six themes were necessary. As categories or themes were being reduced and combined, patterns were identified and noted for later interpretation.

CREDIBILITY: TRUSTWORTHINESS, TRIANGULATION, VALIDITY, AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is important when designing a study that the researcher establish credibility to assure that data are properly collected and analyzed and that the findings and conclusions reflect the world that was studied (Yin, 2016). Yin (2016) stated that credibility in a qualitative study can be strengthened through establishing trustworthiness, triangulation, and validity. Additionally, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) believe that ethical considerations of a study directly relate to its trustworthiness. Table 12 illustrates each test for credibility, the tactics used to demonstrate credibility, and the chapter where the tactics are discussed.

Table 12. *Credibility Test, Tactics Used, and Chapter Discussed In*

CREDIBILITY TEST	TACTIC	CHAPTER DISCUSSED
Trustworthiness	Purpose of study	Chapter 1
	Administrator selection	Chapter 3
	College selection	Chapter 3
	Data collection	Chapter 3
Triangulation	Data – multiple sources	Chapter 3
	Data – multiple methods	Chapter 3
Validity	Peer review	Chapter 3
	Identify research bias	Chapter 3
	Audit trail	Chapter 3
	Transferability of the study	Chapter 3
	Maximum variation	Chapter 3
Ethical considerations	IRB approval	Chapter 3
	CITI training	Chapter 3
	Informed consent	Chapter 3

Trustworthiness

Credibility is established by building trustworthiness in the study. Trustworthiness was built by describing the protocols used for establishing (a) the standards and methods used for how participants were selected, (b) where the study was conducted, and (c) how data were collected. These protocols were described earlier in this chapter. Yin (2016) believes that describing the considerations for selecting the standards and methods for a study helps to establish trustworthiness. Additionally, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) believe that the ethical considerations used for the study also add to its trustworthiness. Ethical considerations will be discussed later in this chapter.

Triangulation

The idea behind triangulation is to find and develop converging lines of inquiry throughout the research (Yin, 2016). Triangulation of data is a method of triangulation

identified by Yin (2016) for establishing credibility and was used in this study. Triangulation of data is one of the best-known methods (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) for checking accuracy and searching for alternative explanations in qualitative research (Stake, 1995). Triangulation of data was achieved through using multiple methods for collecting data and multiple sources of data.

Data were collected through multiple methods that included documents, questionnaires, and interviews. Documents were the first method of collecting data and consisted of the job descriptions of executive administrator positions that were filled by community colleges within the last 1 to 6 years. Job descriptions were used to establish categories for skills and competencies that community colleges expected of executive administrators. The skills and competencies identified provided the base categories for analyzing data collected from the interviews.

The second method of collecting data was through questionnaires completed by the CHROs of Illinois community colleges and executive administrators who report to the president and had been in their current position from 1 to 6 years. The questionnaires were used to confirm the eligibility of executive administrators for the study, and for collecting data regarding the preparedness of executive administrators for their current position. This was used to triangulate with the data collected during the interviews.

The third method of collecting data was from interviews with executive administrators who started working in their current position within the last 1 to 6 years. The base categories for skills and competencies identified from the job descriptions were used for analyzing data from the interviews.

Using multiple sources was established by collecting data from various types of community colleges and functional areas of the college. Institutions varied in size and locale based on the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. Functional areas of the college included areas such as administrative services, academic affairs, and student affairs. Multiple sources of data were used to analyze the similarities and differences in the data that might exist based on the source.

Validity

Five methods were used to establish validity for the study. The first method for establishing validity was through peer review. Peer review is built into a doctoral dissertation through the dissertation committee (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The dissertation chair and committee members read and commented on the findings and ensured that the study was handled properly using accepted methods for a qualitative study.

A second method for achieving validity is by identifying at the start of the research process any biases and assumptions that exist for the study (Creswell, 2007; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). These need to be identified so that the readers understand any factors that might be influencing the findings of the study (Creswell, 2007). It was assumed in this study that many mid-level administrators are not prepared for moving into executive leadership positions at a community college. Community college CEOs and their executive teams often do not have the "extensive and meaningful professional development in the areas in which they are expected to lead" (AACC, 2013, p. 3). Often mid-level administrators are promoted to their positions because of their technical abilities (Rosser, 2000) and have not been trained or educated in

fields that that include leadership skills. Mid-level administrators that serve in an academic capacity are usually educated in the academic disciplines that they teach.

At the time of this study, the researcher was a mid-level administrator who discussed with peers the limited professional development and advancement opportunities for mid-level administrators. These discussions form a bias with the researcher that many community colleges are not doing enough to develop their aspiring mid-level managers to be able to move into executive-level positions. It is important for the researcher to understand that this bias exists and to avoid the possibility that it is a factor in the analysis of the data.

A third method for achieving validity is through using logs that describe the process used during the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Logs were used to create an audit trail of how data were collected, managed, and analyzed. The logs documented (a) communications with Illinois community colleges and executive administrators, (b) data that were collected, (c) pseudonyms used for participants, and (d) work tasks and decisions.

The fourth method of establishing validity is by ensuring the transferability of the study. To achieve transferability, care must be taken to ensure that the results of the study are highly descriptive (Creswell, 2007; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A rich description of the results of the study is provided in chapter four that allows the reader to determine if the findings can be transferred to another setting. Transferability was also achieved through the representation of the colleges and executive administrators selected for the study. The varied sizes and locations of Illinois community colleges selected provide a good representation of community colleges across the United States, and the results of this study should be able to be applied to many other community colleges. Additionally, the Illinois community colleges selected for the study

represent single-district colleges, which is how most public community colleges are organized (Cohen et al., 2014). The selection of executive administrators was representative of the major functional areas of the college that are typically found even in the smallest community colleges. These include administrative services, academic affairs, and student affairs (Cohen et al., 2014).

The fifth method of establishing validity is with maximum variation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Maximum variation in this study was achieved in two ways. The first was by selecting community colleges that varied in size and locale. Size and locale categories were established by using the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. The second way maximum variation was achieved was by including executive administrators with backgrounds from various functional areas of the college. This allowed for a greater range of readers to find applications for the study.

Ethical Considerations

Maintaining an ethical standard throughout the study process is essential for achieving trustworthiness. Ethical standards are necessary to protect the participants from harm (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), especially when human subjects are involved. Before the study began, approval was obtained from Ferris State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB is responsible for ensuring that the basic rights and welfare of participants are protected when human subjects are involved (Ferris State University, n.d.). The IRB approval form included a description of the study population, study procedures, benefits of the study, how the data will be protected, and consent procedures. IRB approval also required that the researcher completed training through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI). CITI training is designed to provide knowledge and professionalism to those who are conducting

research in the United States (CITI Program, n.d.). Additionally, IRB approval was obtained from any participating community college that required it.

The privacy of participants was respected, and the researcher was sensitive to unexpected and uncomfortable memories that might develop from the interviews. To respect the rights of the participant, it was requested that all participants complete an informed consent form (Appendix E). The document included language that the participant may withdraw from the study at any time. Additionally, all data collected from documents and from interviews were presented in aggregate form with names and places withheld.

LIMITATIONS

The study was limited to include community colleges that operate in a single-college district and where the individual college has its own governing board and administration. Illinois community colleges in a single-college district have a locally elected board of trustees that maintain control over decisions with regard to setting college policies (Illinois Community College Board, 2017a). Missing from the study are community colleges that are part of a multi-college district where policy and strategic decision making are decided at the system level. The management structure of multi-college districts differs from single-college districts, and they can be more complex and formalized (Cohen et al., 2014). The study also does not include community colleges from other states that might operate under different governing structures, funding models, and organizational structures.

The study was also limited in the number of executive administrators who were interviewed. There are an unknown number of executive administrators working at the 48 Illinois community colleges. Only eight were interviewed for the study. Additionally, only

executive administrators were interviewed, and the experiences and challenges faced by mid-level administrators who aspire to move into an executive-level position were not investigated. Only executive administrators with 1 to 6 years' experience on the job were intentionally included in the study. Administrators who have been on the job longer may have very different views of their experiences when first on the job.

RESEARCHER AS RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The researcher was the instrument for collecting and analyzing the data. The researcher's biases, predilections, preferences, and choices makes up the lens through which the researcher sees the study. It is important to understand the nature of the lens because the researcher's worldview may factor into how qualitative research is approached and may affect how data are heard and interpreted (Yin, 2016).

The researcher began his career after completing 3 years of undergraduate architectural studies at the University of Illinois and started working for private companies providing college bookstore services to colleges and universities. From 1980 to 1990, he was the general manager for the college bookstore at five different institutions of higher education, including one community college, three public universities, and one private university. In 1990, he started working as an employee for an Illinois community college, managing their college bookstore, and in 2004 he accepted a position as the manager of auxiliary services responsible for directing auxiliary business units including the bookstore, cafeteria, catering services, vending services, conference center, and central stores. While employed at the college, the researcher completed his Bachelor of Science in Management and Master of Business Administration from National-Louis University. In addition to his work at the college, he has served in leadership

roles with regional and national professional associations and received professional certifications from the National Association of College Stores (NACS) and the National Association of College Auxiliary Services (NACAS).

The research could be affected by inadvertent biases created by the researcher's background and experiences. He is a mid-level manager who aspires to move into a higher-level position and has worked primarily on the administrative side of the college. He is familiar with the leadership gap and challenges faced by leaders who are interested in seeking an executive-level position at a community college. Additionally, the researcher is an avid gamer who is particularly interested in computer games that encourage strategic thinking or provide any type of simulated experience. The researcher had a positive experience with a computer-based business simulation called CapStone (www.capstone.com) while completing his master's degree. The simulation utilized several game elements and required significant teamwork from the participants.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This qualitative study used case study design to explore how community colleges are providing professional development to improve the leadership skills and competencies of executive administrators and what types of scenarios that should be included in the design of leadership development simulations. Participants in the study were selected by a combination of maximum variation and purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling was achieved by using executive administrators who fit the criteria established for the study. Maximum variation was achieved by selecting participants from community colleges with various sizes and geographic

locations. The descriptions of size and geographic locations used were established by the Carnegie Classifications for Institutions of Higher Education.

Data analysis followed Yin's (2016) five phases for analyzing data; compiling, disassembling, and reassembling are included in this chapter. NVivo 11 was used to assist with the data analysis.

Multiple methods were utilized to establish credibility, trustworthiness, and validity in the study. The methods used were triangulation of the data, peer review, identification of researcher biases, audit trails, establishing the transferability of the study, and maximum variation. Trustworthiness was also achieved by maintaining ethical standards throughout the study. Data collected were kept secure, and the identity of participants was withheld from reporting. IRB approval was obtained from Ferris State University.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH RESULTS

INTRODUCTION

This qualitative, multiple case study was completed in two phases and collected data from multiple sources. Some data were collected from questionnaires, but statistical techniques were not applied to those data. The data collected from questionnaires were primarily used to obtain demographic attributes of the Illinois community colleges and executive administrators (participants) involved in the study and to gather data that were triangulated with data collected from interviews. This chapter will summarize the results of the data collected. Tables are used to help summarize and present the data that were collected. The data results and supporting tables will be presented separately for each of the four research questions. The four research questions are:

1. How are Illinois community colleges preparing mid-level administrators for executive-level positions?
2. How are simulations being integrated into Illinois community college administrator leadership development programs?
3. How prepared did Illinois community college executive administrators feel they were when they entered their current position?
4. What scenarios, discussions, and other thematic elements should be included in the design of an Illinois community college administrator leadership development program?

DESCRIPTIVE DATA RESULTS

Data were collected in two phases. The first phase included documents collected from the CHROs and a questionnaire they were requested to complete. The second phase included a pre-interview questionnaire sent to executive administrators, interviews, and field notes.

Data Source – Documents

The documents that were collected consisted of the job descriptions of executive administrators who had been in their current position from 1 to 6 years. The purpose of collecting data from job descriptions was to identify the skills and competencies that Illinois community colleges were requiring of executive administrators and to triangulate with data collected from the interviews. The job descriptions were used to gather data for answering research question 4. Thirty-six job descriptions were received from 10 community colleges. Seven of the 36 were for administrators that had worked less than 1 or more than 6 years in their current position. These seven job descriptions were not used in the study. The 29 eligible job descriptions were received in a digital format and were imported into NVivo for coding. It should be noted that community college C11 did not provide job descriptions for the study but did have an executive administrator who participated in the interview. Community college C3 did not submit job descriptions but did participate in the CHRO questionnaire.

