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Preparation, Change, Retirement, and Future Challenge: The Leadership Experience of former Florida College System Presidents

Kevin O'Farrell
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Preparation, Change, Retirement, and Future Challenge: The Leadership Experience of Former Florida College System Presidents

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Leadership, Counseling, Adult, Career, Higher Education
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Keywords: AACC Leadership Competencies, Community College Baccalaureate, Florida Community College, Presidency

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my father and mother, Mark and Phillis O’Farrell, to my wife, Kathryn O’Farrell, and my son, William. My parents have never ceased to invest in me. Their unflinching love and support and encouragement to value education and pursue knowledge have become a core value of my life. To my supportive wife, Kathryn, I could never have completed this journey without you by my side. You have been and are my inspiration. I love you. Finally, to William, who was born during the writing of this dissertation, you represent my future. I cannot wait to see the strong man you become.
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with the best. Finally, my commitment to the life and teaching of Jesus Christ has provided me the internal resolve to never give up and press on. To Him, I am forever indebted.
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ABSTRACT

A leadership emergency is developing in higher education. According the American Association for Community Colleges, by 2022, 75% of current community college presidents intend to retire, and within five years an additional 15% will exit the presidency. As these individuals leave their leadership role, the higher education environment they leave behind will change. Understanding this impending leadership crisis, the purpose of this qualitative interview study was to describe and understand the leadership experience of former Florida College System institution presidents, their perspective and reflection on the institution of the presidency and its evolution, and their thoughts regarding the pertinent challenges facing current and future presidents in the next three to five years. Data were collected through explorative interviews with six former Florida community college presidents. Thirteen themes emerged from the analysis of the data. These themes aligned with and expanded the understanding of the community college presidential leadership experience. Important research implications for academic researchers and practitioners were discovered and additional lines of inquiry for further research in the areas of presidential leadership experience emerged.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A leadership emergency is developing in higher education. By 2022, 75% of current community college presidents intend to retire, and within five years an additional 15% will exit the presidency (AACC, 2012). As these individuals leave their leadership role, the higher education environment they leave behind is rapidly changing. Volatile enrollments, mounting fiscal strain, changes in technology impacting pedagogy, and increasing political pressure are creating a new environment for higher education leaders (Cook, 2012). These changes will undoubtedly impact individuals as they pursue, persist in, and transition from the college presidency. The leadership experiences of these individuals must be researched and understood so potential leaders and internal and external college stakeholders can be prepared to champion their institutions in a rapidly transforming leadership landscape.

In this chapter I will provide an introduction to the research study. I will begin with a brief overview of the community college sector. A discussion on leadership as expressed within the higher education sector, focusing on the community college presidency, will be presented and will include an introduction to several leadership competency areas identified by professional associations within the community college leadership sector. Next, the research study’s problem will be stated. The context and purpose of the study will be presented before a section discussing the study’s five research questions. Finally, a section defining important terms will be shared before discussing the delimitations and limitations of the research study.
Community College Sector

Within the sphere of higher education, several unique institutions function. The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education provides a widely recognized framework for describing the various types of colleges and universities (IUB, 2015). Within the larger domain of higher education lie community colleges. In using Birnbaum’s (1992) taxonomy, community colleges can possess various characteristics of each of the systems he describes; however, as a result of their history and mission, community colleges tend to be primarily classified as bureaucratic, although additional external and internal challenges are changing the nature of those institutions (Ratcliff, 1994). In arguing for the unique nature of community colleges, Eddy (2010) describes four distinct characteristics: (1) balancing of community college missions, (2) shrinking state and local funding, (3) the unique student populations the community college serves, and (4) community colleges’ unique role in serving the needs of developmental education students.

The unique nature of community colleges demands tailored leadership that can maximize and navigate the situational opportunities and challenges facing these institutions. At the helm of these organizations are college presidents. The exercise of presidential leadership in the community college context has been explored: preparation for the presidency (Bugg, 2009; Rabey, 2011; Strickland, 2013; Stubbe, 2008), selection for the presidency (Carter, 2009; King, 2010; Rush, 2012) competencies needed for and during the presidency (Bonner, 2013; King, 2010; Kools, 2010), and exiting the presidency (Johnson, 2012; Shaffer-Lilienthal, 2009). The areas of preparation, selection, competency, and transition have been studied; however, no model exists that incorporates all of the stages which encompass the community college presidential leadership experience. The majority of the attention regarding the exercise of presidential
leadership in the community college context has been focused on the identification and development of specific leadership competencies for administrators.

**Leadership Competencies**

The American Association for Community Colleges (AACC) (2013) identified twenty-four competencies, in five categories for community college leaders. The five leadership competency areas were: (1) organizational strategy, (2) institutional finance, research, funding, and resource management, (3) communication, (4) collaboration, and (5) community college advocacy. For each of the twenty-four specific competencies, the AACC created a continuum to help individuals and groups assess the level of development.

Related to the AACC competencies are the qualities for highly effective community college presidents identified by the Aspen Institute and Achieving the Dream Project (A&ATD) (2013). The five core qualities identified were: (1) a deep commitment to student access and success, (2) willingness to take significant risks to advance student success, (3) ability to create lasting change within the college, (4) having a strong, broad, strategic vision for the college and its students, reflected in external partnerships, and (5) raise and allocate resources in ways aligned to student success. Similar to the AACC competencies, the A&ATD core qualities focused on student success; however, their focus does not address the areas of motivation to pursue, persist in, or transition out of community college presidential leadership. Even with an extensive knowledge-base regarding leadership and higher education, a singular focus can distract from a looming leadership crisis in the community college presidency.

**Statement of the Problem**

As stated, a massive exodus of community college presidents is pending. The American Association for Community Colleges reported that by 2022, 75% of current college presidents
surveyed intended to retire (AACC, 2012). An additional 15% of current college presidents surveyed indicated their intention to retire by 2027. Over the same time span, the AACC report also projected a significant loss of senior administrators and faculty members (AACC, 2012). The American Association of Community Colleges reported that the pool of potential applicants able to effectively assume the role of community college president is diminishing (AACC, 2013). From May 1, 2012 to April 15, 2013, nearly 146 first-time presidents were hired with a significant number of incumbents lacking the leadership skills to address the areas of budgeting, academic management, and fundraising (AACC, 2013). According to the 2013 Crisis and Opportunity Report released by The Aspen Institute and Achieving the Dream, 500 community colleges will be led by a new president by 2017. In addition to the impending retirement of college presidents and academic administrators, as well as, the small number of candidates equipped with the necessary leadership skills for the role of college president, the AACC reported concerns over community college trustees’ understanding of their role and responsibilities in the governance process. With 32 states having a gubernatorial appointment process for board members, significant turnover on many boards is, theoretically, only an election away (AACC, 2012).

With, (1) an impending departure of current presidents and administrators, (2) a limited applicant pool for selecting future presidents, and (3) a changing understanding of the role and responsibilities of community college board of trustees’ members, a leadership tsunami is on the horizon. It is imperative for scholars and practitioners to understand the leadership experience of community college presidents. Through this understanding, scholars and practitioners will be better equipped to function in their specific research and leadership role and provide insight and effective service to the field of higher education and exercise of community college leadership.
Context of the Study: Florida

Studies using a state as a context of analysis in higher education leadership research are evident in the literature (Albee, 2010; Carter, 2009; McFadden, 1995; Moore, 1999; Neptune, 2008; Smith, 2003; Stutz, 2014; Viltz, 1998). However, research that addresses how the unique dynamics of the state impact the leadership experiences of community college presidents is less extensive. There have been a few research studies that have provided insights into the community college leadership experiences in specific states. Carter (2009) examined the career pathways of community college presidents in Tennessee, Alabama, and Kentucky and found that the primary career pathway to the presidency was the traditional academic route. The majority of the participants in the study previously held the role of Chief Academic Officer/Provost immediately prior to serving as president. Academic preparation/education, job experiences and opportunities, and professional networks were the most common professional factors that contributed to the participants’ attainment of a community college presidency.

Leatherwood (2007) studied the community college presidency in North Carolina and found that varied community college experience was the most important quality described in advancing to the presidency. This varied experienced increased the knowledge-base of future presidents. Additionally, individuals, particularly women, who sought leadership opportunities in both external and internal settings, increased their ability to lead and were reported by the participants as critical factors in rising to the presidency. Finally, Leatherwood (2007) reported that participants’ characteristics such as flexibility, work ethic, integrity, sense of humor, humility, and good community skills were important characteristics which added in their successful career advancement.
Carter’s (2009) and Leatherwood’s (2007) work examined presidential leadership in a specific state; however, little connection was made between the dynamics of the state and the leadership experience described by the participants. On the basis of (1) my experience as a former political science instructor and current Florida College System institutional administrator and (2) conversations with numerous Florida post-secondary educators and political activists, there are four characteristics of Florida’s culture which set it apart from other states: (1) population size and demographic diversity, (2) post-secondary institutional success, (3) the focus on a tuition driven-state funding model, and (4) geo-political divisions and history of political intrusion. These four characteristics, along with the absence in the literature of research on the Florida community college presidency leadership experience, invite inquiry. Before addressing the four unique characteristics of the Florida culture, it is helpful to understand the structure of the Florida community college system, known as the Florida College System (FCS).

The Florida College System is the group of 28 public colleges on 68 campuses and 178 sites throughout the state. Over 900,000 students are enrolled at one of the 28 Florida colleges with 63% of students enrolling part-time and an average student age of 26 years (FL DOE, 2014). These institutions of higher learning are community and state colleges which receive their legal authority from the Florida State Statutes. Each institution is locally-governed with trustees appointed by the governor. Together, the 28 Florida colleges are coordinated under the authority of the Florida State Board of Education.

The Florida College System institutions are distinct from the 12 public institutions which are part of the State University System in Florida. Table 1 lists the 28 Florida College System institutions. The Florida College System is the main access point to higher education in Florida. Upon graduation from a Florida high school, 65% of students will pursue higher education at one
of the 28 Florida College System institutions and 82% of freshmen and minority students in
dpublic post-secondary education attend a Florida college (FL DOE, 2014).

Table 1

**Florida College System Institutions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FCS Institutions</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Broward College</td>
<td>Fort Lauderdale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 College of Central Florida</td>
<td>Ocala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Chipola College</td>
<td>Marianna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Daytona State College</td>
<td>Daytona Each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Eastern Florida State College</td>
<td>Cocoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Florida Gateway College</td>
<td>Lake City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Florida Keys Community College</td>
<td>Key West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Florida State College at Jacksonville</td>
<td>Jacksonville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Florida Southwestern State College</td>
<td>Fort Myers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Gulf Coast State College</td>
<td>Panama City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Hillsborough Community College</td>
<td>Tampa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Indian River State College</td>
<td>Fort Pierce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Lake-Sumter State College</td>
<td>Leesburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 State College of Florida</td>
<td>Bradenton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Miami Dade College</td>
<td>Miami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 North Florida Community College</td>
<td>Madison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Northwest Florida State College</td>
<td>Niceville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Palm Beach State College</td>
<td>Lake Worth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Pasco-Hernando State College</td>
<td>New Port Richey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Pensacola State College</td>
<td>Pensacola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Polk State College</td>
<td>Winter Haven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 St. Johns River State College</td>
<td>Palatka</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 St. Petersburg College</td>
<td>St. Petersburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Santa Fe College</td>
<td>Gainesville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Seminole State College</td>
<td>Sanford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 South Florida State College</td>
<td>Avon Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Tallahassee Community College</td>
<td>Tallahassee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Valencia College</td>
<td>Orlando</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The four characteristics of Florida’s culture which distinguish it from other states
(population size and demographic diversity, post-secondary institutional success, tuition driven-state funding model, and geo-political divisions and history of political intrusion) create a unique
dynamic within the state. Florida community college presidents must lead their institutions in
the atmosphere created by these characteristics and, therefore, their approach to leadership is influenced and shaped by this environment.

First, Florida is the third most populous state with an estimated 19.9 million residents. Florida is also the sixth fastest growing state with an annual population gain of 1.49% and is ranked third for annual numeric gain with nearly 293,000 additional residents (U.S. Census, 2014). Not only is Florida one of the most populous states, it is also one of the most racially diverse states compared to the nation. Florida’s diversity percentages consistently exceed the national average. The U.S. Census (2013) reported that 23.6% of Florida’s population is Hispanic or Latino (USA: 17.1%) and 16.7% of the population is African American (USA: 13.2%). The size and diversity of Florida reflect national characteristics and, therefore, understanding Florida aids in understanding practices and tendencies in the nation as a whole.

Second, Florida is a leading state on key measures of student success, enrollment, and cost. Florida is part of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). SREB is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works with 16 member states (Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia). The Florida College System was ranked first on first-year persistence (70.3%), three-year graduation rates (35.4%), and number of degrees and certificates awarded (101,324) (SREB, 2014). The Florida College System ranked second on the total of full-year, full-time equivalent enrollment (359,005) and had the second lowest tuition and fees revenue per full-time equivalent ($2,430) (SREB, 2014). Florida is a regional leader on key measures of student success, enrollment, and affordability.