Table 13 summarizes the demographic attributes of the colleges that provided job descriptions. Job descriptions from 12 small, 9 medium, 7 large, and 1 very large community college were received. These job descriptions were from 13 rural, 4 town, 4 city, and 8 suburban community colleges. This represents every category for institutional size and locale except for very small community colleges. Illinois does not have any two-year public community

colleges that meet the criteria for a very small college as defined by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.

Table 13. *Demographics of Illinois Community Colleges That Provided Eligible Job Descriptions for the Study*

College	Number of Job Descriptions	Institution Size[A]	Institution Locale[A]
C1	3	Small	Rural
C2	6	Small	Rural
C4	3	Small	City
C5	3	Medium	Rural
C6	1	Medium	Rural
C7	4	Medium	Town
C8	1	Medium	City
C9	4	Large	Suburban
C10	3	Large	Suburban
C12	1	Very Large	Suburban

[a]Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, 2016).

Table 14 summarizes the title of positions listed on the job descriptions that were submitted for the study. There were eight positions represented. The predominant positions were directors with nine job descriptions and vice presidents with 12 job descriptions.

Table 14. *Summary of Job Description Positions Included in the Study*

Position	Number of Job Descriptions
Chief Fiscal Officer	1
Chief Information Officer	1
Chief of Staff	1
Dean	2
Director	9

Position	Number of Job Descriptions
Executive Director	2
Associate Vice President	1
Vice President	12

Table 15 summarizes the primary functional areas of responsibility for positions listed in the job descriptions that were submitted for the study. There was a wide variety of functional areas represented. Most of the functional areas included Administrative Services/Chief Financial Officer (5), Academic Affairs/Instruction (3), Foundation and Grants (3), Marketing/Public Relations (2), and Student Services (2). Some positions had multiple areas of responsibility reporting to them. These included Academics and Student Services (2); Foundation, Community Relations, and Marketing (1); Foundation, Grants, and Government Relations (1); and Marketing, Public Relations, and Government Relations (1).

Table 15. *Summary of the Functional Areas of Responsibility for Job Descriptions Included in the Study*

Primary Functional Area of Responsibility	Number of Job Descriptions
Academic Affairs/Instruction	3
Academics and Student Services	2
Administrative Services and Chief Financial Officer	5
Facilities	1
Finance and Chief Financial Officer	1
Foundation and Grants	3
Foundation, Grants, and Government Relations	1
Foundation, Community Relations, and Marketing	1
Human Resources	1
Information Technology	1
Institutional Research and Planning	1

Primary Functional Area of Responsibility	Number of Job Descriptions
Legislative Affairs	1
Marketing and Public Relations	2
Marketing, Public Relations, and Government Relations	1
President's Office	1
Student Services	2
Sustainability	1
Workforce Solutions and Continuing Education	1

Data Source – Chief Human Resource Officer Questionnaire

Eleven CHROs participated in a questionnaire that was hosted by SurveyMonkey. The purpose for the CHRO questionnaire was to gather data about the strategies and programs offered by Illinois community colleges that were designed to develop leadership skills of aspiring and current leaders. The questionnaire included questions that provided data for answering research questions 1 and 2. Analytical reports were run using SurveyMonkey's reporting tools, saved as PDF files, and downloaded to the researcher's computer. Seven of the 11 size and locale classifications that include Illinois community colleges were represented with the questionnaire responses. These included small/rural, small/city, medium/rural, medium/town, medium/city, large/suburban, and very large/suburban. Table 16 summarizes the demographics of the colleges that participated in the CHRO questionnaire. It should be noted that Illinois community college C11 did not participate in the CHRO questionnaire but did have an executive administrator who participated in the interview.

Table 16. *The Size and Locale of Illinois Community Colleges Participating in the CHRO Questionnaire*

Classifications with Illinois Community Colleges		Number of Illinois Community Colleges
Size[A]	Locale[A]	
Small	Rural	3
Small	Town	0
Small	City	1
Medium	Rural	2
Medium	Town	1
Medium	Suburban	0
Medium	City	1
Large	Rural	0
Large	Town	0
Large	Suburban	2
Very Large	Suburban	1

[a]Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, 2016).

Data Source – Pre-Interview Questionnaire

The pre-interview questionnaire was used to gather demographic attributes of participating executive administrators and data to answer research question 3. Twenty-seven executive administrators responded to the pre-interview questionnaire that was hosted by SurveyMonkey. Eight of the responses were determined to be ineligible because the administrator was in their current position less than 1 year or more than 6 years. SurveyMonkey's reporting tools were used to run analytical reports that provided the demographic attributes used to purposefully select eight interview participants. The reports were saved as PDF files and downloaded to the researcher's computer. The demographic

attributes for the respondents and selection of participants for the interview were previously discussed and shown in Table 8.

Additional demographic attributes were collected from the questionnaire besides those used to select the interview participants. Table 17 shows the professional information of the participants. The selection of participants provided for a mixed range of positions, functional areas of responsibility, years in the position, and whether promoted from within the institution. Five of the eight participants were vice presidents representing the major functional areas of Administrative Services/Chief Financial Officer, Finance/Chief Financial Officer, Academic Affairs, Academics/Student Development, and Foundation/Student Affairs. Two of eight participants had been promoted from within the college, and all were in their current position from 1 to 6 years.

Table 17. *Current Professional Information of the Interview Participants*

Participant	Participant Position	Functional Area of Responsibility	Promoted From Within	Years in Position
P1	Director	Marketing / Public Relations	No	1
P2	Vice President	Foundation / Student Affairs	Yes	1
P3	Chief of Staff	President's Office	No	5
P4	Vice President	Finance, Chief Financial Officer	No	6
P5	Vice President	Academics / Student Development	Yes	2
P6	Vice President	Academic Affairs	No	3
P7	Executive Director	Foundation / Grants	No	4
P8	Vice President	Administrative Services, Chief Financial Officer	No	3

Table 18 shows the professional background information for the interview participants. The table identifies the participant's previous position, functional area of the college they

worked in, their degree fields of study, and highest degree achieved. Previous positions included one participant who did not work in higher education, one who was an interim president, and one who was a vice president. The remaining participants were either a dean, director, or controller. Five participants had a master's, one had completed doctoral coursework (ABD), and two had a doctoral degree. When compared to Table 17, this information can be used to identify any relationships between a participant's current position and their background experience. Except for participant P1, every participant previously worked in a functional area of higher education that was related to their current position.

Table 18: *Professional Backgrounds of the Interview Participants*

Participant	Previous Areas of College Worked In	Previous Position	Highest Degree Achieved	Degree Field of Study
P1	Did not work in higher education	Did not work in Higher Education	Master's	Business Management Marketing
P2	Student Affairs	Associate Vice President	Master's	Education
P3	Administrative Services	Interim President	Master's	Science Management
P4	Administrative Services Business Office	Controller	Master's	Accounting Psychology Pastoral Ministry
P5	Academic Affairs Administrative Services Continuing Education Student Affairs Workforce Development	Dean	Doctorate	Education
P6	Academic Affairs	Dean	Doctorate	English
P7	Institutional Advancement	Director	Master's	Technology

Participant	Previous Areas of College Worked In	Previous Position	Highest Degree Achieved	Degree Field of Study
P8	Administrative Services	Vice President	Doctoral coursework (ABD)	Business Education

Table 19 summarizes the demographic attributes of each participant that includes gender, race/ethnicity, age, years in their current position, and highest degree achieved. Five participants were female and three were male. Six participants were White/Caucasian and two were Black/African American. All but one participant were over 40 years of age, and two were over 60 years of age.

Table 19. *Demographic Attributes of the Interview Participants*

Participant	Gender	Race / Ethnicity	Age	Years in Position	Highest Degree Achieved
P1	Female	Black / African American	30 – 39 years	1	Master's
P2	Male	White / Caucasian	Over 60 years	1	Master's
P3	Male	Black / African American	40 – 49 years	5	Master's
P4	Female	White / Caucasian	40 – 49 years	6	Master's
P5	Female	White / Caucasian	40 – 49 years	2	Doctorate
P6	Female	White / Caucasian	Over 60 years	3	Doctorate
P7	Female	White / Caucasian	50 – 59 years	4	Master's
P8	Male	White / Caucasian	40 – 49 years	3	Doctoral course- work (ABD)

RESEARCH RESULTS

Research Question 1: Illinois Community College Leadership Development

How are Illinois community colleges preparing mid-level administrators for executive-level positions?

The data collected relevant to research question 1 was designed to answer how Illinois community colleges were preparing mid-level administrators for executive-level positions. The only source of data to answer research question 1 was collected from the questionnaire that was sent to the CHROs. It should be noted that Illinois community college C11 did not participate in the CHRO questionnaire but did have an executive administrator who participated in the interview.

Research Question 1 Results – Data Source: Questionnaire

The questionnaire asked CHROs what types of leadership development programs were supported by the college with full or partial reimbursement. All responding CHROs indicated that their colleges provided at least some support for leadership development. All community colleges supported sending administrators to professional conferences, and most supported administrators who attended national and regional leadership institutes. All but one of the colleges provided support to attend degree programs at colleges or universities. The question was not structured to make any distinctions between mid-level and executive-level administrators. Table 20 summarizes the type of external leadership development programs that Illinois community colleges support.

Table 20. *Summary of the Types of External Leadership Development Programs Supported by Participant Illinois Community Colleges*

Type of Leadership Program	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C12
	S	S	S	S	M	M	M	M	L	L	VL
Senior leadership institute hosted by national Association	X	X		X		X		X		X	X
Senior leadership institute hosted by regional association	X	X	X	X		X		X		X	X
Degree programs at colleges or universities	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Commercial leadership seminars		X				X				X	X
Professional conferences	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
None											
Other											

Note. S=Small, M=Medium, L=Large, VL=Very Large.

The CHRO questionnaire asked if the college offered its own leadership development (grow-your-own) programs designed for mid-level managers and administrators. Five of 11 colleges responded that they did offer their own programs. It should be noted that all the medium-sized colleges did not offer grow-your-own leadership development programs. Otherwise, the colleges offering grow-your-own leadership programs represented a mix of size and locales. Table 21 summarizes which of the participating Illinois community colleges offered grow-your-own leadership development programs.

Table 21. *Summary of Participant Illinois Community Colleges Offering Grow-Your-Own Leadership Development Programs*

Participant College	Size of Institution[A]	Locale of Institution[A]	Grow-Your-Own Leadership Program	
			Yes	No
C1	Small	Rural		X
C2	Small	Rural	X	
C3	Small	Rural	X	
C4	Small	City		X
C5	Medium	Rural		X
C6	Medium	Rural		X
C7	Medium	Town		X
C8	Medium	City		X
C9	Large	Suburban	X	
C10	Large	Suburban	X	
C12	Very Large	Suburban	X	

[a]Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, 2016).

The CHRO questionnaire asked participants what other strategies the institution engaged in to support the development of current and future leaders. All but two of the participating Illinois community colleges offered some type of support for leadership development other than grow-your-own leadership development programs or financial support to attend off-campus leadership programs. These included job shadowing, mentoring, skills roadmaps, succession planning, career planning and goal setting, and leadership capabilities assessments. Mentoring was the most common form of leadership development supported, which was provided by just over half of the participating community colleges. Many of the participating community colleges offered either career planning and goal setting or leadership capabilities assessments for their leaders. Job shadowing was the least common form of

leadership development utilized. One college stated that other programs they offered included bringing in outside facilitators and holding retreats. Another college stated that they conducted a leadership immersion program targeted for specialists and professionals. None of the colleges utilized retention programs for leaders. Table 22 summarizes the types of internal leadership development programs that Illinois community colleges engage in other than grow-your-own programs.