Third, Florida community colleges have a funding model that focuses attention on tuition and fees and state appropriations. Most community colleges are funded with a combination of
state appropriations, local appropriations, student tuition and fees, auxiliary enterprises, and foundation support (Barr & McClellan, 2011). Florida’s funding model does not include local appropriations. The absence of this component in the funding equation places increased attention on state appropriations. For Florida, the increased attention on state appropriations becomes further complicated when the state’s regional divisions and political geography is applied.

Fourth, Florida is a unique state within the nation due to its regional divisions which reflect a microcosm of national trends and emerging national identities (Colburn & Dehaven-Smith, 2010). Thomas Dye (1998) has described this phenomenon as a fractured political geography. In his description of Florida, five distinct regions characterize the state: (1) the Panhandle region, (2) the Northwest Gulf Coast region, (3) the Southwest Gulf Coast region, (4) the Southeast region, and (5) the Central Florida region. These regions are each characterized by unique demographics, economies, and political preferences that reflect a hyper-heterogeneous state.

Voters in these distinct areas elect state representatives that struggle to create a comprehensive strategy for addressing state-wide problems (Colburn & Dehaven-Smith, 2010; Colburn, 2007). This has created an environment in the state whereby individual members of the legislature can yield significant power over broad-based policy areas, such as higher education. Political intrusions through recent legislative acts as illustrated by the creation of Florida’s 12th public university (SB 1994), the overhaul of developmental education (SB 1720), and the moratorium on community college baccalaureate degree programs (SB 1148) have created significant and abrupt change in Florida’s higher education system. Research on these changes and leadership in the Florida higher education system remains starkly absent. Florida’s
population size and demographic diversity, post-secondary institutional success, funding model, regional divides, and recent episodes of political intrusion all underscore the need to examine the community college presidency leadership experience within the context of the Florida College System.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research study was to describe and understand the leadership experience perspectives of selected former presidents of Florida College System institutions. The study identified the personal and professional experiences of the participants which they believe effectively contribute to the development of leadership skills. The study identified the elements which affected an individual’s desire to pursue and retire from the presidency at Florida College System institutions. The study also explored participant perceptions regarding the evolution of the Florida College System presidency. Finally, this study identified former Florida College System presidents’ perspectives on the challenges Florida College System presidents will face in the next three to five years and the leadership skills they deem essential for future presidents.

**Research Questions**

This research study used a qualitative interview study design model. It followed Brinkmann and Kvale’s (2015) Seven Stages of Interview Inquiry. The first stage involves formulating the purpose and direction of the investigation prior to engaging in data collection through interviewing (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Research questions frame a research study and give the structure, direction, and purpose to the inquiry. This research study answered five research questions. The five research questions guiding this study were:
1. What experiences affected former Florida College System presidents to seek a Florida College System presidency?

2. How do former Florida College System presidents describe their leadership experience?

3. What experiences affected former Florida College System presidents’ desire to retire from a Florida College System presidency?

4. How do former Florida College System presidents believe the Florida College system presidency changed during and after their tenure as president?

5. According to former Florida College System presidents, what are the challenges facing future Florida College System presidents and what competencies are needed to confront them?

Figure 1 Research Question Integrated Model illustrates the interconnection of the research questions involved in this research study. The arrows in the model represent research questions one and three. Research Question One, illustrated by the left arrow in the model, addresses what influences individuals to seek a Florida College System presidency while Research Question Three, represented by the right arrow in the model, examines the influences which lead to an individual’s retirement from the Florida College System presidency. Research Question Two is illustrated by the center square and addresses how former Florida College System presidents describe their leadership experience. The bottom bracket of the model coincides with Research Question Four that addresses the changes former FCS presidents believe occurred during and after their service in the presidency. Finally, Research Question Five is illustrated by the forward movement of the bracket which addresses what former FCS presidents believe will be the most pressing leadership challenges for future FCS institution presidents and what skills they believe will be most needed to confront those challenges.
Significance of the Study

The results of this study are significant to three specific groups. These groups are (1) Florida College System institution boards of trustees, (2) aspirants to Florida College System institution presidencies, and (3) higher education graduate programs. Each group will uniquely benefit from the research through this study.

First, members of boards of trustees of Florida College System institutions will be keenly interested in an individual’s motivations to pursue and retire from the college presidency. Members of boards of trustees of Florida College System institutions will be interested in the professional experiences identified by former college presidents which contributed to their acquisition of important leadership skills. Knowing the skills thought most valuable to be
successful in the Florida college presidency, as identified by former Florida college presidents, will be beneficial to members of boards of trustees of Florida College System institutions as they seek to hire future college presidents. The ACCT will also have a related benefit regarding the important data gleaned from this study. The ACCT has advocated increased study and scholarship in the area of board CEO selection (AACC, 2012).

Second, individuals who aspire to serve as future presidents of Florida College System institutions will find the results of this study helpful and insightful (A&ATD, 2013; AACC, 2013). These candidates will be able to compare their leadership development through previous personal and professional experiences to those of the participants in this study. This research study provides a valuable frame of reference for aspiring leaders and provides them with ideas for future leadership development opportunities. These future leaders will also gain valuable insight into the skills required to successfully serve in the role of college president.

Finally, graduate programs in higher education leadership will find the results of this study beneficial as they seek to develop curriculum regarding the theory and exercise of leadership in community/state college institutions. The themes and specific examples derived from and provided by the participants in the study provide valuable teaching and learning tools and resources for the ongoing study and research regarding leadership in higher education.

**Definitions of Terms**

*Competencies*: The observable and measurable skills agreed to be the standard or norm for administration in the higher education sector (AACC, 2013)

*Florida College System*: The 28 public colleges on 68 campuses and 178 sites throughout the State of Florida (FL DOE, 2014).
Community/State College: A public, primarily 2-year degree granting higher education institution (FL DOE, 2014).

President: The chief executive officer (CEO) or individual in the highest executive leadership position within a community or state college who is referred to as “president.” This did include any interim presidents since they are referred to as “president” and they hold the highest executive office within a community or state college (Smith, 2003).

Former President/Retired President: The individual who has previously served and currently does not serve as the chief executive officer (CEO) or individual in the highest executive leadership position within a community or state college.


Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

This study was confined by (1) participant experience, (2) higher education sector, and (3) geo-political designation. First, the study involves individuals who formerly served as presidents at Florida College System institutions. Therefore, the results from this study are limited to data collected from the participants in the purposive sample. It is also important to note that the participants selected for this study were former presidents who voluntarily resigned and retired from their office. They were not forced out of office or terminated by their board of trustees. It is reasonable to believe that individuals that would have exited the presidency under adverse conditions would have had a different experience than those who were able to leave on their own terms. Second, the study involves individuals who served in the community college sector of higher education. Given the unique distinctions regarding leadership in the community college sector (Eddy, 2010), generalizations to the broader higher education community should
not be made when attempting to make inferences from the research findings. Finally, the data collected reflects the experiences and responses of individuals who served within a geo-political designation: Florida. This research study describes the leadership experiences and perspectives unique to individuals who served in the Florida College System Presidency.

This study is presented in five chapters. The introductory chapter reviewed the background of the study, the problem statement, the context of the study, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the definition of terms, and the study’s delimitations and limitations. In Chapter Two I will examine the significant literature which emphasizes the importance of the research questions and provided the theoretical background for the research. In Chapter Three I will describe the research design. This will include the rationale for the selected research method, a description of the procedures to be used, the participants of the study, the data gathering methods, and a description of the analysis method to be used. In Chapter Four I will describe the findings of the research with attention placed on 13 themes which emerged from the data analysis. Finally, in Chapter Five I will present a discussion on the research findings as they related to previous research students and will discuss the implications and suggestions for future research in the area of presidential leadership.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research study is guided by five research questions. The answer to each research question is designed to illuminate aspects of leadership as it is expressed within the context of the Florida College System presidency. Each research question has emerged from the literature that contributes to the scholarly understanding of leadership. This literature review is divided into several sections. I begin this chapter with a brief historical overview of the emergence of the American community college model and a review of current community college challenges. Next the conceptual framework for this study, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) leadership competencies, is presented. Finally, specific attention is placed on current research involving the AACC leadership competencies and community college leadership.

The American Community College Model

The community college model is distinct from other post-secondary institution models. Its development within the American higher education system is a unique progression occurring over many decades. The formation of the community college model is a byproduct of the societal, cultural, political, economic, and technological changes which congruently occurred in the United States (Ratcliff, 1994). As the American societal landscape changed in the early twentieth century, higher education leaders and institutions responded with ingenuity and adaptability to meet the emerging needs of the citizenry. Several conditions in the 1900s were instrumental in the development of the junior and community college movement.
First, central government planning was not the impetus in the early junior and community college movement. This decentralized genesis allowed for greater autonomy and flexibility in establishing colleges. Local communities were often the driving force behind the establishment of colleges. Local residents who desired social distinction and recognition for their communities, as well as, tools to educate their fellow inhabitants, established colleges in their regions. Although well intended, these local residents were often more zealous in establishing colleges rather than providing ongoing financial support (Ratcliff, 1994). Economic fluctuations could often initiate the end of a local college. On the eve of the twentieth century, The Panic of 1894 resulted in educational leaders proposing that some colleges reduce their curriculum to the first two years of college and allow students to transfer to other institutions to complete their third and fourth year. The two-year curriculum would decrease expenses while allowing institutions to remain viable in their local communities.

Second, efforts by late nineteenth century higher education leaders endeavored to create increased system-wide organization and cohesiveness (Ratcliff, 1994). Efforts to delineate between collegiate and university education led to the idea of making the first two years of college study a function of secondary schools or small liberal arts colleges. Collegiate work was defined as providing exposure to the liberal arts and developing students’ capacity to pursue advanced study while university education was devoted to a research agenda to develop new knowledge, theory, and understanding.

Third, the development of the junior college model simultaneously occurred with the American educational expansion developments surrounding the development of kindergartens, middle schools, junior high schools, and compulsory secondary education. As educational leaders sought to expand and reform the greater American educational system, the role of junior
colleges was promoted. Several leaders began to view the junior college as instrumental in providing technical, vocational, and general education to professional students. Junior colleges could also continue to provide the pre-collegiate study needed to prepare students for entrance into the college and university level.

Fourth, the need and desire for certified teachers in the normal school movement helped to encourage the development of the junior college model in the United States. Normal schools primarily served female student populations and provided alternative secondary education to students who desired to become teachers. The expansion of the American education system necessitated more certified teachers. Thus, normal schools as vocational institutions were in high demand. The demand for teachers and the junior college model occurred concurrently with each institution’s mission sustaining and reinforcing the other’s mission.

Fifth, other regional vocational movements aligned with the junior college model. Prior to the twentieth century, several institutions began to emphasize technical education. Junior colleges in Illinois, Michigan, and Oklahoma focused on technical and vocational education that aligned with the needs of their local regions. In addition to the technical and vocational focus, these colleges also offered general and liberal arts education to students. The liberal arts and vocational focus allowed these junior colleges to meet a variety of regional educational needs (Ratcliff, 1994).

Sixth, as the demand for college education increased, junior colleges provided an open access model to previously underserved populations. The influx of immigrants and the women’s rights movement in the 1900s increased the desire for advanced education and training. It is important to note that traditional women’s colleges, historically Black colleges and universities, and Native-American colleges were all established prior to the complementary secondary
education programs designed to prepare those groups for college-level study. The junior college model and mission to prepare students for college-level studies synchronized with the advent of gender- and racial-specific colleges in the twentieth century. In essence, the junior college open access model is a reflection of the American democratic ideal that all students should have an opportunity to pursue college-level study. As the United States democratized, the nation’s education system adapted to accommodate new student populations. The open access model has become a defining characteristic of the junior college model.

Finally, the desire for the continuing education of workers in skilled trades, technical occupations, and professions has given rise to the development and expansion of the community college model. Central in this development was the end of World War II and the Truman Commission on Higher Education’s 1947 Report (Gleazer, 1994). The Commission emphasized junior colleges providing service to local communities. For a junior college to achieve this goal, it promoted five characteristics junior colleges should embrace:

1. Community colleges should frequently survey its community to confirm or reform its educational offerings; thus ensuring it is meeting community needs
2. Community college educational programs should serve a diverse student population and, therefore, provide alternative times for engaging in course work
3. Community colleges should develop well-integrated programs to meet the needs of various types of students
4. Community colleges should meet the needs of students who are seeking additional general education beyond the first two years of technical or vocational training
5. Community colleges should be central in providing comprehensive adult education programs
The Truman Commission’s report gave national prominence to the term “community college” and ushered in a philosophical alignment between educational leaders of junior colleges and the needs of local communities (Gleazer, 1994). The Commission also reinforced the earlier notion of open access in higher education.

The American community college model is not a mere duplication of the university model but the result of social, ethnic, economic, political, and technical factors converging in U.S. history. The late nineteenth century and twentieth century witnessed the development of a junior college model that met the educational needs of society and augmented the reforms occurring in the greater American educational system. Post World War II developments further accelerated the emphasis junior colleges were placing upon meeting the needs of local communities. This acceleration facilitated the substitution of “junior” for “community” by colleges functioning in that capacity. The result of the convergence of various factors has produced an American community college higher education system that continues to be flexible and adaptive. Today, the defining characteristics of this system continue to promote open access to higher education while serving the needs of local communities.