Table 22. *Summary of Types of Internal Leadership Development Programs That Participant Illinois Community Colleges Engage in Other Than Grow-Your-Own Programs*

Leadership Development Program	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C12
	S	S	S	S	M	M	M	M	L	L	VL
Job Shadowing					X						
Mentoring	X	X	X		X		X			X	
Skills Roadmap		X							X		
Succession Planning	X								X	X	
Career Planning Goal Setting	X	X							X	X	
Leadership Capabilities Assessment	X		X			X					X
Retention Programs for Leaders											
None				X				X			
Other									X		X

Note. S=Small, M=Medium, L=Large, VL=Very Large.

Analysis of Research Question 1

The data collected through the CHRO questionnaire indicate that Illinois community colleges provide a broad range of leadership development opportunities for administrators. The

number and types of programs supported vary with each community college. The findings discovered that medium-sized Illinois community colleges tend to offer fewer types of on-campus leadership development programs than smaller or larger community colleges. The analysis of the data did not reveal a reason for why smaller and larger community colleges offered more leadership development programs.

Illinois community colleges are providing support for both internal and external leadership development programs; however, support for external leadership programs is more prevalent. All participating Illinois community colleges provided support for administrators to attend one or more types of leadership development programs. Two participating Illinois community colleges indicated that they do not provide support for any internal leadership development programming, while all colleges provided external support for at least attending professional conferences. The broad range and number of professional development programs offered by Illinois community colleges seem to indicate the importance that is placed on developing leaders. The research did not include what factors contributed to the number and types of leadership development programs supported by Illinois community colleges, or why external programs were more prevalent than internal.

The data that were collected from the CHROs indicated that about half of the participating Illinois community colleges offered some type of grow-your-own leadership development program. The data indicated that the size and locale of the college do not appear to be factors for why they did or did not offer a program. However, it was noted that none of the medium-sized community colleges that participated has a grow-your-own leadership development program. Small, large, and very large community colleges with rural and suburban

locales offered grow-your-own leadership development programs, while the medium-sized colleges with rural, town, and city locales did not. The data collected do not provide any indication as to why this phenomenon exists.

Research Question 2: Leadership Simulations in Illinois Community Colleges

How are simulations being integrated into Illinois community college administrator leadership development programs?

Research question 2 was designed to answer whether Illinois community colleges used simulations in their leadership development programs. The CHRO questionnaire was the only source of data used to answer research question 2.

Research Question 2 Results – Data Source: Questionnaire

CHRO questionnaire participants who identified that their college offered grow-your-own leadership development programs were asked whether the programs made use of simulations. If the response was yes, they were then asked whether the simulation was purchased, developed in-house, or a combination of both. Five of the participants responded that their colleges provided grow-your-own leadership development programs. One of the five colleges made use of simulations in its grow-your-own leadership program, and that college developed the simulation in-house.

Participants were asked if they would be interested in using a simulation as part of a leadership develop program. Five participants responded that they were interested in the possibility of using simulations, four responded “no,” and two did not respond. One participant who responded “no” stated that they needed more information about simulations. Table 23

summarizes the participants' responses for using simulations in their grow-your-own leadership development programs.

Table 23. *Summary of CHRO Questionnaire Responses to the Use of Grow-Your-Own Leadership Programs and Use of Simulations at Illinois Community Colleges*

College	Grow-Your-Own Leadership Program	Program Uses Simulations	Developed In-house or Purchased?	Interested in Simulations?
C1	No	n/a	n/a	Yes
C2	Yes	No	n/a	Yes
C3	Yes	No	n/a	No
C4	No	n/a	n/a	No
C5	No	n/a	n/a	Yes
C6	No	n/a	n/a	Yes
C7	No	n/a	n/a	No, Need more info
C8	No	n/a	n/a	No
C9	Yes	No	n/a	No response
C10	Yes	No	n/a	Yes
C12	Yes	Yes	In-house	No response

Analysis of Research Question 2

The data collected from the CHRO questionnaire indicated that simulations are not used by most Illinois community colleges for internal grow-your-own leadership development programs. Responses to the questionnaire did not determine why simulations were not being used; however, the only Illinois community college using a leadership simulation out of the 11 colleges that participated in the study was a very large community college located in a suburban locale. It is possible that the size and location of the institution may be factors. It should be noted that one CHRO responding to a follow-up question indicated an interest in using them but needed more information.

Although the data indicate that there are few community colleges using leadership simulations, the responses from 6 out of 11 CHROs indicated that there is some interest in either learning more about them or including them as part of grow-your-own leadership development programs. Additionally, follow-up questions asked during the interviews with executive administrators indicated that 4 out of 8 had participated in at least one simulation in the past. The administrators who had participated in simulations indicated that they felt they are useful in helping to prepare leaders.

Research Question 3: Executive Administrator Leadership Preparedness

How prepared did Illinois community college executive administrators feel they were when they entered their current position?

The data collected relevant to research question 3 was designed to discover how prepared Illinois executive administrators felt they were when they first started their current position. Data from the pre-interview questionnaire and interviews were used to answer research question 3.

Research Question 3 Results – Data Source 1: Interviews

Participants were asked during the interview if they felt that they were prepared for the current position they were in. The results of this question are displayed in Table 24. One participant clearly stated they were not prepared for the position. Three felt they were prepared before starting the position, but soon after starting discovered there were some parts of the job they were not prepared for. Four participants felt they were either prepared or very prepared for the position.

Table 24. *How Prepared Participants Felt They Were for Their Current Position*

Level of Preparedness	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Not prepared		X						
Thought I was prepared, but not	X		X			X		
Prepared							X	
Very prepared				X	X			X

The relationship between the size of a community college and the level of participant preparedness was explored to determine if size was a factor in preparedness. Table 25 summarizes the relationship between the size and locale of a community college and the level of preparedness of the participant. The participant who was not prepared for the position worked in a very large community college. Three participants who were partially prepared worked in either a small, medium, or large community college. The prepared participant worked in a medium sized community college. The three participants who were very prepared worked in either a small, medium, or large community college.

Table 25. *Summary of the Relationship Between the Size of a Community College and the Level of Preparedness of Participants (Shown as Number of Participants)*

	Size of Community College[A]			
	Small	Medium	Large	Very Large
Not prepared				1
Partially prepared	1	1	1	
Prepared		1		
Very prepared	1	1	1	

[a]Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, 2016)

The relationship between the locale of a community college and the level of preparedness of the participant was explored to determine if the locale was a factor in preparedness. Table 26 summarizes the relationship between the locale of the community college and the preparedness of the participants. The participant who was not prepared for the position worked in a suburban community college. Two of the participants who were partially prepared worked in rural community colleges, and one worked in a suburban community college. The participant who was prepared for the position worked in a town community college. All three of the participants who were very prepared worked in city community colleges.

Table 26. *Summary of the Relationship Between the Locale of a Community College and the Level of Preparedness of Participants (Shown as Number of Participants)*

	Locale of Community College[A]			
	Rural	Town	Suburban	City
Not prepared			1	
Partially prepared	2		1	
Prepared		1		
Very prepared				3

[a]Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, 2016).

Participant P1 was a marketing executive at their institution and was previously employed outside of higher education. The participant indicated that their background in sales and marketing provided them with the confidence that they had the skills to do the job. The participant stated that they soon discovered that the lack of experience in higher education did not provide a good understanding of what marketing in an educational environment entailed.

> Based off of just training and a lot of frame works that I think I had from private sector, I thought that I had, keyword thought, I thought that I had at least some semblance of understanding of the structure that needed to be put in place. Now, while I didn't necessarily have a strong understanding of what the marketing environment looked like or what my position entailed . . . I thought I had the process/procedural aspect of it at least somewhat structured out in my mind. So, did I think I was really prepared? Not completely, but I did feel like I had definitely some qualities that made me have the ability rather to grow within the position. (P1)

Participant P3 was employed by another Illinois community college before starting in the current position. Their experience at the previous institution provided the technical knowledge needed for the job. That experience did not prepare them for the cultural differences between the two institutions.

> I think definitely I was prepared for the job description, but I will tell you that I was not prepared for the culture. (P3)

Participant P6 was hired from a lower-level position at a community college in another state. While the participant felt that the experience gained as a dean at the previous institution provided the preparation needed to move into the role of a vice president, it did not prepare the participant for the level of responsibility that came with the vice president position.

> I knew that the level of problem solving would increase. What I didn’t understand was the degree of culpability that would show up on my desk. So, I knew that by the time a problem got to my desk, it would be a big problem. I just didn’t understand how big some of these problems could be. (P6)

Participant P2 identified that they were not prepared for the position. They were promoted from within the institution and given additional responsibilities in a functional area of the college that they had never worked in. They cited their inexperience with the new responsibilities as the reason for not being prepared for the position.

> I have never spent a day in [function area]. So, I wasn't prepared to be vice president for [function area] at all. (P2)

Table 27 summarizes the level of preparedness of interview participants when they first started their current position and their professional backgrounds. Participants who were prepared mentioned that their education, previous experience, or having a good mentor in their previous position is what prepared them for the current position. Participants who were partially prepared stated that they were confident that they were prepared going into the position but identified some aspect of the job that they were not ready for after starting in the position.

Table 27. *Summary of Participants' Professional Background Information and Level of Preparedness When Starting Their Current Position*

	Level of Preparedness When Starting Position	Promoted Within	Previous Position	Functional Area of Responsibility	
				Current	Previous
P1	Partially prepared	No	Not Higher Education	Marketing / Public Relations	Sales - Not in Higher Education
P2	Not prepared	Yes	Assoc. Vice President	Foundation / Student Affairs	Student Affairs
P3	Partially prepared	No	Interim President	President's Office	Administrative Services
P4	Very prepared	No	Controller	Finance / Chief Financial Officer	Administrative Services Business Office
P5	Very prepared	Yes	Dean	Academics / Student Development	Academic Affairs Administrative Services Continuing Education Student Affairs Workforce Development
P6	Partially prepared	No	Dean	Academic Affairs	Academic Affairs
P7	Prepared	No	Director	Foundation / Grants	Institutional Advancement

	Level of Preparedness When Starting Position	Promoted Within	Previous Position	Functional Area of Responsibility	
				Current	Previous
P8	Very prepared	No	Vice President	Administrative Services / Chief Financial Officer	Administrative Services

Table 28 summarizes data collected from the pre-interview questionnaire and interviews regarding how prepared interview participants felt they were, the types of leadership development programs taken, and how helpful those programs were in preparing them for their current position. All but one of the participants took multiple types of leadership development programs. One participant who reported attending only a degree program in management or leadership felt very prepared for the position. One participant who reported they attended four types of leadership programs felt prepared for the position. The remaining six participants each attended two types of leadership programs, and their preparedness ranged from not prepared to very prepared. All but one of the participants felt that attending one or more types of leadership programs helped them prepare for the position. Attending professional association leadership sessions (6) and degree programs in management or leadership (4) were the most common types of programs attended. One participant who reported being neutral on the benefit of leadership programs attended professional association leadership sessions and an on-campus institutional leadership program.

Table 28. *Summary of Participant Level of Preparedness When Starting Current Position, Leadership Development Programs Taken, and How Helpful Those Programs Were in Preparing Them for the Position*

	Level of Preparedness When Starting Position	Leadership Development Programs Taken	How Helpful for Preparation of current Position (1 low, 7 High)
P1	Partially prepared	• Professional Association Leadership Sessions • National/Regional Senior Executive Programs	6
P2	Not prepared	• Professional Association Leadership Sessions • National/Regional Senior Executive Programs	5
P3	Partially prepared	• AACC Executive Leadership Suite • Degree Program in Management, Leadership	7
P4	Very prepared	• Professional Association Leadership Sessions • Other Leadership programs	5
P5	Very prepared	• Professional Association Leadership Sessions • Degree Program in Management, Leadership	6
P6	Partially prepared	• Professional Association Leadership Sessions • On-campus Institutional Leadership Program	4
P7	Prepared	• Professional Association Leadership Sessions • Degree Program in Management, Leadership • On-campus Institutional Leadership Program • Commercial Leadership Program	7
P8	Very prepared	• Degree Program in Management, Leadership	5

Participants were then asked what would have helped or did help prepare them for the position. The responses received for this question can be divided into what would have helped or did help before starting the current position, and what would have helped or did help after starting the current position. Participants indicated that their previous experience (4), formal education (2), and technical skills training (2) helped prepare them prior to starting the position. Additionally, participants indicated that the professional relationships (2) they built along with the social and interpersonal skills (2) they developed prior to starting the position also helped prepare them. Most participants (5) indicated that networking and professional relationships helped them after starting the position. Participants also indicated that having a mentor (3) and learning the organization and its culture (3) helped them after starting the position. Table 29 summarizes the responses to the question of what would have or did help prepare participants for their current position.

Table 29. *Summary of Responses Indicating What Would Have or Did Help Prepare Participants for Their Current Position*

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
	Before Starting the Current Position							
Formal Education				X				X
Mentoring				X				
Networking, relationship building	X				X			
Previous experience		X		X	X	X		
Social, interpersonal					X		X	
Technical skills training (budgeting, legislative)	X					X		
	After Starting the Current Position							
Learn the organization and culture	X	X	X					
Mentoring	X		X		X			

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Networking, relationship building	X		X	X			X	X
Technical skills training (shared governance)	X							

Participant P5 commented on how leaders develop skills and competencies by experiencing situations in their previous positions.

> I think that really, again, as you develop progressively through your job that's your training. I mean you have that conflict; you have the decision making; you're getting additional responsibilities and broader oversight. And so, I think as you're just putting those things into practice, to me that's really the way in which you develop as a leader mainly. (P5)

The necessary skills and competencies were not always provided from previous positions. Participant P6 commented on the need to train specific technical skills that would have helped them in the current position but were not part of their functional responsibilities in the previous position.

> I could have used some basic labor law training, I think. I could have used some basic legislative background training. Compliance training, those types of things. So, a lot of legal type of things, I think would have been very helpful to know. (P6)

Relationship building, networking, and good social skills were identified by several participants as being essential for a leadership position. Participant P5 commented on how many current leaders have not developed this skill.

> It's just much more how you interact with people is really what it comes down to. And it's just amazing how many people in leadership positions are lacking that skill. (P5)

Participants P1, P3, P7, and P8 supported the importance of relationship building and social skills when in a leadership position. Participant P3 stressed the importance of building internal relationships with others in the organization to help learn about the institution.

> I've made an intentional effort to kind of make connections, attend meetings, and just go to lunch with folks. (P3)

Participant P8 also stressed the importance of quickly building relationships with others. Relationships can be just as important when formed outside the organization as it is to build them within.

> Once you're in that role, quickly try to build a network with other vice presidents, CFOs, whatever the title is, through[out] the state. Fortunately, in Illinois, we have [the] Illinois Community College Chief Financial Officers Organization. [State] has a similar organization and they meet in-person two, three times a year. You've got the listserv, emails where you can say, "Hey, what does anybody do about this?" and get feedback. But quickly, you need to be able to ask for help when you don't know something and don't worry about the fact that you don't know it. You've got to be able to ask for help and, I guess, rely on the other professionals, whether it's those that worked for you or whether you need to bring in someone from the outside to give you some help, or help you understand something, or help implement something, or whatever it might be. (P8)

The importance of relationships recurred often during the interviews as a source for obtaining advice and feedback.

> Other things that prepared me would probably be again largely listening to those people, whether through that program or just in general who have gone through something similar. (P5)

Participant P7 stressed the importance of relationship building from the viewpoint of someone in the position of Institutional Advancement.

> You learn the importance of making friends, and networking, and keeping those. A lot of people will network and campaign and do all those things, but they never maintain the relationships. . . . So, the networking part is something that probably has served me well. (P7)

As a follow-up question, participants were asked what professional development programs they took helped prepare them for their current position. All participants that responded stated that attending conferences and seminars offered through their professional associations helped them. Participant P4 stated that being active in a leadership role in a

professional association is what helped them. Other participant responses included formal education (2), leadership institutes (2), training seminars (1), and commercial leadership programs (1). Participant P6 did not respond to the question. Table 30 summarizes participant responses.

Table 30. *Types of Professional Development Programs That Helped Prepare Participants for Their Position*

Professional Development Program	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Active participation in professional assoc.				X				
Commercial leadership programs							X	
Formal education					X		X	
Leadership institutes					X		X	
Professional association conferences	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Training seminars			X					

Research Question 3 Results – Data Source 2: Pre-interview Questionnaire

The data gathered from the pre-interview questionnaire include responses from 19 survey participants, which includes the eight interview participants. The pre-interview questionnaire asked how well prepared participants were for their current position. The responses shown in Table 31 indicate that 15 participants were quite well prepared for their current position. Four participants were neutral in their response, indicating they were neither prepared nor unprepared for the position. None of the participants felt they were not prepared, or poorly prepared, for the job.

Table 31. *Summary of How Pre-interview Questionnaire Participants Felt They Were Prepared for Their Current Position*

	1 NOT PREPARED	2	3	4	5	6	7 PREPARED
Number of Responses	0	0	0	4	5	4	6

Questionnaire respondents were asked to select from a list the leadership skills development programs they had taken. The most common responses indicated that 10 participants attended professional association leadership sessions and 11 indicated they had taken a degree program in management, leadership, or administration. Other responses included six participants attending national or regional professional association senior executive leadership programs, six attending on-campus leadership programs, one attending the AACC Executive Leadership Suite, and one attending a commercial leadership seminar. Four participants indicated they had not taken any leadership development programs. Table 32 summarizes the respondents' responses to the number of development programs they participated in.

Table 32. *Respondent Participation in Leadership Skills Development Programs*

TYPE OF LEADERSHIP PROGRAM – MULTIPLE RESPONSES POSSIBLE	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
AACC Executive Leadership Suite	1
National or regional professional association senior exec. program	6
Professional association conference leadership sessions	10
Commercial leadership seminars	1
Degree program in management, leadership, or administration	11
On-campus institutional leadership program	6
Other leadership programs	1
None	4

While they did not indicate if their participation in the leadership programs preceded their current position, they did indicate how well the programs prepared them for the current position. The responses indicated that 13 participants felt that the leadership programs helped them prepare for their current position. Two participants indicated that the programs neither prepared nor did not prepare them. Table 33 summarizes the responses.

Table 33. *Summary of How Well Participants Felt Leadership Development Programs Helped Them Prepare for Their Current Position*

	1 NOT PREPARED	2	3	4	5	6	7 PREPARED
Number of Responses	0	0	0	2	5	3	5

Analysis of Research Question 3

The data collected from the interviews with participating Illinois executive administrators consistently reinforced that participants felt they were prepared when they first started the position. The use of the term "felt" should be noted, since some participants thought they were prepared before starting the position but realized after starting that there were some aspects of the position that they were not ready for. Three interview participants realized that they were not fully prepared after being in the position. Only one interview participant felt they were not prepared for the position. There was insufficient data to determine if the size and locale of a community college were factors in how prepared participants were.

The data collected from the pre-interview questionnaire corroborate with data collected from the interviews. Fifteen of 19 participants identified that they were prepared for their current position. Responses from the remaining four participants were more neutral and did

not provide a strong response for being either prepared or not prepared. The questionnaire did not inquire further about how participants felt after they entered the position.

The responses, linked to the participant's professional background, indicate a connection between their previous background and their feelings of preparedness. The responses from participants who felt they were prepared for the position primarily attributed this to their previous work experience, education, or training. For example, half of the participants stated that previous experience would have or did help them prepare for their current position. Some participants stated that they gained experience through working at smaller institutions in the same or similar position. These participants' preparedness for the current position could be a result of being exposed to the soft skills (i.e., problem solving, strategic thinking, communications, etc.) and technical knowledge required by the previous position; however, it may not have been at the same level of complexity that might be seen at larger institutions. For example, three participants who realized they were not as prepared for the position as originally thought stated that they were confident that their previous position provided them with the technical skills required for the job. As stated in the interviews, their previous positions were at different types of institutions, from outside of higher education, or from lower-level positions. As a result, they were less prepared for other aspects of the job that required soft skills and competencies.

Interview participants consistently identified four things that help with being prepared for an executive-level position. These included (a) technical training in certain areas of knowledge not used in previous positions, (b) understanding the organization and its culture, (c) networking and relationship building, and (d) having a mentor. Participants stated they had

some difficulties with the technical skills that were not necessary with their previous position. The participants indicated that some technical training in these areas would have been beneficial in preparing them for the job. The skills and competencies the participants identified where training would be helpful included working knowledge of (a) legal and basic legislative matters, (b) compliance, (c) fund management, and (d) labor negotiations.

Several participants identified that understanding the organization and its culture is essential to work effectively in an organization. The participants stated that knowing who to talk to for getting answers, how decisions are made, and where to go to for information is a big part of learning the organization and being effective in the position. Participants identified that networking, being able to build relationships, or having a mentor plays a big part in gaining an understanding of the organization and how it operates. For example, participant P3 stated:

> Take out the time, potential time, to understand the culture, get to know the people, and get to know the community. (P3)

The responses from the participants indicate that being able to talk to others on campus to identify things that typically are not covered in a procedure manual or employee orientation program is necessary to learn about how to get some things done. The ability to build relationships with peers and other workers to tap into their experiences can make it easier to achieve a goal. For example, participant P1 stated:

> Other things that prepared me would probably be largely listening to those people, whether through that program or just in general who have gone through something similar. (P1)

To summarize, executive administrators were prepared to enter their current position. The experience received from their previous position, education, and training helped prepare them. After starting the position, some realized that there were certain parts of the job they

were not prepared for. Executive administrators recommend mid-level administrators interested in an executive-level position should (a) receive technical training in areas typically not a part of their current position but necessary for an executive administrator, (b) have an understanding the organization and its culture, (c) build relationships with peers and other workers, and (d) have a mentor.

Research Question 4: Suggested Scenarios for Leadership Development Programs

What scenarios, discussions, and other thematic elements should be included in the design of an Illinois community college administrator leadership development program?

Data regarding research question 4 were collected to identify the scenarios, discussions, and thematic elements that could be included in an Illinois community college executive administrator leadership development program. Job descriptions collected from participating Illinois community colleges and the interviews were used to collect data regarding research question 4.

Research Question 4 Results – Data Source 1: Job Descriptions

Job descriptions were collected to gain an understanding of the skills and competencies that Illinois community colleges wanted executive administrators to have. The themes related to skills and competencies that were identified from the job descriptions served as a base for coding, or categorizing, the data collected from the interviews. Identifying the skills and competencies from job descriptions will assist in identifying the types of scenarios, discussions, and thematic elements to include in a simulation that prepares aspiring mid-level administrators for executive-level positions.

Articles written by the American Association of Community Colleges (2013), Ebrahimi Mehrabani and Azmi Mohamad (2015), Leslie (2009), Nevarez and Wood (2010), and Plinske and Packard (2010) identified leadership skills and competencies that are critical for executive leaders to possess to be successful in their positions. These skills and competencies provided a base of 28 a priori themes that were used for coding data during a contextual analysis of the job descriptions. During the analysis, 28 emergent themes were added to the a priori themes. This resulted in a total of 56 tentative themes that were identified and used for coding. The 56 tentative a priori and emergent themes were combined to nine themes after reviewing them for similarities and redundancies. Similar or redundant tentative themes became sub-themes within the nine themes. The data continued to be refined within the sub-themes during the analysis. This ultimately resulted in a total of 58 sub-themes that were classified into seven a priori and two emergent themes.

Table 34 displays the a priori and emergent sub-themes that are included in the nine themes. The seven a priori themes included (a) communications skills, (b) community college mission, (c) leading people, (d) problems-solving skills, (e) strategic thinker, (f) technical skills, and (g) personal values and characteristics. The two emergent themes included (a) management skills, and (b) policy and governance. There were no descriptive data from the job descriptions that could be coded to six of the a priori sub-themes. These included (a) balancing personal and work life, (b) dependable, (c) doing what it takes, (d) empowerment, (e) good listener, and (f) quick learner.