**Community College Challenges**

The unique development of the community college model required a unique kind of leader at the community college. Eddy (2010) identified four distinct challenges facing leaders at community colleges. The first challenge is balancing the multiple community college missions. Community colleges have traditionally been known for providing transfer education, vocational training, and community service. Community college leaders must balance these issues while being responsive to local, state, and national needs. Community and business demands and student needs and desires also pose challenges for community college leaders.
The second challenge is funding. Local and state funding has diminished, forcing community colleges to pursue new partnerships with local businesses. Most community colleges receive less than 10% of their funding from private sources (Eddy, 2010). While the argument for increased business and community college cooperation is valid, some have argued that such collaboration increases the pressure of community colleges to focus on narrowly tailored workforce training programs and courses over transfer education.

The third challenge facing community college leaders involves its student populations. Among the enduring principles of the community college model has been its commitment to open access. Lower admission standards and open enrollments have allowed community colleges to enroll more students. The negative consequence of this has been completion rates. Community college students are not traditional students. A traditional student is a high school graduate who enrolls in college the following fall (Mullin, 2012). Nationally, 67% of undergraduates are age 25 or younger (Snyder & Dillow, 2011). At community colleges, more than 30% of the student population is age 30 or older and nearly 40% of the student population is age 25 or older (Knapp et al, 2003; Hamm, 2004). Community college students tend to maintain employment outside the classroom. Eighty-four percent of community college students work while enrolled with 60% of those students working more than 20 hours per week (Mullin, 2012). Community college students have unique family relationship characteristics which place them in an at-risk classification for achieving their educational goals. Forty-seven percent of community college students are either married, separated, or are a single parent. Thirty-four percent of community college students have at least one dependent and 63% maintain independent status (Wilson, 2004). Additionally, community college students come from nuclear family units which have little-to-no post-secondary experience. Forty-five percent of community college
students have parents with a high school diploma or less while 24% have some post-secondary education. The absence of social capital for dealing with the demands of higher education course work places community college students at a competitive disadvantage compared to native students at 4-year institutions (Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum, 2003).

The final leadership challenge identified by Eddy (2010) involves the community colleges’ unique role in serving the needs of developmental education students. Community college open admission policies also result in the acceptance of students needing remedial or developmental education. Sixty percent of incoming community college students are advised to enrolled in at least one developmental education course (Bailey, 2009). These courses can require significant investments of time and money and can discourage students from pursuing the completion of their degree or achieving their educational goal (Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum, 2003). Simultaneously, the percentage of public 4-year institutions that provide developmental education dropped from 85% in 1994 to 76% in 2007 (Eddy, 2010). This has placed more pressure on community colleges to address college-readiness.

_Evolving Mission: The Community College Baccalaureate_

The mission of the community college continues to evolve as evidenced with the emergence of the community college baccalaureate degree (CCBD). Over the last two decades, the CCBD has expanded the mission of the community college. Floyd and Walker (2008) have described the rationale for the CCBD as an extension of the access principle of the mission of community colleges. This access is proved at geographic, programmatic and financial levels. Since community colleges traditionally have provided students local access to higher education, the CCBD now extends that access to the baccalaureate level. Students completing their associate’s degree can now continue their studies in an environment that is conducive to their
lifestyle and learning style. The CCBD also provides the community college student access to the baccalaureate degree specific to their educational and career aspiration. The CCBD programmatic focus allows increased ease in obtaining the desired degree by the student in a more convenient format. Finally, the CCBD allows for greater financial access to the baccalaureate degree. Community college tuition is cost-competitive and possesses the capacity to reduce long-term financial constraints on previously underserved student populations with limited financial resource access.

Critics of the CCBD see it as community college mission creep; however, it is important to note several points in the mission debate. First, as universities increasingly focus on graduate education and research, local communities have felt their needs for baccalaureate training in certain career-fields which have been sidestepped (Floyd & Walker, 2009). This development has created an opportunity for community colleges to continue to serve local communities through the awarding of the CCBD. Second, most of the CCBD colleges are not providing baccalaureate degree programs in the traditional liberal arts disciplines. The CCBD is often offered in workforce and applied science disciplines. These fields are typically not represented at the university level but are important to local workforce needs which have been the traditional focus of community colleges (Floyd & Walker, 2008). Currently, 24 of the 28 institutions in the Florida College System offer the CCBD. Research on attitudes towards and motivations regarding adding the CCBD to community college curriculums has occurred (Burrows, 2002; Kielty, 2010; Petry, 2006); however, research regarding how president’s perceived this development has changed the role of the presidency has not occurred.

The four challenges facing community college leaders identified by Eddy (2010), (1) balancing multiple missions, (2) funding, (3) non-traditional student populations, and (4)
Developmental education access and the rise of the community college baccalaureate degree are connected to the historical mission of the community college (access, service, teaching, and continuing education). These challenges continue to impact the completion, retention, and placement rates of students who come from the community college context. Diminishing financial resources and state-funded support along with increased political intrusion in college policy and curriculum indicate community college leaders must be proficient in the competencies of resource management and community college advocacy. These competencies will continue to rise in importance as leaders confront the elements and conditions which impact the evolving mission of the community college.

To understand these challenges, Kouzes and Posner’s (2012) research can provide an operational definition for leadership. For this study, the leadership definition of Kouzes and Posner (2012) was used: leadership is, “the relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012 p. 30). Additionally, the American Association of Community Colleges has provided a conceptual framework that offers a descriptive and prescriptive range of competencies required to confront the challenges facing community colleges.

**The AACC Leadership Competencies for Community College Leaders**

The conceptual framework informing this research study was the American Association for Community Colleges (AACC) Leadership Competencies. In 2005, the AACC released six leadership competency categories after a two-year development process that was first initiated by a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The goal of the development process was to identify the areas of competence that community college leaders most needed to be effective in the roles (AACC, 2005). The six areas were: (1) organizational strategy, (2) resource management, (3)
communication, (4) collaboration, (5) community college advocacy, and (6) professionalism.
Later in 2013, the AACC released an updated list of the community college leadership competency categories which identified twenty-four competencies, in five categories. The major differences between the two category lists included the infusion of the competencies found in the category of professionalism into the other five categories and the expansion of resource management to also include institutional finance, research, and fundraising. The AACC Leadership Competency approach offers a broad-based and comprehensive set of skills to aid community college leaders in their approach to leadership.

The five leadership competency areas in the 2013 model are: (1) organizational strategy, (2) institutional finance, research, funding, and resource management, (3) communication, (4) collaboration, and (5) community college advocacy. For each of the twenty-four specific competencies, the AACC created a continuum to assess the level of development. Specific examples for each competency are presented for emerging leaders, new chief executive officers with three or less years of experience in their position, and new chief executive officers with three or more years of experience in their position.

The organizational strategy competency area refers to a community college leader’s ability to promote student success, institutional quality improvement, and mission fulfillment. The eight specific AACC competencies associated with this category for CEOs with three or more years of experience were:

1. Be authentic
2. Have courage
3. Take risks
4. Focus all employees on student success
5. Create an environment that promotes access, inclusion, and equity

6. Embrace and understand how to communicate with technology and how to use it to increase student success

7. Articulate the role of the board of trustees to the college community

8. Build a team around the institutions’ goals for student success

The competency areas of institutional finance, research, fundraising, and resource management refers to the physical and financial assets of the institution. The five AACC competencies associated with this category for CEOs with three or more years of experience were:

1. Develop in-depth knowledge of the finances of the organization and have knowledge of alternative approaches to address shortages

2. Take an entrepreneurial stances in seeking alternative funding sources

3. Ensure accountability in reporting

4. Employ organizational time management

5. Manage conflict and change in ways that contribute to the long-term viability of the organization

The communication competency area refers to a community college leader’s ability to articulate priorities, goals, and vision to various internal and external stakeholders. Seven AACC competencies are associated with this category for CEOs with three or more years of experience:

1. Convey ideas and information succinctly, frequently, and inclusively through the media, to the board, and other constituencies and stakeholders

2. Understand communications with print versus on-camera or web-based media and refine skills to be effective in all venues
3. Project confidence and respond responsibly and tactfully
4. Facilitate an environment of shared problem solving and decision making
5. Build and leverage internal and external networks and partnerships
6. Understand that people live and interact in an increasingly globalized world
7. Understand how to engage media at the local, state, and national levels to advocate for the community college mission

The collaboration competency area refers to a community college leader’s ability to develop and maintain internal and external relationships that promote student success and advance the community college mission. The two AACC competencies associated with this category for CEOs with three or more years of experience were:

1. Break down silos and mitigate internal politics within the institution
2. Build and leverage internal and external networks and partnerships to advance the mission, vision, and goals of the community college

Finally, the competency area of community college advocacy refers to a community college leader’s ability to promote the mission of the community college at the local, state, and national level. The two AACC competencies associated with this category for CEOs with three or more years of experience were:

1. Engage in shaping multiple government programs to best meet college objectives
2. Engage with public outlets in a proactive manner that most effectively advocates for the operations of the college

Related to the AACC competencies are the qualities for highly effective community college presidents identified by the Aspen Institute and Achieving the Dream Project (A&ATD) (2013). The five core qualities identified were:
1. A deep commitment to student access and success
2. Willingness to take significant risks to advance student success
3. Ability to create lasting change within the college
4. Having a strong, broad, strategic vision for the college and its students, reflected in external partnerships
5. Raise and allocate resources in ways aligned to student success

Similar to the AACC competencies, the A&ATD core qualities focused on student success. The A&ATD also advocated taking risks by openly acknowledging low levels of student success and realigning resources when needed to promote student outcomes. According to the A&ATD (2013) to create lasting change, effective community college presidents must build urgency for action, create strong plans to achieve goals, collaborate with faculty and student services staff and be ready to implement and evaluate strategies for achieving student success. To establish external partnership that align with the community college mission, effective community college leaders should work with K-12 education providers to reduce developmental education needs, work with the community to provide more on-the-job-training, form partnerships with social services agencies as references for students, and develop relationships with political and legislative authorities to ensure funding. Finally, effective community college leaders will explore ways to engage in entrepreneurial strategies to connect the community college mission with local business, community, and philanthropic endeavors that champion student success.

Both the AACC and A&ATD address the unique leadership needs facing community college leaders and presidents. These qualities and competencies are essential for current and future community college presidents. While the political, financial, and community environments continue to shift, community college leaders and presidents will continue to need
to remain responsive and flexible as they adapt to the surrounding climate and strive to provide access and opportunity to a large, diverse, and challenging student population.

**The Presidential Leadership Experience**

The perception that AACC leadership competencies are important has been established (Becthel, 2010; Curphy, 2011; Duree, 2007; Hassan, 2008; Price, 2012; Robison, 2014). Hassan’s (2008) research sought to validate the AACC competencies as important for effective community college leadership. Included in his study were a subset of 13 Florida college presidents and 13 boards of trustees’ chairpersons. The highest rated AACC competencies (2005) by presidents and board of trustee chairpersons were (1) organizational strategy, (2) community college advocacy, and (3) communication. The lowest rated AACC competencies (2005) were (1) resource management, (2) collaboration, and (3) professionalism. Hassan (2008) also found that there was no statistically significant difference between the means of responses by presidents and trustee board chairpersons on the importance of AACC competencies.

Hassan (2008) also examined which development experiences community college presidents found most helpful in their leadership development. The four most frequently cited experiences were: (1) progressive job responsibilities, (2) challenging job assignments, (3) networking, and (4) graduate programs. Kools (2010), who also examined development experiences among college leaders and found almost identical rankings for the four most frequently cited experiences: (1) challenging job assignments, (2) progressive job responsibilities, (3) networking, and (4) graduate programs. Price’s (2012) research on leadership development experiences and academic affairs officers found very similar results to Hassan’s (2008) and Kools’ (2010) research. The four most frequently cited development experiences were: (1) progressive job responsibilities, (2) challenging job assignments, (3) networking, and (4) graduate programs.
participation in institutional task forces, committees, and commissions, and (4) networking. Hassan’s (2008) and Kools’ (2010) research involved CEOs while Price’s (2012) research centered on chief-academic officers. The three studies show a strong consensus regarding the importance of on-the-job experience contributing to leadership development.

One additional finding of interest by Hassan (2008) was that the highest rated AACC leadership competency that was thought to be needed (community college advocacy) was reportedly developed with the fewest number of development experiences. Hassan (2008) concluded that this may be an indication that various experiences contribute differently to the development of certain competencies, making some experiences more relevant to certain specific competency development. Unlike the other competencies, this competency involves advocating for the community college on campus, in the community and at state or national levels; an activity that may not have been encountered in coursework or in previous work experience.