Table 34. *Summary of the Themes and Related Sub-Themes for Skills and Competencies Identified from Illinois Community College Job Descriptions*

THEME	RELATED A PRIORI SUB-THEMES	RELATED EMERGENT SUB-THEMES
Communication skills	Communications, articulate Interpersonal communications Good listener	Public speaking
Community college mission	Passion for education and community college	
Leading people	Leading people Collaboration Teamwork Employee development Inspiring commitment Managing change Motivating others Participative management Vision Empowerment	Negotiation skills Putting people at ease Relationship building Social and interpersonal skills Tactful and political Establishing culture
Management skills (E)		Managing processes/people Planning Organizational skills Flexible Project management Time management
Policy and governance (E)		Policymaking and governance
Problem-solving skills	Creativity Problem solving Resourcefulness	Analytical Decision making Innovative
Strategic thinker	Strategic planning Understanding organizational strategy	
Technical skills	Institutional finance Fundraising and resource development Laws and legal issues Technology training	Human resources Collective bargaining Education Experience in education Marketing skills Technical experience
Personal values and characteristics	Good moral character Trust Dependable Doing what it takes Balancing personal and work life Quick learner	Detail oriented Pro-active Focused Results oriented Self-starter Service oriented

Note. (E) = Emergent theme.

All the participating community colleges had job descriptions that included the ability to lead people, manage, solve problems, have knowledge of policymaking and governance, and have the technical skills related to the position. Communication skills were included in the job descriptions for 9 of 10 community colleges, knowledge of the community college mission for 5 of 10, strategic thinker for 8 of 10, and personal values and characteristics for 7 of 10.

Research Question 4 Results – Data Source 2: Interviews

Participants of the interviews were asked what their biggest challenge was when they first entered their current position. Table 35 provides a summary of the notable challenging situations that each participant executive administrator faced.

Table 35. *Summary of Challenging Situations That Participant Executive Administrators Faced When First Entering the Job*

Participating Executive Administrator	Challenge Faced
P1	"So I think probably communication was also kind of a piece that I had to get used to because how I would communicate in the past wasn't necessarily the same way that I can communicate here."
P2	"And my sense was they were getting a bad rap because no one was out there telling the community about what student affairs did. And so I did a lot of talking, a lot of bragging, a lot of showing examples of what happened in career services."
P3	"I think the biggest challenge for me was the, I guess I would say again, it's maybe the culture."
P4	"Probably the first challenge was reporting directly to the president and not having a buffer. That caused a lot of stress because I felt a little more pressure than usual to make sure I was sharing the right information."
P5	"The most logical successor would've been the [position] for the interim position and [he or she] wasn't selected for it and didn't react well at all. And to be honest that has been a struggle from then until now."

Participating Executive Administrator	Challenge Faced
P6	"And writing a big document wasn't the challenge, it was that I was new to the institution, and I just didn't know a whole lot. The process of putting that together helped me learn the institution."
P7	"I think my biggest challenge at [community college] was really identifying the alumni that I really need to establish strong relationships with."
P8	"But then it's getting to know your direct reports and strengths and weaknesses of your team."

The challenging situations that participants faced were coded using the same nine themes identified from the coded job descriptions. Two emergent themes emerged from the interviews that were then added to the original nine themes: (a) being culturally adaptable, and (b) understanding the college. The themes most often identified with the challenges faced included being culturally adaptable (5), understanding the college (5), and leading people (5). The challenges faced also included problem-solving (4), technical skills (3), communication skills (2), management skills (2), community college mission (1), strategic thinker (1), and personal values and characteristics (1). The theme of policy and governance was not identified in any of the challenging situations. Table 36 summarizes the themes identified from the interviews that were related to the biggest challenges that participant administrators faced when they first entered the job.

Table 36. *Summary of Leadership Skills and Competencies Identified by Participants During Interviews Related to the Biggest Challenges They Faced*

THEME	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Communication skills	X	X						
Community college mission		X						
Leading people	X	X	X		X			X
Management skills	X					X		
Policy and governance								
Problem-solving skills	X	X		X				X
Strategic thinker		X						
Technical skills	X	X			X			
Personal values, characteristics		X						
Culturally adaptable (E)	X		X	X			X	X
Understanding the college (E)	X	X				X	X	X

Note. (E) = Emergent theme.

Participants were asked what skills would have helped them prepare for the challenges they faced. Knowing what these skills are will help to identify the skills and competencies that need to be included in a leadership development simulation. The themes identified most by participants included leading people (6), communication skills (4), management skills (3), and personal values and characteristics (3). The themes of policy and governance, problem solving, and understanding the college were not identified by participants as skills that would have helped prepare them for the challenges faced. Table 37 summarizes the skills that would have helped participants prepare for the challenges of the position.

Table 37. *Summary of Leadership Skills Identified by Participants That Would Have Helped Prepare Them for the Challenges They Faced*

THEME	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Communication skills			X	X			X	X
Community college mission	X							
Leading people		X		X	X	X	X	X
Management skills	X				X	X		
Policy and governance								
Problem-solving skills								
Strategic thinker							X	
Technical skills	X						X	
Personal values, characteristics		X			X		X	
Culturally adaptable (E)				X				X
Understanding the college (E)								

Note. (E) = Emergent theme.

Participants were asked what advice they would give to someone new in the position. Knowing the skills and competencies related to the advice that would be provided may indicate what needs to be included in a leadership development simulation. Two additional themes emerged from the interview when this question was asked. These included being risk adverse and self-awareness. The advice provided from every participant included the theme of leading people. Other themes related to advice for someone new to the position included having technical skills related to the position (4), knowing the community college mission (3), communication skills (2), problem-solving skills (2), and being self-aware (2). Personal values and characteristics, being culturally adaptable, and understanding the college were not identified with the advice participants would give. Table 38 summarizes the leadership skills

and competencies related to the advice that participants would give to someone new in the position.

Table 38. *Summary of Leadership Skills and Competencies Related to Advice That Participants Would Give to Someone New in the Position*

THEME	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Communication skills					X	X		
Community college mission			X	X		X		
Leading people	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Management skills				X				
Policy and governance	X							
Problem-solving skills	X				X			
Strategic thinker						X		
Technical skills			X	X			X	X
Personal values, characteristics								
Culturally adaptable (E)								
Understanding the college (E)								
Risk adverse (E)	X							
Self-awareness (E)				X	X			

Note. (E) = Emergent theme.

Participants were asked what scenarios or situations they would include in a leadership development simulation. Understanding what is important to participants can assist simulation designers with the types of situations to include in a leadership development simulation. The respondents came up with multiple situations that are summarized below. These are situations that would present a challenge for many executive administrators and would require multiple skills and competencies to deal with them.

The two recommended scenarios that follow create confrontational situations that require simulation attendees to use the skills and competencies related to the themes of problem solving and the ability to lead people. The sub-theme of being tactful and political would be necessary to resolve the situation recommended by participant P5 and would require technical knowledge related to human resource policies and union contracts.

> . . . would be the things like I've mentioned where let's say you have a dean who frequently kind of violates contractual issues but kind of feels like they're doing the right thing. They're riding the grey area. Maybe they don't always follow seniority. (P5)

Participant P6 provided a situation that would require the simulation participant to collect the facts about a situation and make a decision that might not be favorable to the one or more parties involved. This case may require the ability to tactfully and politically work with multiple stakeholders to negotiate a solution.

> I had one recently where the instructor really suspected that a student hadn't written [or] hadn't done his own work. And he couldn't document how somebody else might have done the work. . . . The instructor failed the student, and the dean backed the instructor. But when it got up here, I was the person who had to say, "You know, if you can't prove it, we can't penalize this student for it." And had I just backed the dean, this student could've made a whole lot of trouble for the college. So those are the kinds of things that when you get up here, all of a sudden, it's a whole different kind of thinking. (P6)

The themes of problem solving, strategic thinking, and leading people are part of another situation suggested by participant P6. The situation requires the simulation attendee to critically analyze a situation and decide on a solution to the problem. The decision requires balancing the needs of multiple stakeholders and thinking strategically to develop a solution that is in the best interest of the college.

> A possible one would be your grade appeal situation. Most places have the same process in place where the student's first asked to go to the instructor and work things out. And so when that fails, then they go to the dean, and the dean is responsible for

> maybe negotiating an agreement. But sometimes they come up here. Deans are responsible for backing their faculty to the best that they are able to do, but sometimes things can get up here, and it's not a matter of the integrity of the classroom or the integrity of the faculty member. It's about the integrity of the institution. And all of a sudden, you're looking at potential lawsuits or potential things in the press, or those types of things, and how do you maintain the integrity of the classroom, and the integrity of your faculty, and the integrity of the institution all at the same time. (P6)

A third situation suggested by participant P6 requires similar skills to the previous situation. The simulation attendee will need to decide how to work with a dean and faculty member who may not agree with decision that is made.

> I had another one, a grade appeal where the student's mother had been diagnosed with cancer, and so she didn't finish her work at the end of the semester, and she wanted an incomplete. And we had the policy, classroom policy that says you have to complete so much of the course in order to get an incomplete. A lot of schools have the same policy. And so the instructor had failed the student, the dean backed the instructor, and that's unfair. And it's like, "The kid's mom's dying of cancer. Give her the incomplete." Now, it didn't play out well. The student never completed the course and ended up with the same F that she would have gotten anyway, but again, that instructor had the discretion at the time to grant that incomplete and chose not to. Had we not granted that incomplete, again that is something that student could have made some bad situation for the college. Call to a lawyer, call to the press. (P6)

Participant P4 discussed collective bargaining as a scenario. Collective bargaining was one of the sub-themes that emerged from the coding of job descriptions. The situation also draws upon the themes for skills and competencies that include leading people and problem solving. Executive administrators involved in collective bargaining need to be in tune with their organization, its culture, and its people.

> Certainly, labor negotiations. I didn't even think about that. That was something I didn't do at [community college] that I did do here. But I got lucky because we use interest-based bargaining. So, it's a whole different animal than traditional bargaining, but that might be two different simulations, a simulation of traditional bargaining and a simulation of interest-based bargaining. (P4)

Participants P1, P4, and P8 discussed the need for simulation participants to be able to work with others in a collaborative way and be effective in meetings. The simulation could be a board of trustees meeting, a meeting with the president and their executive staff, a project meeting, or meetings with various campus groups. Various skills and competencies would be required of attendees during the simulation. The skills and competency themes include communications, leading people, and problem solving. Participant P1 recommended a project meeting with the various stakeholders having different agendas and objectives that they need to accomplish from the project.

> [A project where] each department or each person would have their own particular objective that they would have. When they come to the table, they would have to say, "Hey, this is what I [need from the project]." It's a mini negotiation almost, but not at the same time, because, once again, we all have to work as one. We have to work together to make sure that we're achieving this ultimate goal of really what does that look like? (P1)

Participant P4 recommended a simulated meeting with attendees not agreeing on an issue. Each attendee has a different perspective based on their functional area of responsibility.

> We have cabinet meetings, administrative council meetings. And a simulation there where there's a conflict between the different vice presidents, so to speak, because they have different [perspectives]. I'm coming at it from finance, and this person's coming at it from student, and this person's coming at it from marketing, and not everybody is on the same page. And how to communicate in a situation like that. (P4)

Participant P8 recommended a situation where the simulation attendee is new to their role as a vice president and needs to present to an academic dean's meeting.

> You're a brand-new vice president of administration, you're going to attend the academic dean's meeting. There's a dean of this, this, this, and this and there's a VP, and it's always been adversarial, or it's always been friendly, or they always overspend their budget. What are you going to go talk to them about? Something like that. (P8)

Participant P3 suggested a role play situation that would put the simulation attendee into the role of working with students and experiencing how the student engages with the campus. This would build a better understanding of student needs and awareness of the community college mission. The simulation would allow attendees to practice skills and competencies related to the themes of communications, leading people, and problem solving. Some of the related sub-themes might include interpersonal communications, good listening, social and interpersonal, putting people as ease, and creativity.

> So the simulation experience would include, for me, a classroom experience where you have a underrepresented, a first generation student who's coming to a community college for the first time and you see the first time that student engages with the college in terms of registration, advising, whatever it may be. (P3)

Table 39 summarizes the leadership skills and competencies that are related to the simulation scenarios recommended by the participants. Participant P2 did not respond to the question with a suggested scenario.

Table 39. *Summary of Leadership Skills and Competencies Related to the Simulation Scenarios Recommended by the Participants*

THEME	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Communication skills	X		X	X				X
Community college mission			X					
Leading people	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Management skills								
Policy and governance								
Problem-solving skills	X		X	X	X	X		X
Strategic thinker						X		
Technical skills				X			X	X
Personal values, characteristics								
Culturally adaptable (E)								

THEME	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Understanding the college (E)			X	X				X
Risk adverse (E)								
Self-awareness (E)								

Note. (E) = Emergent theme.

Analysis of Research Question 4

Several questions were asked of interview participants that were designed to discover the skills, competencies, and scenarios to include in an Illinois community college leadership development program. The participants identified many skills and competencies during the interviews, but those that were identified most often were related to communications, being culturally adaptable, problem solving, and leading people. The participant responses for what situations to include in a leadership development simulation were probably most telling of what skills and competencies would be best to include in a leadership development program. The ability to lead people and solve problems were the two skills and competencies that emerged often from that question. The participant responses to the questions asked during the interviews indicate that executive administrators will be faced throughout their career with situations that will put them at odds with direct reports, peers, or even the president. Dealing with these situations will require the administrator to demonstrate multiple skills and competencies.

All but two of the participating Illinois community colleges that submitted job descriptions covered at least eight out of the nine skill and competency themes identified. An interesting observation is that the theme of policymaking and governance was a competency identified by every community college submitting job descriptions; however, it emerged as a

theme only with participant P1 during the interviews. Participant P1 was hired from outside higher education and was unfamiliar with the concept of shared governance. They felt that shared governance training would be beneficial. Additionally, the theme of problem solving appeared in job descriptions from every participating community college; however, the theme did not emerge with interview participants when discussing what would help prepare them for the position. The importance of problem-solving skills did appear as participants discussed the challenges they faced, when giving advice to someone new in the position, and when suggesting scenarios for simulations.

OTHER DATA SOURCES

Results from Field Notes

The field notes written after the interviews were used to supplement data gathered from the interview audio files. Skill and competency themes identified from the field notes match much of what was identified from the interview audio files. Leading people was identified five times in the field notes. Problem-solving skills, being culturally adaptable, and self-awareness were each identified three times. Personal values and characteristics, understanding the college, and being risk adverse were not identified at all in the field notes. Table 40 summarizes the themes identified from the field notes.

Table 40. *Summary of Themes Identified for the Field Notes Written After the Interviews*

THEME	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Communication skills	X							X
Community college mission						X		
Leading people		X	X	X		X	X	X
Management skills						X		

THEME	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Policy and governance	X							
Problem-solving skills		X			X	X		
Strategic thinking							X	
Technical skills						X		
Personal values, characteristics								
Culturally adaptable (E)	X		X					X
Understanding the college (E)								
Risk adverse (E)								
Self-awareness (E)			X	X	X			

Note. (E) = Emergent theme.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Data were collected from multiple sources for this qualitative multiple case study. The data sources included documents, questionnaires, interviews, and field notes. The data collected from questionnaires were used primarily for gathering the demographic attributes of Illinois community colleges and executive administrators, and for gathering data that could be used to triangulate with the qualitative data collected from interviews. Statistical methods of analysis were not applied to the questionnaire data. The case was an Illinois community college executive administrator who was in their position from 1 to 6 years and reported directly to the president of the college. Several executive administrators were included to provide multiple cases for the study. Data collected from multiple sources created management challenges that required the process to be well documented for maintaining validity and reliability. Multiple logs were used to document the communications, recruiting, and data collection process.

CAQDAS was used to assist with compiling and analyzing the data, managing the data files, and managing the transcription process. This added to the reliability of the study.

Data were collected that answered the four research questions. The data showed that (a) Illinois community colleges are taking steps to develop mid-level administrators, (b) most Illinois community colleges do not incorporate simulations into their grow-your-own leadership development programs, and (c) Illinois community college executive leaders generally felt prepared when entering their current positions. For research question 4, data were collected from job descriptions and categorized into nine themes identifying the skills and competencies that are essential for Illinois executive administrators to possess. These themes were used as a basis for categorizing the skills and competencies that emerged during the interviews. Four additional themes for skills and competencies emerged from the interviews. Interview participants identified several scenarios that required many of the skill and competency themes identified. Chapter Five will explore and interpret the data that were compiled.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

INTRODUCTION

The researcher gathered information from eight executive administrators and 12 chief human resource officers (CHRO) that was insightful to the research purpose and answering the research questions. The executive administrators and CHROs came from Illinois community colleges that differed in size and degree of urbanicity (locale). Data collected provided insights into the scenarios, discussions, and thematic elements to include in the design of leadership simulations intended to develop the leadership skills and competencies of mid-level administrators aspiring to move into executive administrator positions. Additionally, the data collected assisted in determining the extent to which Illinois community colleges are developing the leadership skills and competencies of aspiring mid-level administrators and whether simulations are included as part of their grow-your-own development programs. Chapter five will provide (a) a brief summary of chapters one through four; (b) a summary of the research findings and implications for community colleges; (c) a recommendation for the skills, competencies, scenarios, and thematic elements to include in Illinois community college leadership development simulations; and (d) recommendations for further research.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

Chapter One introduced the study that was done. The purpose of the study and research questions were reviewed to identify what was to be accomplished with the research. The research questions are:

1. How are Illinois community colleges preparing mid-level administrators for executive-level positions?
2. How are simulations being integrated into Illinois community college administrator leadership development programs?
3. How prepared did Illinois community college executive administrators feel they were when they entered their current position?
4. What scenarios, discussions, and other thematic elements should be included in the design of an Illinois community college administrator leadership development program?

A brief history of American community colleges and the leadership gap that exists in community colleges were reviewed to provide a contextual background for the study. Three concepts and theories were introduced that explain why simulations are effective for developing the skills and competencies of aspiring leaders. A brief description of the research methodology was provided to allow for an understanding of how the study would be conducted.

Chapter Two provided a detailed review of the pertinent literature that formed the context for the study. The literature reviewed included (a) a brief history of community colleges, (b) leadership in community colleges, (c) leadership development, and (d) the concepts and theories that support the effectiveness of leadership simulations. The theories and concepts used were (a) Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory, (b) the concept of using gamification to increase learning engagement, and (c) Katz's (1955) Skills-Based Leadership

Theory. These theories and concepts form the basis for using leadership simulations to develop the skills and competencies of aspiring mid-level community college administrators.

Chapter Three reviewed the research methodology that was used to conduct the study. A detailed description of the research design identified the study as a two-phased qualitative study using multiple case study methodology. The chapter provided an explanation for using the qualitative paradigm to obtain a deep understanding of the challenges faced by community college executive leadership and produce a final product that uses words to provide a rich description of the interpretation of the results of data collected. The chapter described the criteria and protocols used for selecting and recruiting participants to achieve maximum variation in the sample. The methods for contacting participants and collecting data from them using documents, questionnaires, and interviews were reviewed. The chapter included a detailed discussion on methods used to establish validity and reliability of the study. Finally, the limitations of the study and the researcher as a research instrument were discussed.

Chapter Four provided a detailed description of the data that were collected and analyzed. The data were collected from the CHROs and executive administrators of Illinois community colleges. The data were collected using questionnaires, job descriptions, interviews, and field notes. The data collected were categorized to themes, summarized, and displayed in a series of tables.

FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of the study was to identify the leadership skills and competencies that are necessary to include in the design of leadership development training simulations intended for Illinois community college mid-level administrators who aspire to move into an executive-level

position. Identifying these skills and competencies provides insight into the themes, discussions, and scenarios to include in a simulation. Additionally, the study includes the extent to which Illinois community colleges are providing leadership development and using leadership simulations.

Research Question 1: Illinois Community College Leadership Development

How are Illinois community colleges preparing mid-level administrators for executive-level positions?

Research question 1 was designed to discover the types of leadership development programs that are supported by Illinois community colleges. Gaining an understanding of where Illinois community colleges are prioritizing their resources for leadership development will provide insights into what opportunities exist for incorporating simulations into existing grow-your-own programs.

Illinois community colleges are providing various types of programs that help develop the leadership skills and competencies of administrators. Since executive administrators interviewed indicated that the leadership development programs they participated in helped them be better prepared for their positions, it would be beneficial for community colleges to continue with and expand on the programs offered to mid-level administrators. Having mid-level administrators who are better prepared to move into executive-level positions will position community colleges to be better prepared to deal with the leadership gap that was identified in the literature that was reviewed.

Most Illinois community colleges that participated in the study supported sending leaders to leadership programs that are hosted by regional and national professional

associations. These programs work well, and aspiring leaders will benefit from these programs because they focus on community colleges, the specific challenges they will face, and the practical skills they will need when moving into higher-level positions (Nevarez & Wood, 2010). Most Illinois community colleges also provided support for leaders to attend degree programs hosted by colleges and universities. Although these programs may not provide the practical skills that administrators will need, they do focus on teaching leadership theory and linking theory to practice (Nevarez & Wood, 2010). The leadership development programs that are least supported by Illinois community colleges were commercial leadership seminars. This is likely attributable to the fact that these programs are open to a wide range of industries and do not focus on the community college issues that grow-your-own leadership programs, professional association leadership programs, and degree programs can offer (Conger & Xin, 2000).

The study indicated that most Illinois community colleges are sending administrators to professional conferences. Executive administrators who were interviewed indicated that they benefit from and value the networking opportunities provided by attending conferences that are relevant to the leader's role. They stressed the importance of building professional relationships with peers in their field. Similarly, this was also found to be true of Illinois community college mid-level student affairs managers during a dissertation study conducted by Koronkiewicz (2016). As a result, it would be beneficial for community colleges to continue providing resources to support travel to professional conferences.

Most Illinois community colleges provide leadership development support for one or more internal programs that include job shadowing, mentoring, skills roadmaps, career

planning and goal setting, and capabilities assessments. These are valuable for providing a pathway for aspiring leaders to help them achieve their career goals. However, some of the programs fall under the assessment category of leadership development and do not provide a learning environment for developing skills and competencies. They are more effective when augmented with other leadership development programs (Weiss & Molinaro, 2005).

Although the literature reviewed recommends that community colleges implement internal grow-your-own leadership development programs, fewer than half of Illinois community colleges provide them. The reason why many Illinois community colleges are not using grow-your-own programs was not investigated in the research. Additionally, the study did not identify how executive administrators who had taken grow-your-own programs felt about their effectiveness. Implementing grow-your-own leadership development programs for aspiring mid-level administrators may be a missed opportunity for Illinois community colleges that do not have a program. Evidence gathered from the interviews with executive administrators indicated the importance of building relationships with peers and other workers on campus. Grow-your-own leadership programs that include group interactions provide an opportunity for building these relationships. Additionally, the literature reviewed identifies that these programs provide participants with a learning environment that focuses on relevant and local community college issues.

This study provides support for community colleges to continue committing resources for leadership development programs for mid-level and executive-level administrators. Additionally, any leadership development program would benefit from incorporating elements of social networking into its design. The AACC recommends that community colleges need to be

proactive and deliberate in their leadership development efforts to prepare mid-level administrators for executive-level positions. Based on the data collected, most Illinois community colleges are doing this.

Research Question 2: Leadership Simulations in Illinois Community Colleges

How are simulations being integrated into Illinois community college administrator leadership development programs?

Research question 2 was designed to identify whether Illinois community colleges are including simulations with grow-your-own leadership development programs. The results of the study clearly showed that most Illinois community colleges that offer grow-your-own leadership development programs are not including simulations in the design of their program. However, based on the data collected from the CHROs, there is evidence that indicates some community colleges would be interested in implementing them. Additionally, the positive feedback from executive administrators who have taken simulations, along with information from the literature reviewed, provides support for community colleges to investigate the possibility of implementing them as a leadership development tool. This concurs with the recommendation of the AACC that community colleges should provide aspiring leaders with opportunities to participate in simulations that create real-world scenarios that leaders might face.

Research Question 3: Executive Administrator Leadership Preparedness

How prepared did Illinois community college executive administrators feel they were when they entered their current position?

The data collected for research question 3 were designed to discover how prepared Illinois executive administrators felt they were when they first started in the position. Gaining an understanding of how prepared they were and what factors contributed to their preparedness can assist with determining what themes and scenarios to include in the design of a leadership development program.