Duree (2007) explored community college president’s perceptions of their preparedness for the presidency through the filter of the AACC competencies. Participants in his research study indicated that they felt well prepared in the competencies of organizational strategy, communication, and advocacy. Respondents felt less prepared in the areas of resource management, specifically as it applied to being well-prepared to take an entrepreneurial approach to finding ethical alternative funding sources. Respondents also did not feel as prepared in skills associated with developing a sense of collaboration or in demonstrating cultural competence in a global society when assuming their first presidency. Two of the areas identified by Duree (2007) in which community college presidents did not feel as prepared (resource management and collaboration) were rated least important by presidents and board chairpersons in Hassan’s (2008) research.
Finally, it is worthwhile to note the research regarding the career stages and leadership experience of presidents and AACC competencies. Bonner (2013) researched the community college presidency and AACC competencies for incumbents classified as beginning-, mid-, and senior-level presidents. Her findings suggested that (1) beginning presidents, during their first term in office, struggled with the solitary nature of the presidency, (2) candidates seeking a community college presidency should seek and develop diverse professional experiences while cultivating a passion for the process, and (3) effective presidents should have the characteristics of energy, persistence, and grit in order to face and effectively manage the pressures of the community college presidency.

*Mentorship*

The intersection of mentorship and AACC competencies is an important research area. Studies have shown that effective presidents should have persistence; however, the inspiration source for this persistence has not been adequately identified (Bonner, 2013). What previous relationships could provide community college presidents with inspiration for persistence? Several scholars have attempted to explore this field. Rabey (2011) studied community college leadership preparation, AACC competencies, and the role of mentorship. Rabey (2011) identified the advantage of future community college presidents having a mentor. These mentors assisted aspirants in strengthening their proficiency in and familiarity with AACC competencies. Rather than past experience alone, Rabey’s (2011) research found that having a mentor significantly aided in preparing community college leaders for their first presidency more than non-mentored candidates. In his study, the majority of female presidents indicated they had mentors prior to their first term as presidents and that having a mentor greatly increased their chance of ascending to the community college presidency. Rabey’s (2011) research reinforced
the earlier work of Stubbe (2008) who used AACC competencies to identify gender differences in proficiency regarding organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, and advocacy. Stubbe (2008) found that female candidates for college presidencies were significantly aided in their pursuit of a presidency when a mentor was active in their professional development and that mentors greatly assisted the aspirants in strengthening their proficiency in the competency areas of communication and collaboration.

Like Stubbe (2008), Bugg (2009) researched the role of race in candidate preparation for the community college presidency and found that culturally informed candidates that were aware of their culture distinctions and the nature of the community college presidency were able to effectively assume the role of community college president and maximize their role in the institution. This heightened awareness empowered the individuals to persist in their role as community college presidents and was often a result of their interaction with a mentor or as a result of a previous professional or personal experience that expanded their understanding of themselves.

Stubbe’s (2008), Bugg’s (2009), and Rabey’s (2011) research underscored the importance, particularly for minority populations, of having a mentor to assist with leadership preparation for the community college presidency. Regardless of background, the presence of a mentor in the personal and professional life of the candidate, contributed significantly to presidential aspirations.

*Leadership Development*

Leadership development through development opportunities and the presence of AACC competencies has also been an important research area (Boggs & Kent, 2002; Cejda, 2006; Duree, 2007; Hassan, 2008; Kools, 2010; Shults, 2001; VanDerLinden, 2005). These studies
have shown that, regardless of administrative area or field, academic leaders report similar leadership development experiences which have contributed to their professional development and career advancement. Among these leadership development opportunities include: advance degree attainment (Boggs & Kent, 2002; Duree, 2007; Shults, 2001); in-house programs and other leadership development programs; (Boggs & Kent, 2002; Shults, 2001; VanDerLinden, 2005); mentoring and performance evaluations (Boggs & Kent, 2002; Shults, 2001; VanDerLinden, 2005); committee and commission service (Cejda, 2006; VanDerLinden, 2005); external institutional service (Cejda, 2006; Shults, 2001; VanDerLinden, 2005).

Hassan (2008) reported the top three leadership experiences which contributed to a leadership professional development for each of the AACC leadership competency areas. Table 2 summaries his findings. Later Kools’ (2010) confirmed Hassan’s (2008) findings that presidents did not find (1) business experience, (2) personal reflection, (3) military experience or (4) government experience as helpful in their leadership development.

Table 2

Hassan’s Findings on AACC Competencies and the Top 3 Leadership Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AACC Leadership Competency Category (2005)</th>
<th>Leadership Experience</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>• Progressive job responsibilities</td>
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<td>• Challenging job assignments</td>
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<td>• Feedback</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
<td>• Feedback</td>
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<td>• Challenging job responsibilities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Hardships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community College Advocacy</td>
<td>• Networking with colleagues</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Mentoring/coaching</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Sponsored workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational Strategy</td>
<td>• Progressive job responsibilities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Challenging job assignments</td>
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Table 2 (Continued)

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<th>AACC Leadership Competency Category (2005)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>• Mentors/coaches</td>
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<td>• Progressive job responsibilities</td>
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<td>Resource Management</td>
<td>• Progressive job responsibilities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Challenging job assignments</td>
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<td>• Networking with colleagues</td>
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Eddy (2010) argued that the four challenges facing community colleges are: (1) balancing multiple missions, (2) funding, (3) non-traditional student populations, and (4) developmental education access. The five areas from the AACC Leadership Competencies: (1) organizational strategy, (2) institutional finance, research, funding, and resource management, (3) communication, (4) collaboration, and (5) community college advocacy have been identified as the areas to achieve proficiency in order to be effective. Hassan (2008), Kools (2010), and Price (2012) showed that leaders do order competencies, ranking them based on salience and importance.

Hassan (2008) found the highest rated AACC competencies (2005) by presidents and board of trustee chairpersons were (1) organizational strategy, (2) community college advocacy, and (3) communication. Price’s (2012) research on chief academic affairs officers’ perception of competency importance and Kools’ (2010) research on leadership competency importance by college service area also had reported that leaders listed these three competencies as the most important. Hassan’s (2008), Kools’ (2010), and Price’s (2012) research all found the lowest rated AACC competencies to be (1) resource management, (2) collaboration, and (3)
professionalism. Table 3 shows the AACC leadership competencies category rankings as reported in the previous research studies findings.

Table 3

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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Lg. Urban</td>
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</table>

Using a mixed-method research design, Becthel (2010) examined the in-house leadership development curriculum of a large Midwest multi-campus metropolitan community college. The aim was to determine the extent to which transformational leadership theory and AACC leadership competencies were introduced, reinforced, and mastered in the program. Using the Leadership Academy Competencies Survey (LACS), focus groups, and document analysis, Becthel (2010) found that the AACC competencies were reported by the leadership program participants to be present in the curriculum to a moderate extent. Participants felt community college advocacy was the strongest competency stressed with resource management being stressed the least. Interestingly, the leadership program steering committee felt that the community college advocacy competency was among the least emphasized. Like Becthel (2010), Robison (2014) in his study of community colleges in the Southern Association of College and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) region and AACC competencies and in-house leadership programs, found that the two most emphasized competencies were
community college advocacy and professionalism and that the least emphasized leadership competency was resource management.

When comparing these findings with Hassan’s (2008) research, it is interesting to note that Hassan (2008) found resource management rated as the least important AACC competency by community college presidents and board chairpersons and community college advocacy was rated the second most important competency by community college presidents and board chairpersons. Additional research studies have found a low rating of resource management importance (Schmitz, 2008). While each group (participants and directors) in Becthel’s (2010) study perceived varying degrees of emphasis regarding the embedment of AACC competencies in the program, both groups determined that AACC competencies were included in the overall program and that their inclusion strengthen the program and it’s intended purpose: to develop future leaders for college-wide service. Robison’s (2014) research concluded that while AACC competencies are important and included in in-house leadership development curriculum, emphasis on certain competencies (community college advocacy and professionalism) is stronger than competencies such as resources management. This may be a result of an inherent leadership focus on understanding the role of the community college through an external stakeholder political frame (Bolman and Deal, 2008; Bolman and Gallos, 2011) and the need for community college leaders to build external networks rather than focus on operational resource management sub-set skills. Like community college advocacy, this competency may not have been encountered in previous coursework and/or work experience.

**Presidential Selection**

Taking a procedural step back from Becthel’s (2010) and Robison’s (2014) research focus, several research studies have focused on the role of search committees and search firms in
the presidential selection process. Curphy (2011) used a case study research design to examine the use of AACC competencies in the presidential search process. Curphy (2011) sought to examine the extent search firms and search committees are utilizing the AACC competencies in selecting community college presidents. For the case study, a large Midwestern state’s community college system was selected. Curphy (2011) choose six recently selected community college presidents. When asked whether the newly selected president had ever heard of the AACC competencies, four indicated they had not. Additionally, only three of the four who had not heard about the AACC competencies felt previous knowledge of the competencies would have been helpful during the presidential section process. The remaining participant reported that his focus was on the job description and posting rather than leadership competencies in general.

Curphy (2011) concluded that presidential search committees have been unaware of the AACC competencies and have been “reinventing the wheel” by creating unique competences for their institutions (p. 96). Hassan’s (2008) research focused on the perceived importance of AACC competencies by presidents and board chairperson’s in Florida and New York. Since board chairpersons would be keenly involved in selecting new presidents, it is interesting to note that participants in Curphy’s (2011) case study reported that they either did not know about or did not highly value leadership competencies in the presidential selection process. Curphy’s (2011) research focused on a Midwest state’s community college system with respondents apparently less interested in leadership competencies. This might suggest that regional differences in states and/or differences at the institutional-level may affect a board’s interest in or belief in the salience of general leadership competencies.
The research of Rush (2012) provides an example of when institutional characteristics may trump the use of AACC competencies when selecting a president. Rush (2012) examined whether certain departing president and community college trustee board characteristics influenced the type of president that was selected at a community college. Rush (2012) found that (1) non-white and/or internal candidates were more likely to be hired at institutions with a non-white board chair, female departing presidents, and/or non-white departing presidents, (2) female presidential candidates were not more likely to be selected at community colleges with female board chairs or departing female presidents, and (3) community colleges with smaller student populations were more likely to hire female, non-white, and/or internal candidates. Rush’s (2012) research supports the idea that other institutional-level characteristics may have stronger influence on the selection process and outcome than established industry-level competencies.

Curphy’s (2011) research underscored the neglect of search firms and search committees to use the AACC competencies in the presidential search process; however, this neglect may be a form of benign neglect as other institutional-level elements compete for saliency (Rush, 2012). However, those involved in the presidential selection process should be highly cognizant that if search firms and search committees fail to incorporate industry accepted leadership competencies in their work, they can potentially increase the likelihood of failing to select the most qualified candidate. Consequently, this reality poses grave implications for the status of community college presidential leadership.

*Presidential Retirement*

Presidential retirement has been an area of interest in higher education leadership, but less research has been focused on this area. Vaughan (1989) compiled a checklist of 12
characteristics to gauge presidential effectiveness as a guide for presidents and boards of trustees to address the question of, “What experiences affected former Florida College System presidents’ desire to retire from a Florida College System presidency?” Table 4 summaries Vaughan’s (1989) findings.

Table 4

*Presidential Tenure Checklist*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When Nothing Is Exciting</td>
<td>A loss of enthusiasm for the job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When Everything Must Be Exciting</td>
<td>An endless attempt to create excitement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When Priorities Cannot Be Established</td>
<td>When work becomes either equally important, routine, or when the appeal to do the things requiring the least effort is strongest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the Agenda Is Completed</td>
<td>Goals have been achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When Lower Standards Are Accepted</td>
<td>Standards of excellence and acceptance are diminished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the Vote Is One of No Confidence</td>
<td>The loss of confidence of a major segment of the college community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the Fit Is No Longer Right</td>
<td>A change in circumstances or the individual which alters the working relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When No Risks Are Taken</td>
<td>Safe, low-risk decisions become the norm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When “They” Want You</td>
<td>The presence of a desire on the part of one segment of the college community to unseat the incumbent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the President “Self-Destructs”</td>
<td>Presidents begin to look for reason to leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the Seesaw Stops</td>
<td>The contented nature of the board and the president to accept the status quo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When the Grass is Greener</td>
<td>When a president sees other career aspirations as more appealing to his/her current role</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the exception of (1) a no confidence vote, (2) the desire to unseat the incumbent, and (3) inclination of the board to accept the status quo, the remaining nine checklist characteristics are personal on the part of the incumbent. This means the individual rather than an external force dominates the circumstances surrounding presidential retirement. This tilts the decision to leave the presidency in favor of the incumbent rather than a group or individual outside the office. Given the nature of the presidency, Vaughan (1989) also argues that presidents should intellectually and psychologically prepare for life after the presidency.

The research on the community college presidency and the AACC competencies has yielded some important findings. First, AACC competencies are perceived by aspiring presidents, current presidents, and board chairpersons to be important for the community college presidency. Second, there seems to be a tiering of the importance of these competencies which places community college advocacy near the top (most important) and resource management near the bottom (least important). Third, the presence of mentors, especially in minority populations, greatly assists in enhancing presidential aspirants’ proficiency in and familiarity with AACC competencies and pursuing the community college presidency. Fourth, in-house leadership development programs are attempting to incorporate AACC competencies into their curriculum; however, the perception of participants indicates a stratification of competencies which seem to place more importance on community college advocacy even when lesser emphasized competencies, such as resource management are deem more import by in-house leadership development directors. Finally, the importance of and use of AACC competencies in
selecting community college presidents seems mixed. Certain regions appear to at least place importance on the use of AACC competencies while other regions appear to dismiss the use of AACC competencies in favor of institution specific job skills. The AACC competencies provide a broad and heuristic framework in categorizing and organizing the leadership experience of aspiring and current community college presidents. This research study will continue to build on the research between AACC competencies and community college presidential leadership by understanding the leadership experience of individuals who have served in the community college presidency in the context of the Florida College System.