The data clearly indicate that participating Illinois executive administrators were confident with the skills they had moving into executive-level positions. Only one interview participant felt they were not prepared for the position. Although interview participants felt they had an overall preparedness for the position, they also indicated that there were certain parts of the job that they were not prepared for. Aspiring leaders and executive administrators would benefit from leadership development programs that focus on these areas.

The data collected from the interviews indicated that previous experience is an important contributor for preparing any mid-level administrator for an executive leadership position. Additionally, education and training also appear to be factors in how prepared they felt they were. Participants who realized they were not as prepared felt they had the technical knowledge and a good understanding of the job but had various other reasons for feeling unprepared after starting. These included being unprepared for the cultural differences with the institution they came from, the level of responsibility faced with decision making, and lacking a working knowledge of institutional funding, compliance, and legal matters.

The data support the theories of experiential learning and that leaders learn best through experience (Kolb, 1984; Thomas, 2008; Thomas & Cheese, 2005). The data show that much of the reason participants felt prepared for the position they were currently working in is

because of the knowledge and experience they gained while working in previous positions, educational programs they attended, and the leadership programs they attended. Participants felt less prepared for situations that required the soft skills an executive leader needed, such as communications, problem solving, and interpersonal skills. Although they may have used these skills and competencies in their previous positions, they did not have the experience of using them in an environment that comes with the complexities, challenges, and responsibilities of a higher-level position.

Several themes emerged during the interviews with participants that indicated what would help mid-level administrators be prepared for an executive-level position. Of those themes, networking and relationship building was a theme that was identified throughout the study as being important. Administrators said they valued the ability to talk to someone they knew for advice on how to handle a situation, to discuss best practices, to compare operations, or to brainstorm ideas. The ability to build relationships with superiors, peers, subordinates, and others on campus was identified as being a critical skill that would help a new executive administrator to negotiate the challenges that they might face.

Attending professional association conferences was another theme that emerged from the study. Attending professional conferences helped prepare Illinois community college executive administrators prior to and after they were in their current position. Professional conferences provide aspiring leaders and executive administrators the opportunity to build relationships and collaborate with others in similar positions. They provide the opportunity for training and education that are focused on the unique needs and challenges of the conference participant. Illinois community colleges appear to recognize the importance of this, since

providing support for attending professional association conferences was included in the professional development programs offered by every participating Illinois community college completing the CHRO questionnaire.

This study offers support for community colleges to continue developing programs that improve the skills of aspiring community college leaders. Programs would benefit from incorporating communications, problem solving, interpersonal skills, and institutional awareness into situations that executive administrators would face. Incorporating certain technical skills that mid-level administrators may not deal with in their jobs such as institutional funding, legal, and compliance issues would also be helpful. The results of the study also support that community colleges will benefit by continuing to offer leadership development programs that allow aspiring leaders to network and build professional relationships with others. One strategy identified in the study that is commonly supported by community colleges is allowing travel to professional conferences.

Research Question 4: Suggested Scenarios for Leadership Development Programs

What scenarios, discussions, and other thematic elements should be included in the design of an Illinois community college administrator leadership development program?

Research question 4 was designed to gather data to identify the skills and competencies that are important for an Illinois community college executive administrator to possess. This was achieved through inquiring about (a) the challenges administrators faced, (b) the preparation that helped them with the position, and (c) advice that they would give to someone new to the position. Additionally, they were asked what scenarios they thought should be included in the design of a leadership simulation. Several a priori and emergent themes were

identified from these questions that provided insights into what skills, competencies, and types of scenarios to include in the design of a simulation.

The themes that emerged from the interviews are supported by the themes identified in the literature presented by the American Association of Community Colleges (2013), Ebrahimi Mehrabani and Azmi Mohamad (2015), Leslie (2009), Nevarez and Wood (2010), and Plinske and Packard (2010). The results of the study indicated that soft skills such as communications, problem solving, and interpersonal skills are more important to develop in mid-level administrators than more technical skills that tend to be learned from previous positions.

Several skills and competency themes were identified by the data that are essential for an aspiring leader. The themes of leading people, problem solving, communications, and cultural adaptability emerged often during the study. The theme of leading people included sub-themes such as collaboration, motivating others, managing change, relationship building, social and interpersonal skills, being tactful and political, and establishing culture. Problem solving included the sub-themes of creativity, resourcefulness, analytical, and decision making. Communications had sub-themes that included public speaking, being a good listener, being articulate, and interpersonal communications. While the sub-theme of establishing culture was identified as a competency from the job descriptions that were collected, the participants who were interviewed focused more on the importance of being able to adapt to an institution's culture rather than change it. The results from this study indicate that leadership development programs would benefit from including elements that develop an administrator's ability to lead people, solve problems, communicate effectively with internal and external stakeholders, and identify and adapt to an institution's culture.

It was identified that knowledge of certain technical skills would help mid-level administrators be prepared for the job. This is especially the case for technical skills that were not part of the competencies required of an administrator in their previous position or outside of their field of expertise. For example, executive administrators from administrative services were ok with budgeting and fund management, but executive administrators from other areas of the college mentioned they needed to learn more about budgeting so that they could do their job better. As a result, there are some technical areas that could be focused on with leadership development programs. The technical skills that were specifically mentioned included knowledge of budgeting and community college funding, labor law, and collective bargaining.

Nearly all executive administrators felt comfortable entering the position they currently hold. Their previous experiences prepared them well for the job. However, based on the data collected, there is potential to continue providing development opportunities for the human, conceptual, and certain technical skills required of a leader. Community colleges would benefit from including the skills and competencies identified in this study in the design of leadership programs.

RECOMMENDED SKILLS TO INCLUDE IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SIMULATIONS

The purpose of this study was to discover the skills, competencies, and types of scenarios to focus on for leadership development simulations that are designed for mid-level community college administrators who are interested in moving up to an executive-level administrator position. Data were collected from interviews with executive administrators and executive administrator job descriptions from Illinois community colleges to identify these

skills, competencies, types of scenarios, and situations. Based on those data, the following skills and competencies are recommended to be included in the design of a leadership development simulation.

- Human skills
    - Communications – listening, public speaking, articulate
    - Leading people – collaboration, motivating others, interpersonal, relationship building
- Conceptual skills
    - Problem solving – creativity, resourcefulness, analytical, decision making
    - Cultural adaptability – institutional awareness, supporting institutional culture
- Technical skills
    - Budgeting
    - Community college funding
    - Collective bargaining, labor relations, labor law
    - Legal and compliance issues

Interviews with the executive administrators also led to recommended types of scenarios that could be included in leadership development training simulations. The types of scenarios specifically mentioned by executive administrators included:

- Conflict resolution between multiple stakeholders to meet the needs of the institution.
- Collective bargaining session.
- President's cabinet meeting or project team meeting to discuss an objective.
- New vice-president attending an academic dean's meeting with imbedded adversarial relationships and/or difficult issue to solve.

- Working with an underrepresented or first-generation to create a positive student experience.

The themes that revolve around these recommended simulations include situations that place an administrator in a position to listen to others, analyze a situation, think strategically, and work collaboratively with others to provide a solution to a problem. The scenarios deal with situations that may not be a situation or part of a typical routine that mid-level administrators might deal with at their level of responsibility. The scenarios may pit various parties against each other and deal with difficult problems that require the participant to think holistically and at a strategic level about what is the best solution for the institution.

The responses to questions and scenario examples provided by the interview participants indicate that simulation scenarios would benefit participants when they include multiple participants. This encourages the collaboration and relationship building that was identified by the study as being important. Collaboration and relationship building can be encouraged with simulation participants through scenario designs that include a team resolving an issue or multiple teams representing various factions with their own objectives to meet when resolving an issue. Scenarios might be designed to have participants face a crisis that encourages critical thinking and decision making, which were also essential skills identified by the study that executive administrators should have. Based on this, the types of scenarios recommended for leadership development training simulations might include the following or similar situations in addition to those specifically mentioned by participants:

- Dealing with a campus disaster that might require a partial or full shutdown of the campus. This might include a flood, tornado, labor strike, or pandemic situation.
- Dealing with the elimination of a major funding source that will require the college to decide what actions to take to balance the budget.

- A team presentation to gain support from the community for a new initiative that will require new funding.
- A team in mock negotiations with one or more labor groups to agree on labor contracts during a time when state funding is being limited. For example, new performance-based funding measures that will require the college to address certain student outcomes requirements in order to receive funding.

The themes behind these scenarios require a team of individuals to collaborate with each other to solve a problem. They provide situations that allow participants to learn and practice technical skills such as budgeting, fund management, and legal that several executive administrators felt were important to learn. They involve some level of internal and external communications. They do not occur every day and allow administrators to practice how to respond to these situations in a safe environment.

FURTHER RESEARCH

As simulations become more accessible and affordable, community colleges would benefit from further research on the development of leadership simulations and their use as a tool for developing aspiring leaders. Knowledge of leadership simulations can be broadened from further research in three areas.

First, future studies may want to investigate whether the skills and competencies required of executive administrators differ between single-college districts and multi-college districts. In the literature reviewed, it was identified that multi-college districts have complex organizational structures (Cohen et al., 2014). Does this affect how mid-level administrators need to prepare for an executive-level position? One interview participant who was not prepared for the culture of the institution previously worked at a community college in a multi-college district. How much of the cultural change was due to the differences between a single-

college and multi-college district? Additionally, the experiences of mid-level administrators moving from a single-college district to a multi-college district might be very different than moving from a multi-college district to a single-college district. The knowledge gained from this area of research would guide recommendations for designing future leadership simulations.

A second area that warrants further research is identifying the barriers that are preventing community colleges from implementing simulations in their grow-your-own programs. Additionally, if leadership simulations are included as part of an existing leadership development program, how do they impact the leadership abilities of mid-level and executive-level community college administrators? Are there differences in the level of administrator preparedness between those who participate in simulations included with grow-your-own leadership programs and those that might be offered through professional associations, national and regional leadership institutes, and other types of programs? The available literature regarding the use of simulations in leadership programs in business organizations and K-12 education shows that they can be successfully used as a tool for developing and honing leadership skills (Conine, 2014; Olson, 2007; Sparks, 2011). It was assumed for this study that community college leadership programs using simulations will provide aspiring leaders with the same benefits found in programs used elsewhere. As community colleges increase the use of leadership simulations with grow-your-own leadership programs, are they providing an effective means of preparing aspiring leaders for higher-level positions? This area of research would provide recommendations to support the future of leadership simulations with grow-your-own leadership development programs.

Third, the results of this study indicated that the participating medium-sized Illinois community colleges did not offer grow-your-own leadership programs and offered fewer opportunities with other types of professional development. Is there an underlying reason why medium-sized Illinois community colleges offer fewer development opportunities? Is this consistent with other medium-sized community colleges in the United States, or is it found only in Illinois? What factors contribute to the types of professional development offered by community colleges? Identifying the reason why this phenomenon exists can help with building strategies for increasing leadership development opportunities in medium-sized community colleges.

LIMITATIONS

There were some limitations to the study. First, the survey sent to the CHROs did not inquire whether Illinois community colleges provided employees with non-financial support for professional development, such as paid days off to attend programs, flex time for taking programs, or support groups for those attending programs. These types of support programs may or may not affect the ability of aspiring leaders to attend programs; however, this should not affect this study's primary purpose of identifying skills and competencies aspiring leaders should possess.

Second, the coding of job descriptions did not differentiate between preferred and required skills and competencies. More importance may need to be placed on skills and competencies that are required versus preferred. An administrator may feel more or less prepared for a position depending on the level of knowledge they have in a skill and depending on whether the skill is preferred or required. Skills and competencies may be more important

for some positions than they are for others. For example, financial skills were coded as a competency that executive administrators should have. A provost or vice president of academic affairs may not need to be proficient in accounting to have a working knowledge of the college's financial matters, such as budgeting and fund balances, to be successful in their job. A vice president of finance and administration will need a much higher level of financial knowledge that will probably come from a formal degree program in business or finance.