**Summary**

In this chapter I reviewed the literature associated with the study of leadership and the community college. A review of the development of the American community college model was presented that illustrates the origins of and the unique leadership challenges facing community colleges. The conceptual framework for this study, the AACC leadership competencies, was examined and current research on the intersection of the community college presidency and leadership was discussed.

While the field of community college presidential leadership has been growing in the areas of competency scholarship, the literature is missing a discussion of these topics concerning community college presidents serving in the Florida College System. The unique challenges facing the community college leaders are only amplified by the size, diversity, and political nature of the state of Florida. The 28 Florida College System institutions and the presidents that lead them have distinct challenges. By examining the community college presidency within the context of the Florida College System, this research contributes to the literature field,
strengthening scholars’ and practitioners’ understanding of the community college leadership experience.
CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to describe and understand the leadership experience perspectives of selected former presidents at Florida College System institutions. In this study I identified the personal and professional experiences of the participants which they believe effectively contribute to the development of leadership skills. Using transformational leadership as a perspective to understand leadership, the study identified the elements which affect an individual’s action to pursue and retire from the presidency at Florida College System institutions. In this study I also explored participant perceptions regarding the evolution of the Florida College System presidency and finally, I identified former FCS presidents’ perspectives on the challenges of the next three to five years that FCS presidents will face and the leadership skills thought most valuable for future Florida community college presidents to possess. The five research questions in this study related to the leadership experience and the college presidency at Florida College System institutions were:

1. What experiences affected former Florida College System presidents to seek a Florida College System presidency?

2. How do former Florida College System presidents describe their leadership experience?

3. What experiences affected former Florida College System presidents’ desire to retire from a Florida College System presidency?
4. How do former Florida College System presidents believe the Florida College system presidency changed during and after their tenure as president?

5. According to former Florida College System presidents, what are the challenges facing future Florida College System presidents and what competencies are needed to confront them?

Figure 1 Research Question Integrated Model illustrates the interconnection of the research questions involved in this research study. The arrows in the model represent research questions one and three. Research Question One, illustrated by the left arrow in the model, addresses what influences individuals to seek a Florida College System presidency while Research Question Three, represented by the right arrow in the model, examines the influences which lead to an individual’s retirement from the Florida College System presidency. Research Question Two is illustrated by the center square and addresses how former Florida College System presidents describe their leadership experience. The bottom bracket of the model coincides with Research Question Four that addresses how the participants believe the presidency has evolved during and after their service in the presidency. Finally, the forward movement of the bracket illustrates Research Questions 5 that addresses what former FCS presidents believe will be the most pressing leadership challenges for future Florida College System institution presidents and what skills they believe will be most needed to confront those challenges.

Research Design

This research study was a qualitative investigation into the leadership experiences of college presidents at Florida College System institutions. Creswell (2013) identified five characteristics of qualitative research: (1) it allows for participants in the research to construct meaning through their personal understanding of society, (2) the researcher collects and analyses
data through an interactive process, (3) participants are observed in their natural setting, (4) it allows for the construction of concepts, theories, and hypotheses rather than the testing of existing ideas, and (5) it provides rich and vivid research that is highly descriptive and accessible.

Bass (1990) identified the need to use qualitative methods to study the phenomenon of leadership. Qualitative interviewing is an effective approach to understanding human experiences because it allows researchers to describe and understand a participant’s experience and his or her own understanding of his or her motives and reality (Seidman, 2012). Using transformational leadership to frame the conceptualization of leadership, leadership can be defined as, “The relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012 p. 30). The advantage of qualitative interview methods to unlock the vivid leadership experiences of former Florida community college presidents, encourages the decision to select a qualitative interview study design.

This study’s qualitative interview design used Brinkmann and Kvale’s (2015) Seven Stages of Interview Inquiry: (1) thematizing, (2) designing, (3) interviewing, (4) transcribing, (5) analyzing, (6) verifying, and (7) reporting. In stage one, thematizing, the purpose of the inquiry and the direction of the research is formulated. The purpose of this study was to describe and explain the leadership experiences and perspectives of former Florida College System presidents. Five research questions have emerged from the literature which guided this inquiry. Transformational leadership was the leadership theory that has been selected to conceptualize leadership.

In stage two, designing, careful attention is taken in consider all seven stages of the inquiry process before commencing the interviews. The designing stage requires researchers to
consider population, sample, sample selection, data collection procedures, data management, data analysis, and ethical considerations. In addition to following USF IRB guidelines, this research study conformed to Patton’s (2002) five areas of ethical compliance: (1) explaining purpose, (2) informed consent, (3) confidentiality, (4) data collection, and (5) data accesses. Chapter three of this proposal outlines the specific procedures and protocols associated with this research study.

In stage three, interviewing, the data collection through interviewing commences. For this research study, the data was collected using a responsive interviewing model that involved semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). This research study’s interviews was explorative in purpose (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Explorative interviews are characterized by an open and flexible structure in which I can introduce an issue and seek new information regarding the inquiry subject. There is methodological alignment between the explorative interview purpose and the semi-structure interview style. My approach to the interview process embodied a romantic conception of interviewing. Romantic interviewing values the establishment of a rapport and empathic connection with the interviewee in which the data generated provides in-depth knowledge concerning the beliefs, perceptions, experiences and opinions of the participants (Roulston, 2010). Romantic interviewing also holds that the data is co-constructed by the interviewer and the interviewee (Roulston, 2010). This allowed me the ability to contribute to the conversation and heighten the rapport with my participants, leading to the generation and collection of deep meaning and insight.

In stage four, transcribing, the interviews were transcribed from oral data to text data. The files were uploaded to a third-party transcription provider, Production Transcripts of Glendale, CA. Word-for-word transcribed electronic files of the interviews were provided to me
in Microsoft WORD format. In stage five, analyzing, the data from this research study was analyzed using Rubin and Rubin’s (2012) Seven Steps in Responsive Interview Data Analysis. The decision to use this method of data analysis was selected because it is supported by the use of explorative, semi-structured, interviews (Brinkmann & Kvale’s, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

In stage six, verifying, the research findings were examined to determine its trustworthiness and quality. This research study used Roulston’s (2010) criteria for addressing quality in romantic interviewing (triangulation, audit trail, longevity in the field, member checking, and subjectivity). Finally, in stage seven, reporting, the full procedures, methods, and findings of this study was presented in a readable medium. The final dissertation sharing this information was defended as partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction.

Participants and Selection Process

The population for this study included individuals who have ever served in and retired from the college presidency at a Florida College System institutions. With a large population, it was important to select a sampling of individuals for the study. Numerous qualitative researchers have written on the subject of sampling (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015; Creswell, 2013; Janesick, 2011; Lichtman, 2013; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Participants in a qualitative interview study are selected by a researcher because they have experienced the subject being studied. The sample is homogenous in terms of shared experience. Lichtman (2013) suggests that it is routine to see qualitative research studies with fewer than 10 participants.

Using a purposeful sampling strategy, six individuals were identified and asked to participate in this study. Each participant had served in at least one community college presidency in Florida and was currently retired and no longer engaged in full-time employment.
As a current employee at a Florida College System institution, I had several contacts with current and former presidents and several of those individuals had expressed interest in participating in my study. I also utilized the contacts and connections of members of my dissertation committee to identify potential participants. An initial email requesting an interview was sent to each potential participant. Each individual who was asked to participate in the study accepted the invitation. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym (P1, P2, etc.) to protect the participant’s identity. Table 5 shows the number of presidencies in which each participant served in a community college in Florida and the number of presidencies in which each participant served in a community college outside the state of Florida.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number Florida Presidencies</th>
<th>Number of non-Florida Presidencies</th>
<th>Total Number of Presidencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four of the six participants served in more than one community college presidency. Two of the participants in this research study were females and four of the participants were males. The participants came from a variety of higher education backgrounds before serving as president. The participants had held multiple positions in student affairs, academic advising, foundation and auxiliary support services, academic affairs, classroom instruction, financial aid, and institutional effectiveness. The participants were seasoned veterans who were deemed successful in their professional careers as evidenced by their tenure as president at their
respective institutions. None of the participants were forced to leave the presidency under adverse conditions but retired and exited the presidency on their own terms. In fact, many of the boards of trustees upon learning of their president’s desire to retire attempted to dissuade the participant from exiting the presidency and remain as president. During the data collection process the participants were eager to engage in the interviews and repeatedly offered their help to advance and promote my research project. The participants emanated a genuine warmth and interest in the research study’s purpose and were extremely flexible and accommodating when working to establish interview times and locations.

Data Collection Procedures

Prior to commencing this research study, a request for review involving human subjects was filed with the University of South Florida’s (USF) Social and Behavioral Institutional Review Board (IRB). The USF IRB is the committee which reviews all research involving human subjects. A mandatory training module that outlines the procedures, rules, and regulations associated with ethical and responsible research at USF is required. I completed the IRB Application for Initial Review, Determination, or Exemption. A copy of my Collaborate Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Human Research Curriculum Completion Report is included in Appendix B. A copy of the USF Research Integrity and Compliance Approval Letter is included in Appendix C.

In qualitative research, the researcher is the research instrument (Janesick, 2011). The full physical, mental, and emotional perceptive powers of the researcher must be used to fully gather and analyze the rich data taken from qualitative inquiry. The primary data collection vehicle in this study was the interview process. Janesick (2011) defines interviewing as, “a meeting of two persons to exchange information and ideas through questions and responses,
resulting in communication and joint construction of meaning about a particular topic” (p. 100). This research study’s interviews were explorative in purpose (Brinkmann & Kvale’s, 2015). Explorative interviews allowed for an open and flexible structure in which I can introduce an issue and seek new a perspective on the subject of the inquiry. This study used a responsive interviewing model for all the interviews conducted. Responsive interviewing is a specific type of qualitative interviewing which allows for flexibility of design and allows for semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The responsive interviewing model is based on the assumption that the participants have experienced what is true for them and that through sharing those experiences the researcher is able to better understand the subject being studied. Rather than traditional interviewing which can emphasize detachment, responsive interviewing encourages the establishment of a mutually beneficial relationship between conversational partners (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Here, the interview process becomes a forum where both conversational partners can validate and adapt to the personalities of both individuals involved in the interview process. There is methodological alignment between the explorative interview purpose and the semi-structure interview style.

Semi-structure interviews encourage the interviewee to take the necessary time to fully answer the question. Follow-up probing questions allow for increased understanding of the subject from the interviewee’s perspective (Janesick, 2011; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The semi-structured interview also allows the researcher more control over the direction of the interview, thus providing the researcher directional control of the interview process while permitting the interviewee the flexibility to answer questions in rich detail.

Once the participant agreed to participate in the study, she or he was emailed an informed consent letter and asked to agree to the terms and conditions of the study (Appendix E). Once
informed consent was obtained, a date and time was schedule for the interview to take place. Informed consent was collected and stored on my password-protected home computer. Participants were provided the option of either conducting the interviews in a face-to-face, phone, for video-conferencing format. Each participant was emailed the interview protocols prior to their scheduled interview to allow them adequate time to prepare for their responses (Appendix E). Two participants choose a face-to-face format with the remaining four participants selecting a phone format for their interviews. Five of the six participants requested that one interview be held rather than two separate interviews. One participant had two interviews. For the five participants who choose one interview, their interviews lasted between 108 minutes and 118 minutes each. The one participant who had two interviews had an initial interview of approximately 96 minutes and a second interview lasting approximately 36 minutes.

On the day of each scheduled interview, I either drove to the agreed-upon location or called the participant at the phone number they provided. A summary of the purpose of the research study was provided at the beginning of each interview along with an opportunity for the participant to ask any questions regarding the purpose of the study or the process of interviewing. I reminded each participant that I would be audio-recording the entire interview, transcribing the interview, and providing them a copy of the transcription.

All interviews were audio recorded on an Olympus USB digital voice recorder (model #WS-82). The interviews and data collection was completed within six weeks. Table 6 lists the interview questions that addressed each research question.
Table 6

*Interview Questions as Related to the Research Questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Interview Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Question 1: What experiences affected former Florida College System</td>
<td>1. Was your presidency here in Florida your first presidency?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>presidents to seek a Florida College System presidency?</td>
<td>2. Would you think back to the time when you decided to apply for the presidency in Florida and share with me some of your thoughts on that decision?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Were there significant individuals, mentors, or conditions in your life that influenced you to seek the presidency in Florida? If so, can you tell me about how they influenced your thinking about becoming a community college president in Florida?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. While a Florida community college president, did you ever have an opportunity to leave the presidency for one in another state? If so, why did you choose to remain in Florida?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Question 2: How do former Florida College System presidents describe their</td>
<td>1. In reflecting back, do you feel you were prepared for the job when you became president?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leadership experience?</td>
<td>2. What were the biggest surprises, if any, after you assumed the position? Were there things you wish you had known more about before starting?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. What leadership skills do you think were critically important to your success as a president?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. As president, what skills were your strengths? What skills did you not feel as confident?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. What personal and/or professional experiences do you believe developed your leadership skills?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. As president, how would you describe your leadership style? What metaphors, if any, have you used to describe your leadership style?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question</td>
<td>Interview Question</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Research Question 2: How do former Florida College System presidents describe their leadership experience?</strong></td>
<td>7. What has been the most rewarding aspect of your service as a president?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Can you share an experience that was personally challenging and/or caused you stress, but was finally resolved with some level of success?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9. As president, are there things you wished you had done differently?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Question 3: What experiences affected former Florida College System presidents’ desire to retire from a Florida College System presidency?</strong></td>
<td>1. Prior to your retirement, was there a time you considered resigning and did not do so? If so, what changed your mind?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Was there a defining moment when you wanted to retire from the presidency? If so, describe that moment for me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. How long had you been considering retirement prior to making an official announcement?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. How important was the opinion of your spouse or significant partner in your decision to retire?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Do you have any regrets regarding the timing of your retirement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. What do you miss about being president?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. What has been difficult about adjusting to life after the presidency?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Question 4: How do former Florida College System presidents believe the Florida College system presidency changed during and after their tenure as president?</strong></td>
<td>1. As you reflect on your time as president, what were some of the changes you experienced that impacted the role and nature of the presidency?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. What were some of the political and institutional pressures you experienced that affected how you approached your role as president in the community and at your institution?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. How has the rise of the community college baccalaureate degree changed the role of the presidency?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Interview Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Question 4: How do former Florida College System presidents believe the Florida College system presidency changed during and after their tenure as president?</td>
<td>4. How do you feel you were able to anticipate the rise of the community college baccalaureate degree?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. How do you feel you contributed to the rise of the community college baccalaureate degree?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Since retiring from the presidency, how do you feel the presidency has evolved?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Having witnessed the evolution of the presidency, would you be interested in serving as a president today? Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question 5: According to former Florida College System presidents, what are the challenges facing future Florida College System presidents and what competencies are needed to confront them?</td>
<td>1. As you reflect on the current higher education environment in Florida, what challenges do you see Florida community college presidents facing in the next three to five years?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. What leadership skills are needed for future Florida community college presidents to be successful?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. What are the best strategies for developing those skills?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. What advice would you offer to future Florida community college presidents?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the responsive interviews, a reflective journal was kept to record additional data points need for data analysis. The use of the reflective journal increases the amount of data collected and refines and sharpens the researcher as research instrument (Janesick, 2011; Roulston, 2010).

**Data Management**

Once the data had been collected from the participants, I transferred digital audio files from the digital voice recorder to an external hard drive. The files were uploaded to a third-party transcription provider, *Production Transcripts* of Glendale, CA. Word-for-word transcribed
electronic files of the interviews were provided to me in Microsoft WORD format. The original
digital audio files and Microsoft WORD files produced by Production Transcripts of Glendale,
CA were deleted. I kept the Microsoft WORD files on a password-protected external hard drive.
The hard drive containing the digital audio files and Microsoft WORD transcribed files will be
kept in my home office for five years following the successful final defense of my dissertation.
After the five year mark, the digital audio files and Microsoft WORD transcribed files will be
deleted.

A WORD document transcription of the interview was sent via email to each participant
in order for them to provide an accuracy check. Accuracy checks helped to ensure the data
collected was properly and correctly documented. It prevents the inadvertent blurring of
interviews or the unintentional omission of sections (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Each participant
was given two weeks from the date the transcription was emailed to respond with any changes or
additions. If a response was not provided, the interview was assumed to be accurate and it was
used in the data analysis. Five of the six participants responded to the accuracy checks. Only
one participant did not respond to the accuracy check after the two week deadline.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, Rubin and Rubin’s (2012) Seven Steps in Responsive Interview Data
Analysis was used. Once all the participants responded to the accuracy checks following the
interview and transcription steps, the transcripts were reread and passages were marked with a
heuristic label or short phrase that represented the meaning of the specific passage. This coding
process was the initial step of data analysis. A second axial coding cycle was used to identify the
dominate codes and organize the data set (Boeije, 2010). The AACC Leadership Competencies
(2013) were used as a conceptual framework to identify specific areas related to the participant’s
leadership experiences (organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, and advocacy).

After the two coding cycles were completed, the dominate codes were sorted and summarized and sorted and compared to each other. This allowed for differences and similarities between the codes and various passages to be identified. This comparison analysis provided summary information on the coding process. Next, the sorted and summarized transcription passages were assessed and combined to develop a broad-based view of the interviews. The use of a reflective journal and field notes also provided me with reference points to recall emerging themes. Reflective journal entries provided summaries of whole interviews and areas to examine and compare against other interviews.

Next, an explanation for the data collected was created that involved identifying a set of related concepts or themes that answered the five research questions of this study. Thirteen themes emerged relative to the five research questions. Table 7 shows the alignment of each theme to its corresponding research question.

Table 7

*Themes as Related to the Research Questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Question 1: What experiences affected former Florida College System presidents to seek a Florida College System presidency?</td>
<td>1. An inner awakening: Seek the presidency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Mentors are important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question 2: How do former Florida College System presidents describe their leadership experience?</td>
<td>1. Prepared for the presidency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Eclectic leadership styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Key to leadership development: Experience</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Committed to complete goals</td>
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</table>
Table 7 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Research Question 3: What experiences affected former Florida College System presidents' desire to retire from a Florida College System presidency? | 1. The desire to retire: No single factor  
2. The time is right: Pleased with the exit  
3. Schedule: The hardest post-presidency adjustment  
4. People: What former presidents most miss |
| Research Question 4: How do former Florida College System presidents believe the Florida College system presidency changed during and after their tenure as president? | 1. Politics and Technology: The game-changers  
2. The community college baccalaureate degree: Benefits and challenges |
| Research Question 5: According to former Florida College System presidents, what are the challenges facing future Florida College System presidents and what competencies are needed to confront them? | 1. System unity: Stay together when performance funding and political climate tempt to divide |

Each theme was examined against the coded data to confirm it was consistently supported. In using and reporting interview data for this research study, I followed Brinkmann and Kvale’s (2015) Guidelines for Reporting Interview Quotes. Using these guidelines, my goal was to select quotes from the extensive interview data that were: (1) related to the general text, (2) contextualized, (3) interpreted, (4) balanced as compared to the text, (5) short, (6) the best illustrative examples of the theme’s essence, (7) rendered into a written style, and (8) conformed to a simple signature system for editing. Selecting the best illustrative examples of a theme’s essence was challenging, as many participants shared detailed information relative to the interview questions, and ultimately, the research questions. I placed careful attention on the quote selection process and attempted to balance the use of quotes among participants to
represent the shared essence of the theme that emerged from the participants’ experiences. Table 8 shows the participants’ quotes that were selected to best illustrate each theme’s essence.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Participant Quoted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. An inner awakening: Seek the presidency</td>
<td>P2, P3, P5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mentors are important</td>
<td>P3, P4, P5, P6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Prepared for the presidency</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Eclectic leadership styles</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Key to leadership development: Experience</td>
<td>P1, P2, P5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Committed to complete goals</td>
<td>P3, P6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The desire to retire: No single factor</td>
<td>P1, P3, P6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The time is right: Pleased with the exit</td>
<td>P2, P3, P6, P5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Schedule: The hardest post-presidency adjustment</td>
<td>P1, P3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. People: What former presidents most miss</td>
<td>P1, P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Politics and Technology: The game-changers</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The community college baccalaureate degree: Benefits and challenges</td>
<td>P2, P3, P5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. System unity: Stay together when performance funding and political climate tempt to divide</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ethical Considerations

Qualitative interviewing exposes the experiences, thoughts, and emotions of the participants and the researcher. Patton (2002) argues that given the nature of qualitative interviewing, the researcher must have an ethical framework when approaching research. In
addition to following the USF IRB guidelines, this research study conformed to Patton’s (2002) five areas of ethical compliance:

1. *Explaining purpose.* Each participant was informed of the purpose of the study prior to participating and will be informed of the potential use of the research findings.

2. *Informed consent.* All participants will be asked to sign an Informed Consent Form prior to participating in the interview process. The Informed Consent Form delineated the scope and conditions of participating in the study. A copy of the Informed Consent Form is included in Appendix E. The signed Informed Consent Forms will be stored in a locked cabinet in my home office.

3. *Confidentiality.* Any personal information or identifying markers from participants’ will be redacted. Pseudonyms will be used to protect the identity of the participants. No data was be stored on public servers.

4. *Data collection.* All participants will be informed that at their discretion, they may terminate the interview process at any time for any reason.

5. *Data accesses.* All digital materials and data related to this research study were kept on an external hard drive in my home office for five years following the successful final defense of my dissertation. After the five year mark, the digital audio files, Microsoft WORD transcribed files, and additional materials will be deleted or destroyed.

**Trustworthiness and Quality**

The methods I used in this research study met Roulston’s (2010) criteria for addressing quality in romantic interviewing (triangulation, audit trail, longevity in the field, member checking, and subjectivity). For *triangulation*, this study used interviews and a reflective journal
to establish various data points. The various data points collected provided a method to cross-check and confirm the analysis and conclusions drawn from the data. Rather than relying on one interview per participant, this study used multiple interviews with each participant (up to three) that created data triangulation.

For establishing an audit trail, I kept a reflective journal, used email communication protocols, and used interview protocols. These detailed documents created a transparent approach to the research process and allowed readers and other researchers to know the steps and sequence of events that occurred during the study.

This research study met longevity in the field, as I have been in the field of higher education administration for the past eight years. During my tenure, I have served in various instructional, administrative, and auxiliary support roles in higher education. I have worked closely with three college presidents, severing in both the private and public education sectors at two-year and four-year degree granting institutions. This variety and deep of experience has heightened my awareness of and sensitivity to issues that affect higher education administration and its leaders.

I used member checking to increase the quality of the study. Member checking increases the credibility of the research by helping to ensure the data collected is properly and correctly documented. Member checks minimize the distorting of interviews or the unintentional oversight of missing sections (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Member checks allow participants in the research study to have access to interview transcripts, and journals (Janesick, 2011). This allows for members to verify the authenticity and accuracy of the research at any stage in the research process and increase the trust between participants and the researcher. Participants were asked to
participate in member checks to ensure accuracy. Copies of the final research study were provided to each participant.

Finally, to increase the study’s trustworthiness and quality in the area of *subjectivity*, I used researcher reflexivity. I kept and utilized a reflective journal. This allowed for a running account of the study for audit purposes. For the qualitative researcher, the reflective journal provides additional data points for the research project (data triangulation). It also allows for meditative focus that can refine and enhance the role of researcher as research instrument. The reflective journal process aided in helping to reach saturation regarding the data and narrative (Janesick, 2011).

Finally, in addition to Roulston’s (2010) criteria for addressing quality in romantic interviewing, a pilot study regarding the research study was conducted. For the pilot study I conducted one 90 minute face-to-face interview with a former Florida College System president. An interview protocol consisting of 26 questions was used. After conducting my pilot interview, there were several important lessons that were gleaned. First, I realized some of my questions needed to be reorganized as to the order in which they were asked. Based on my participant’s responses, some of the questions naturally lead the participant to discuss other areas of the interview. The order in which the interview questions are asked was reorganized in this proposal. Second, I found I used excessive phrases in several of my question prompts. I repeatedly used the phrase, “Florida College System.” Subsequently, I removed excessive references of this phrase as its presence created a less conversational tone in the interview and created a more clinical and sterile conversational environment. Third, the pilot study revealed that providing the interview questions to the participant prior to the interview was preferable. This strategic decision added to the richness of the responses that the participant provided. I
could tell from his responses that he had genuinely thought about the questions and the answers he offered. This reflective forethought created detailed responses that added to the depth of the data collected. Fourth, following the interview I emailed the participant to see if he had feedback regarding his experience. I wanted to see that my non-verbal communication was transmitting an inviting atmosphere. I did not want him to feel uncomfortable while I was taking notes, checking to see if my voice recorder was working properly, and reviewing questions. For my dissertation study, I informed each participant that I would be checking my voice recorder occasionally, to confirm that it is recording properly. Finally, the high point of the pilot interview was when the interview transitioned into a conversation. This was a very rewarding moment. The reality that I was asking questions seemed to fade away as I and my participant became comfortable with the interview.

The pilot study for this research study provided a field-test of the interview protocols and interview process. In the pilot study I identified several areas that were refined and/or modified. It sharpened my in-field interviewing and observation skills related to the study’s research questions.