CONCLUSIONS

Reports from agencies like the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) have done much to raise awareness of the leadership gap that exists in community colleges. Senior leadership training programs are offered through many professional associations like the National Association of College Auxiliary Services (NACAS), League for Innovation in the Community College, American Council on Education (ACE), and AACC. Illinois community colleges have multiple institutional initiatives in place to develop the leadership skills and competencies of their mid-level administrators. They recognize the necessity for developing aspiring leaders to fill the leadership gap that is resulting from the number of baby boomers who are leaving the work force. As stated by one CHRO,

> The board has tasked me with devising a plan for succession. I believe that a leadership development program needs to be put into place as a result of the upcoming exodus of baby boomers. (C5)

These data collected from participants inform us that several human and conceptual skills are important to develop. The skills and competencies themes they considered important to develop are communications, interpersonal, problem solving, leading people, and cultural adaptability. There was less emphasis on the technical skills because these have mostly been

learned in previous positions or through educational programs; however, community college funding, finance, budgeting, legal matters, compliance, and collective bargaining were technical topics that needed some attention. All of these can be included in the design of a leadership development simulation that is integrated into a grow-your-own leadership program.

This study confirms that executive administrators benefited from professional development and professional relationships. Professional development programs, including grow-your-own leadership programs, helped prepare them for their current position. According to the literature, simulations that are used to supplement larger leadership programs are effective for developing leadership skills. However, the study confirms that all but one of the Illinois community colleges offering grow-your-own leadership programs are not making use of simulations. The design of this study did not allow for identifying why Illinois community colleges are not making use of this development tool. Identifying what barriers exist that are preventing community colleges from implementing simulations will be important to make way for the use of this effective leadership development tool that is recommended by the AACC.

It is important that the grow-your-own leadership programs and simulations are aligned with the needs of the participants to be effective and valued. Improving the skills and competencies identified in this study provide a base for those outcomes. Additionally, if programs are designed to be used by multiple participants, they can also provide excellent opportunities for relationship building and knowledge sharing that is important to administrators.

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APPENDIX A: INTRODUCTORY EMAIL TO COLLEGE PRESIDENTS

From: Richard Seiler
Sent:
To: [COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT]
Cc: [EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT]
Subject: Community College Leadership Development Research

Dear [COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT],

I am a doctoral student at Ferris State University in the Community College Leadership doctoral program. The purpose of my dissertation is to study the leadership skills that are important for middle managers to advance into executive level positions at a community college. Additionally, I hope to learn what type of programs community colleges have in place that provide leadership skills training. Information collected from the study can be used to design leadership skills simulations that can supplement existing leadership development programs.

I invite your college to participate by asking you to identify your chief human resources officer. They will be asked to answer a brief questionnaire, provide copies of job descriptions of the college's executive administrators, and identify executive administrators who meet certain criteria. These administrators will be asked to participate further in the study which will include a short questionnaire, and may be asked to participate in a face-to-face interview.

Please respond to the email with the appropriate contact information for the chief human resource officer. There are no anticipated risks to the participants. However, it is anticipated that this research will generate relevant information and possible insights to community college leadership development. The identities of participant colleges and executive administrators will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Richard R. Seiler

APPENDIX B: EMAIL TO CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCE OFFICERS

From: Richard Seiler
Sent:
To: [CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCE OFFICER]
Cc: [EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT]
Subject: Community College Leadership Development Research

Dear [CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCE OFFICER],

I am a doctoral student at Ferris State University in the Community College Leadership doctoral program. [COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT] provided me with your contact information for the college to participate in a dissertation study to identify the leadership skills that are important for middle managers to advance into executive level positions at a community college. Additionally, I hope to learn what type of programs your college has in place that provides leadership skills training. Information collected from the study can be used to design leadership skills simulations that can supplement existing leadership development programs.

The research will require the following:

1. Complete a short online questionnaire, which requires approximately 10 minutes to complete. The link to the questions is [LINK TO SURVEYMONKEY]
2. Respond to this email with a list of executive administrators, with appropriate contact information, who meet the criteria of reporting directly to the president and have been in their position from one to six years.
3. Provide appropriate contact information for the executive assistants to the administrators listed in #2.
4. Provide job descriptions for the executive administrators who meet the criteria in #2.
5. Respond to this email "no administrators meet the criteria" if none meet the criteria in #2.

Executive administrators will be asked to participate by completing a short questionnaire. Upon completion of the questionnaire, a subset will be invited to participate in a face-to-face interview. Participants will be able to withdraw from the study at any time. There are no anticipated risks to the participants. However, it is anticipated that this research will generate relevant information and possible insights to community college leadership development. The identities of participants will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you should have any questions.

Richard R. Seiler

APPENDIX C: EMAIL TO EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATORS

From: Richard Seiler
Sent:
To: [EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATOR]
Cc: [EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT]
Subject: Community College Leadership Development Research

Dear [EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATOR],

I am a doctoral student at Ferris State University in the Community College Leadership doctoral program. Your college is participating in a dissertation study to identify the leadership skills that are important for middle managers advance into executive level positions at a community college. Information collected from the study can be used to design leadership skills simulations that can supplement existing leadership development programs.

I am asking for your participation in this phase of the study, which will require you to complete a short online questionnaire that will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The link is provided below. You were selected to be part of the study because you were identified by your Human Resources department as reporting directly to the president of the college and have been in your position from one to six years.

You may be asked to participate in a face-to-face interview which will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes. If you are selected for the interview, you will be contacted to schedule a meeting at a time and place of your choosing.

Here is the link to the online questionnaire. Please enter the following PIN number when asked.

[PIN]

[LINK TO SURVEYMONEY]

There are no anticipated risks to participating in this study. However, it is anticipated that this research will generate relevant information and possible insights to community college leadership development. The identities of participants will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you should have any questions.

Richard R. Seiler

APPENDIX D: EMAIL TO INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

From: Richard Seiler
Sent:
To: [INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT]
Subject: Community College Leadership Development Research

Dear [INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT],

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a face-to-face interview for my dissertation study. You have been selected to participate in this phase based on predetermined selection criteria.

The interview will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Interviews will be scheduled between [DATES]. Please provide me with dates and times that will work for you. If you prefer, I can work directly with your executive assistant to finalize the date and time.

There are no anticipated risks to participating in this study. However, it is anticipated that this research will generate relevant information and possible insights to community college leadership development. The identities of participants will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to our interview. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you should have any questions.

Richard R. Seiler

APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT – EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATORS

Informed Consent

Dear ,

I am a student in the Doctorate in Community College Leadership program at Ferris State University and am working on a dissertation project designed to identify the leadership skills that are important for middle managers to advance into executive level positions at a community college.

To inform this project I am conducting interviews with Executive Administrators who report directly to a community college president. I am contacting you to see if you would be willing to answer a series of questions about leadership preparedness when taking an executive level position.

Your participation in this study is voluntary which is explained along with other details in the informed consent form. When interviews are completed, I will use pseudonyms for participants and their institutions to protect the anonymity of all participants.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 847-650-0324 or send an email to _____.

Thank you,

Richard Seiler

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Leadership Skills Required for Executive Level Positions

Main Researcher: Richard Seiler
Email: _____ Phone: _____

Primary Advisors:
Dr Sandra Balkema
Email: _____Phone: _____
Dr. Mark D. Mrozinski
Email: _____ Phone: _____

STUDY PURPOSE

You are invited to participate in a research study about leadership skills for executive level positions. The researcher is interested in gaining insight from executive leaders regarding how prepared they felt they were, and the skills they felt were necessary for the job when they took their executive level position.

PARTICIPATION

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary.
You are eligible to participate in this study because you are a community college executive leader who reports directly to the president. If you agree to be part of this study, you will be asked a series of questions related to leadership preparedness and leadership skills.

POTENTIAL RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

There are no known risks associated with this study.

ANTICIPATED BENEFITS

This research is designed to examine the leadership skills deemed necessary for middle managers who are interested in advancing into an executive level position. Integrating these skills into simulations as part of leadership development programs has potential to develop the leadership abilities of mid-level administrators and provide a qualified pool of candidates to fill vacancies created by retiring or exiting administrators.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Signing this form is required for participation in the study and gives the researcher your permission to obtain, use, and share information about you for this study. The results of this study may be published in an article, but any subsequent publication would not include any information that would identify you. There are some reasons why people other than the researcher may need to see the information you provided as part of the study. This includes organizations responsible for making sure the research is conducted safely and properly, including Ferris State University.
In order to keep your information safe, the researchers will protect your anonymity and maintain your confidentiality. The data you provide will be stored in secured and encrypted electronic files. The researcher will retain the data for three years after which time the researcher will dispose of your data by standard state-of-the-art methods for secure disposal. The data will not be made available to other researchers for other studies following the completion of this research study.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The main researcher conducting this study is Richard R. Seiler, a doctoral student at Ferris State University. If you have any questions you may email him at rseilerdccl@gmail.com or call 847-650-0324. You may also contact the faculty advisors: Dr Sandra Balkema at balkemas@ferris.edu, or Dr Mark D. Mrozinski at mmrozins@harpercollege.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) for Human Participants, 1010 Campus Drive, FLITE 410D, Big Rapids, MI 49307, 231-591-2553, IRB@ferris.edu.

SIGNATURES

Research Subject: I understand the information printed on this form. I understand that if I have more questions or concerns about the study or my participation as a research subject, I may contact the people listed above in the “Contact Information” section. I understand that I may make a copy of this form. I understand that if my ability to consent for myself changes, either I or my legal representative may be asked to re-consent prior to my continued participation.

Signature of Subject: _____ Date of Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Contact Information: email - _____ phone - _____

Main Researcher: I have given this research subject (or his/her legally authorized representative, if applicable) information about this study that I believe is accurate and complete. The subject has indicated that he or she understands the nature of the study and the risks and benefits of participating.

Printed Name: Richard R. Seiler

Signature: _____ Date of Signature: _____

APPENDIX F: IRB APPROVAL LETTER – FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

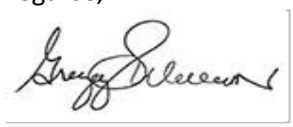
Date: Feb 2, 2018
To: Sandra Balkema, Richard Seiler
From: Gregory Wellman, R.Ph, Ph.D, IRB Chair Re: IRB Application for Review

The Ferris State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application for using human subjects in the study, " *Identify the executive administrator leadership skills that are important to include in leadership training simulations.*" 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 not on individual 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 Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

APPENDIX G: IRB APPROVAL LETTER – PARTICIPATING INSTITUTION

Community College Leadership Development Research

[IRB administrator]

Tue, Apr 10, 2018 at 8:29 AM

To: [Administrator],

[Administrator]: Thanks for hopping in. I spoke with Richard about his project. He said that from HR he wanted the job descriptions of all of the President's direct reports.

I told him I would give him names of his direct reports with 1-6 years' experience in management positions that report to the president. You can correct me if I'm wrong but those would be:

[administrator], VP administrative affairs

[administrator], chief of staff

[administrator], director, PR & Marketing

[administrator], director, legislative affairs & resource development.

All others on Foundation, Cabinet or Exec Staff either do not report directly, or have not been direct reports for the time frame he is looking for.

Thank you, [IRB administrator].

Community College Leadership Development Research

[IRB administrator]

Fri, Apr 27, 2018 at 1:59 PM
To: Richard Seiler
Cc: [HR administrator], [president], [administrative assistant]

Mr. Seiler:

I am pleased to inform you that your human subject research proposal has been reviewed and approved by [community college]'s IRB through Expedited Review.

Therefore, please feel free to commence with your research at any time.

Just a reminder that in the instance your protocol, questionnaires, etc. should change, you are required to reapply to the [community college] IRB to have your research project reapproved.

I wish you well with your research and to finishing you doctorate at Ferris State University.

Best,

[IRB administrator]

Community College Leadership Development Research

[IRB administrator] Mon, Jul 30, 2018 at 11:54 AM

To: Richard Seiler

Hello Mr. Seiler,

As we discussed on the telephone last week, you are approved to carry out the web surveys and the telephone and face-to-face interviews described in the research materials you submitted to [community college]. It is my understanding that you will inform individuals that their participation is voluntary and will ensure their anonymity through the use of pseudonyms. If you make substantive changes to your research procedures or instruments, please let me know. Otherwise, I wish you good luck with data collection.

Regards,

[IRB administrator]

****

[IRB administrator]

[title]