**Summary**

This qualitative interview study investigating the leadership experiences of college presidents at Florida College System Institutions used Brinkmann and Kvale’s (2015) Seven Stages of Interview Inquiry Design (thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verifying, and reporting). A sample of six former Florida College System Institutions presidents was selected using a purposeful sampling strategy. An explorative, responsive interviewing model using semi-structured open-ended questions was employed. Rubin and Rubin’s (2012) Seven Steps in Responsive Interview Data Analysis (transcribe, code, sort and
summarize, sort and compare, weigh and integrate, generate theory, and generalize) was used. USF IRB guidelines for research involving human subjects and Patton’s (2002) five areas of ethical compliance (explaining purpose, informed consent, confidentiality, data collection, and data accesses) were strictly followed. To ensure research trustworthiness and quality, intentional actions were outlined to ensure the research study conforms with Roulston’s (2010) criteria for addressing quality in romantic interviewing (triangulation, audit trail, longevity in the field, member checking, and subjectivity).
CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative interview study was to describe and understand the leadership experience of former Florida College System institution presidents, their perspective and reflection on the institution of the presidency and its evolution, and their thoughts regarding the pertinent challenges facing current and future presidents in the next three to five years. Data were collected through explorative, face-to-face or phone interviews that were semi-structured with open-ended questions (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Six individuals were selected and participated in this study. In Chapter Four I report on the study’s findings as related to the leadership experience of former Florida College System institution presidents and the research study’s research questions. The study’s five research questions were:

1. What experiences affected former Florida College System presidents to seek a Florida College System presidency?
2. How do former Florida College System presidents describe their leadership experience?
3. What experiences affected former Florida College System presidents’ desire to retire from a Florida College System presidency?
4. How do former Florida College System presidents believe the Florida College system presidency changed during and after their tenure as president?
5. According to former Florida College System presidents, what are the challenges facing future Florida College System presidents and what competencies are needed to confront them?

**Research Findings**

Analyzing the data gathered from the interview questions led to the identification of 13 themes which led to the answers to the study’s five research questions (see Table 7). After each theme is presented and supported by the data, a summary is provided followed by a reflection on the theme.

**Research Question 1 Findings**

For research question one, “What experiences affected former Florida College System presidents to seek a Florida College System Presidency,” two major themes developed from the data:

1. No single experience led a former president to seek a Florida College System Presidency, but a combination of experiences resulting in a personal and professional awakening encouraged them to pursue the presidency

2. Mentors played an important role in motivating former presidents to seek opportunities to prepare them for a Florida College System Presidency.

**Research Question 1; Theme 1 – An inner awakening: Seek the presidency**

No one experience was ever cited by a participant which lead them to seek a Florida College System Presidency. The participants cited several experiences that contributed to the development of their desire to seek the presidency. These included progressively challenging job responsibilities (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6), service on college-wide and Florida College System-wide committees (P1, P2, P3, P4), service on external community boards and with external
organizations and service and membership in professional organizations and industry affiliations (P1, P2, P3, P6), participation in in-house and Florida College System-wide leadership development programs (P1, P2, P3), doctoral programs (P2, P3, P5), and personal self-study in leadership and education policy (P2, P3, P4, P6).

The participants often spoke of an inner personal and professional awakening that was born in their thinking as a result of the experiences they had within the context of the community college. This awakening resulted in their belief that they could and should pursue a community college presidency because in that capacity they felt they could have the greatest impact. Participant 2’s comments are illustrative of this awakening,

And one of the things, I guess, that kind of caused me to decide to pursue [the community college presidency] was my sense that the community college was what I believed strongly in and what I came to is that I should try to get to the place within the community college that I can have the greatest impact. And that seemed to me to be the presidency.

Participant 5’s thoughts also capture the essence of theme 1 regarding the absence of a single experience in favor of a variety of college experiences as providing the motivation to seek the presidency. For this participant there was never an end-goal of becoming a president but the idea was evolutionary as a result of the combined experience over time. “I don't ever remember that I dreamed of being president of a college before I came here and it took me even a while after that, but it's not something that I was dreaming about when I was 20 years old or 21 years old. It just kinda happened…” Participant 3 referred to her desire to pursue the presidency as a “seed” that grew over time. Multiple events and factors contributed to her desire to pursue the presidency,
That’s really where the seed was planted when I was at [institution] for a variety of reasons. One, I had left private education and gone to the public sector and saw how much more freedom and flexibility we had with public dollars and funding than we had in the private sector where you had to rely on tuition and student enrollment. … So it really kind of opened my eyes to the versatility, and of course being a graduate of a junior college I really understood that we were dealing with a wide variety of students who had all different sorts of goals. I saw some opportunities for leadership and I really desired to learn as much as I could.

Research Question 1; Theme 2 – Mentors are important

Mentors played an important role in helping the participants in their pursuit of a presidency. All the participants quickly and frequently recalled the names of mentors who were influential in their professional development and in providing assistance to them in spurring them on to pursue the presidency. According to the participants, mentors provided advice, reassurance, and opportunities to assist the participants in diversifying their resumes, increasing their knowledge in several functional areas, and in some cases sparking their interest in pursuing a presidency. Participant 6, when speaking about his mentor relationship, recalled the following moment regarding his desire to pursue the presidency,

There’s a very specific event that occurred, or I would call it more of advice or encouragement from a mentor. …I remember the moment when in his office, he looked at me and said, ‘You need to work toward becoming a college president.’ And he then encouraged me and he’d take me to lunch and we’d talk about it.

Participant 3 recalled the moment she discussed her desire to pursue the presidency and her mentor’s reaction and assistance in her professional development,
I basically said I would like to be a community college president and do what you do, and he was kind enough to say to me, ‘Well, stick with me. I’ll try to put you in every role possible, except the presidency, of course, to prepare you, but I need to know you’re going to stay.’ And I just said, ‘Okay, that’s great.’ … Every four years I was in another opportunity for leadership in a new area. … So it was just a great opportunity to hone my skills and then I knew I was ready.

According to the participants, mentors provided encouragement and direction for them as they progressed in their professional career. Participant 5 shared how one of his mentors would regularly challenge his thinking which helped him grow and develop professionally,

He was trying to teach me because he’d ask me questions, like, come in with a scenario: This is it and what would you do? How would you handle this? And I would answer the question for him, and he said, ‘Well, that’s a pretty good answer as far as it goes, but did you think about this and did you think about that?’ He’d have two or three other things he’d ask me about. So, he kind of taught me how to broaden my thinking in dealing with people and so forth. … That's the reason why I say he was the one who taught me the most about being an administrator.

For one participant the presence of a mentor provided the catalyst for his considering the field of higher education as a career. Participant 4 recalled the story saying, “I would have never gotten into the community college world of work, were it not for [mentor].” Later another mentor was extremely influential on Participant 4’s career as he called how the mentor could see in him presidential potential. “When I did my doctorate at [university], my major professor was a guy named, [mentor], and somehow he saw some potential in me and he sort of set me on the path toward the presidency.”
Summary of Research Question 1 Themes

When describing the experience of seeking a Florida College System presidency, the participants recalled a variety of memories which assisted in motivating them to apply. For the participants, there was no single experience that led to the application for president. The participants described how the experiences seemed to build upon one another until there was a movement in their professional journey when they could envision themselves serving as a community college president. According to the former presidents, mentors were instrumental in helping to guide, encourage, and provide opportunities for them to realize their professional goal. These mentors left lasting positive impressions on the participants which transformed their professional and personal lives.

Reflection on Research Question 1 Findings

It was interesting to discover that the participants consistently claimed that they did not begin their professional careers with the goal of becoming a community college president. At the onset of the interviews, I expected to hear the participants speak of their desire to seek the presidency as a day-one goal at their first community college assignment. I thought they would have been extremely driven by the idea of becoming the leader on campus. However, the “dream” or “goal” of becoming president was something that evolved over time as they were exposed to more leadership opportunities and began to see-within-themselves, with the help of mentors, that they could serve as a community college president. The participants wanted to do each job they were assigned well, and as long as it provided them the opportunity for challenge and impact, they were content and satisfied in that role. It was as if the participants matured or grew into the idea that they could become a president. As they matured professionally and personally, they expressed a growing passion for the mission of the community college and an
ambition for seeking the presidency. I found that the participants used their ambition to their benefit. They were strategic and intentional in the choices they made and the relationships in which they engaged, especially the relationships involving mentors.

When speaking about mentors, the participants were quick to recall names, meetings, and activities in which they engaged with their mentors. The stories they recalled were rich with details regarding the location of conversations and the subject matter discussed. They could easily remember the time of day and whether they were in their office, at a restaurant, in their mentor’s office, on the phone, at a conference, or speaking in the hallway. The richness of the details reflected the importance of the encounter and importance of the relationship they had with their mentor. The participants stressed the importance of having mentors and even asked me questions about my professional goals. Apart from the interviews they offered advice and suggestions on ways I could improve my professional development. They asked me about the next steps I wanted to take professionally and even if I could envision myself as a community college president. They offered their assistance and support beyond the research study and projected a genuine warmth and concern regarding ways they could help me.

The evolution of the participants’ desire to seek the presidency was an interesting finding. It was a kin to a seed being planted and then watered and nurtured over time. Mentors often served as important caretakers, providing the right amounts of water, sun, fertilizer, pruning, and support. Once the participant had sufficiently matured professionally and personally and the right opportunity arrived, the ideal alignment was achieved and it was time for harvest.

Research Question 2 Findings

For research question two, “How do former Florida College System presidents describe their leadership experience,” four major themes developed from the data:
1. Former presidents generally felt prepared for the presidency

2. Former presidents did not use a specific leadership theory or leadership style as president but relied on pragmatic and eclectic approaches to leadership

3. Former presidents’ previous professional work experience was the most significant contribution to their professional and leadership skill development

4. Former presidents had opportunities to exit the FCS but chose to remain because of their commitment to their goals for their institution

*Research Question 2; Theme 1 – Prepared for the presidency*

Former Florida College System presidents reported that they generally felt prepared as they entered the presidency. Their previous professional work experience, service in the community, and knowledge about the community college mission combined to give them a level of confidence regarding their ability to serve as president. Participant 1’s comments reflect the confidence she had developed from her previous experience when she entered the presidency,

I was totally prepared, you know, because he had let me pretty much run [the college]. He was the outside guy. You know, he liked to do the politicking and this, that and the other and he let me run the inside of the institution. So I was the Chief Operating Officer in all ways.

Participant 6 confirmed this idea among former presidents when commenting on his preparedness feelings regarding the presidency,

I felt quite prepared. At that point I had worked in community colleges in two states and that was my third community college. … So no, I never had a moment where I didn't feel prepared. There were challenges that came up, as you would imagine, that surprised me. And that's going to happen in any job for any person anywhere. I mean, that's not
being unprepared, that's just getting surprised. It's a different issue. But I felt prepared. Felt ready.

The analysis of the data using the AACC Leadership Competencies (2013) showed that six former presidents felt better prepared in the areas of organizational strategy, communication, and collaboration and felt less prepared in the areas of resource management. Preparedness regarding advocacy was split with four former presidents (P1, P2, P3, and P4) expressing little to no initial challenges in the advocacy role while two (P5 and P6) had initial challenges while navigating the local and state political environment.

In the area of organizational strategy, the six presidents cited that the strategy they most used to assess organizational culture, was listening. This allowed them to understand the current culture of the organization by gathering important information and feedback on issues that needed to be addressed. Upon gathering this information, they were able to strategize on the next steps needed to make improvements. Participant 2 recalled the use of a survey to gather the data he needed in order to implement a plan of action at the beginning of his presidency.

Well, there was an interim president there and the previous president had left under some difficult circumstances. So I knew there were some issues. I didn’t realize the depth of the mistrust and some of the pain that had been part of that culture had that to be healed. And I knew there was some. I didn’t realize the depth of it. And I was not there very long before I came to change my plan of action to move much more quickly than I had planned. I did a survey before I went to the institution of basically everybody at the college – an anonymous survey. And so I had a pretty good feel for where people were or what they were thinking or what they thought the issues were which really helped me to
develop a direction to go in a fairly short order. I don’t think there were a lot of surprises.

The use of surveys and “listening tours” were used by the former presidents to assess the status of their institutions. According to the former presidents, these activities helped them develop strategies related to student success and quality improvement.

In order to articulate priorities and promote student success, the former presidents cited strategies aimed at bring their employees together for town halls or college summits. Illustrative of this idea was the strategy Participant 1 used in closing all the campuses twice a year and bringing all the college employees together for a day of meetings. This strategy helped to create a shared purpose among employees that advanced the mission of the college. Participant 1 enjoyed sharing a story she frequently told at staff at meetings that for her, illustrated the benefit of her communication and collaboration efforts.

One of my favorite stories was one day on a Saturday, when the campus was closed; one of the maintenance guys was out mowing the grass with a big tractor. He’s mowing the grass, and a car pulls into the parking lot. And a man, his wife, and a little young man get out of the car. So he drives over there to see what they want because it’s strange to have anybody on a weekend on the campus. They said they wanted their son to come here, but he wanted to go out of the county. And they had heard it was a good school, so they thought they’d come out and walk around; see what it looked like. The maintenance worker said, ‘Well, let me give you a tour.’ So he got off his tractor and gave them a tour of the campus and told them about the auditorium; told them where the different things were; walked them around. … And Monday I got a phone call in my office from the mother and she said, ‘This guy got off his tractor, quit mowing the grass, gave us a tour.
Best tour I ever had. He was wonderful. He sold our son on coming to your school. We’re going to register next week.’ You see, the worker knew how well our students do at the university when they transfer and he knew 99% of our students that train in the vocational programs get jobs. He was telling them all that. He knew the numbers. And he sold them. So he was a recruiter that day. It’s cool. It’s a good story, you know.

The former presidents also discussed areas in which they felt they needed to improve their proficiency. The area of resource management was universally cited as an area in which the presidents felt they could strengthen their proficiency. In discussing the areas she matured in while president, Participant 3 recalled her growth in the areas of resource management, “I think finance is always going to be a critical component because it changes so much.” Participant 1 discussed her challenge on improving in the resource management area of fundraising, “I still hate to ask people for money. But I got good at it, because I had to. You know, it was just part of the job.” Participant 2 shared his need to strengthen his competency in resource management when he was asked about areas, in which he needed to develop proficiency,

One of those would be resource development. I mean I’m talking about essentially the philanthropy side of the presidency and developing resources for the institution. That’s a much more important role for a president to play. And I think that for me that was a strong growth area, one I spent a lot of time on.

Finally, some former presidents also commented on the adjustment they had to make regarding the level of influence they had as president. Participant 1 recalled, “…I learned right way not to verbalize out loud something that you thought would be nice, because some staff member is going to go out and kill himself trying to get it for you.” The power of this level of
influence created the need for former presidents to be cognizant of their words and intentional with their communication skills.

Research Question 2; Theme 2 – Eclectic leadership styles

During their tenure as president, the participants did not utilize an exclusive leadership theory or employ a specific theoretical leadership style. The leadership approach of former presidents would seem to be expressed as pragmatic and electric in nature. While they were well versed in various leadership theories, often citing leadership approaches, the participants described their leadership styles in unique ways that were grounded in their varied professional experience.

Several former presidents used various leadership metaphors throughout their tenure as president, “velvet glove over an iron fist” (P1) and “the fulcrum” (P3). The former presidents repeatedly used terms to describe their leadership style that would be aligned with values expressed in the AACC Leadership Competencies of communication and collaboration: “Understanding People (P1), “Open” (P2), “Participatory” (P3), and “Flexible” (P5). They universally stated that being a good listener was critical to their success as president. The use of listening was often described along with building collaboration and trust within and outside the institution. Participant 2’s comments on the element of trust as a requirement for any successful organization, summarizes the idea shared by the participants: “An institution has to have a strong element of trust as a foundation for it to be successful in any regard. And when that’s missing for whatever reason it needs to be rebuilt.” Illustrative of the theme, when describing his leadership style, Participant 5 emphasized the need to listen to others saying, “I guess it would be more eclectic than following any particular style. I’m generally a pretty easy person to get along with. … I always had ideas about where we ought to be going, what direction we ought to be
going in, but I listen to other people.” Listening and being a good listener were universally cited by the former presidents as a way to build collaboration and establish trust between themselves and those they led.

Research Question 2; Theme 3 – Key to leadership development: Experience

The former presidents reported that their previous work experience, in the form of progressively challenging job responsibilities, to be the most significant contribution in the development of their professional career and leadership skills. Participant 5 recalled how his progressive work experience created a desire in him to pursue the presidency: “I got exposure to everything that was going on at the college. So it had me thinking about being an administrator and moving up in the administrative ranks.” Participant 1 expressed that her experience in learning the policies and procedures governing the offices above her office, assisted in building her confidence to eventually pursue the presidency,

I was just glad to move up, you know, have fun. One thing I always did was understudied the person ahead of me. Tried to learn everything that they knew. All the statutes that they needed to know, all the regs, everything. … And so if anything happened, then I was ready to step up, you know. I realized, you know, ‘This isn’t so scary.’ You know, ‘I think I can do this.’

Participant 2 expressed how his experience of having worked in the Florida College System and at a Florida College institution provided him the on-the-job training he felt he needed to serve in the presidency,

I’d been in Florida for ten years. I knew that system. I knew the institution in [region] from having been there and knew what they did. It was the number one place in Florida
that I wanted to be. … But when that presidency at [institution] became available I did pursue it because that was something that interested me a great deal.

While other professional activities were cited by the former presidents, such as, service on college-wide and Florida College System-wide committees (P1, P2, P3, P4), service on external community boards and with external organizations and service and membership in professional organizations and industry affiliations (P1, P2, P3, P6), participation in in-house and Florida College System-wide leadership development programs (P1, P2, P3), doctoral programs (P2, P3, P5), and personal self-study in leadership and education policy (P2, P3, P4, P6), their previous work experience was repeatedly and universally referenced by the participants as having the most significant impact on their professional and leadership skill development.

*Research Question 2; Theme 4 – Committed to complete goals*

According to the former presidents, when they were presented with opportunities to leave the Florida College System institution for other presidencies, they choose to remain because of the opportunities at their current college to complete goals they had set. Former presidents seemed to possess an inner drive and passion to accomplish the goals they set for their institutions. They also felt appreciated and affirmed by their boards. Participant 3 recalled when she was encouraged to apply at other institutions, but chose to remain,

I had a couple of people want me to think about opportunities in Virginia and California, and I just – I thanked them and told them that I was honored and humbled, but there was so much going on at the college. We were doing so much and we were so happy here, I mean, it was really everything – and the board had been kind to me. The board had provided me with opportunities each year to enhance my involvement, not only in the community, but from a financial standpoint as far as my future, and I just felt like they
were investing in me and I didn’t have any reason to think they weren’t happy and so far they had not been negative in my evaluations. I appeared to be meeting their concerns and needs. I’ll tell you there was just so much going on that to walk away would’ve been crazy.

Participant 6 also shared his strong commitment for the community in which his institution was located,

I was so happy to be here … so I got so involved in the community that that was the farthest thing from my mind. I knew of other vacancies around the state and around the country that I could have applied for, but I had no interest whatsoever. … This was such a great place to work. I had such a wonderful team of people to work with that I knew the grass was not greener anywhere else. This was the greenest grass you could ever find, and I stayed here and was happy I did, and I still live in this community and I'll live here probably until they bury me somewhere.

Participant 1 recalled how she was approached three different times to leave her institution but choose to remain because of the rapid growth and excitement she was experiencing at her institution,

I did have three opportunities to leave [institution], and I chose not to. … I’d only been at [institution] for about four years and we were just starting to take off, and I had all kinds of money coming in from the legislature because we had turned things around and we had big construction projects and I just didn’t feel like it would be right to leave at that point, you know. And the place had just caught fire.
Summary of Research Question 2 Themes

The former presidents described their leadership experience in a variety of ways. Each president had a unique experience filled with its own trials and triumphs. The participants believed when they became presidents they were prepared. While they recognized that surprises would happen, they were able to use their existing knowledge-base as a foundation to tackle the issues before them. For the participants, their unique personalities, experiences, and backgrounds created custom approaches to leading their institutions. Pragmatic and eclectic approaches to leadership, which were grounded in the work history and experiences of the participants, were used as effective tools by the participants on their campuses and in the community. Finally, the former presidents indicated they were committed to completing the goals they set for themselves as leaders of their institutions. According to the former presidents, when opportunity knocked, they did not always feel the “grass was greener” on the other side. The participants thought carefully about their role and were cognizant about the commitment and investment they were making at their institutions. According to the former presidents, by saying “no” to opportunities to leave their institutions they were simultaneously saying “yes” to remaining at their current institution in order to accomplish collective institutional goals.

Reflection on Research Question 2 Findings

The participants projected a strong sense of confidence when describing their conviction that they were prepared for the presidency. In the interviews they never hesitated when asked if they were prepared. They reported that they felt confident in their ability to lead. The participants also shared detailed stories of some of the first leadership challenges they faced on their campuses and in their communities. The participants confided that no leadership textbook or theory ultimately prepared them for the challenges they faced. Because of the emphasis that is
often placed on the study and understanding of theories in academic environments, I expected to hear at least some specific leadership theories or perhaps an author of a leadership book referenced, but was intrigued with how quickly they dismissed that idea in the interview and moved the conversation to the practical lived experience of the presidency. The participants found more value in their backgrounds and leadership exchanges with others than they did in the theoretical or published ideas on leadership.

When I discussed the idea of leadership style with the participants, they appeared to have a difficult time thinking of themselves from an abstract and detached perspective. I found the participants viewed themselves and their style as one-in-the-same, not something separate or compartmentalized. *They* were their leadership style. The things they did or the strategies they used to lead were reflective of the values they held and the way they lived everyday life. They spoke about listening because they valued the need to understand. If they did not know something, they asked questions. In short, it was interesting to find that each participant’s style was more a collection of behaviors and that they consistently engaged in those behaviors that helped them make sense of a situation, leading to a choice, that lead to a course of action.

Finally, I found the former presidents to be very intentional about the presidencies in which they chose to serve. Prior to the interviews, I thought there might be a vain of opportunism among some of the participants. I believed that some of the presidents might easily “jump ship” if a perceived, possibly better opportunity, arose. However, this was not the case. Several of the presidents shared detailed stories of how they traveled to the campuses of the institutions to which they were considering applying prior to applying in order to see if they were a good fit for the culture of the community and campus they thought they may want to lead. This level of intentionality dismissed the idea of opportunism. Additionally, when they became
president and opportunities came for them to possibly leave for another presidency, the participants cited convictions that the timing was not right or that they had an obligation to their present institutions. In these cases, I found that the presidents placed their institutions above themselves. There was a genuine feeling on the part of the presidents that they were where they should be and they could not leave until they had fulfilled their personal and professional commitment to the college.

Research Question 3 Findings

For research question three, “What experiences affected former Florida College System president’ desire to retire from a Florida College system presidency,” four major themes developed from the data:

1. No one experience affected former presidents desire to retire; most felt they had accomplished the goals they had set for themselves and their institutions

2. Former presidents were pleased with the timing and process they undertook to exit the presidency

3. The hardest adjustment to life after the presidency was a reduced schedule

4. Former presidents miss the working and personal relationships forged while in office with their followers and the students they served

Research Question 3; Theme 1 – The desire to retire: No single factor

In the analysis of the interview data, there did not appear to be any single experience that affected a participant’s desire to retire from the presidency. The former presidents came to the conclusion that they wanted to retire once they believed they had accomplished the goals they had set for themselves and their institutions and they felt comfortable exiting the presidency. In other words, the desire to retire was similar in the desire to apply in that the desire to retire grew
over time through their leadership experience. As the participants began to see more and more institutional goals accomplished, they began to envision their life outside the presidency.

Participant 1 recalled the time she decided it was time to exit the presidency after she realized her list of goals were accomplished,

I was looking at the vision statement that we had developed years before, and realized that I had already accomplished almost everything on it. And we were in the process of building the two new centers, or two new campuses, and they were all ready, ground was broken, I’d already gotten the land, gotten all the money, all of that. But they were halfway through construction. And I thought, ‘You know, that’s it. That’s going to be my last hurrah.’

The following statement from Participant 3 illustrates the desire on the part of former presidents to complete their work with a sense of accomplishment and closure, “…I wanted to step away feeling I had accomplished what my own goals were internally as far as leaving the institution in good shape.” After accomplishing his goals, Participant 6 described his decision to exit the presidency as an inner feeling.

I loved what I was doing. I loved the people I was working with. There was no external reason why I should retire. My health is good, and things were going very well. Even the way we managed our way through the state and national recession and follow-up economic challenges from 2008 on, we were really proud of the way we survived all that. As poor as the funding was, as difficult as it was, we managed it very, very well. And, again, almost like the hurricanes, it was another crisis that we felt good about the way we handled. … So there was no reason to retire other than I just felt like it was the time.
Research Question 3; Theme 2 – The time is right: Pleased with the exit

The former presidents indicated they were pleased with the timing and process they followed in exiting the presidency. Participant 6, commenting on his retirement, said, “As I look back, I think one of the things in my whole career that I'm proud of is the way I handled my retirement.” On regretting leaving the presidency, Participant 2 said, “I can honestly say I have not had one regret, and I felt it was the right time, and I've never – my wife has asked me several times, did I think I retired too early? But no, I really haven't.” Participant 3, agreed with absence of regret on the timing of her retirement saying, “I have had not one ounce of melancholy.”

The six former presidents indicated that they worked between 6 to 18 months with their boards regarding their intention to retire. The use of succession planning was highly valued by the participants. Participant 5 felt succession planning was critical to his exit from the presidency saying, “It was extremely important to me. I know that the president is the person who holds the campus together, and we needed to have a good process, and try to, as much as we could, attract qualified people, good people, for that position.” Former presidents sought to develop plans and strategies that built consensus among groups, particularly their boards. Participant 6 recalled the benefit his succession plan had in uniting the board.

So I mapped out a whole transition plan, and literally wrote it up, it was about four or five pages. And I started off with the board chair, met with the board chair, gave him a copy of the written document, talked over the plan with that board chair, and then went on and met individually with every single board member, individually, before anything ever became public. … So it was not just my plan, it was the plan of the board and me, and it was a consensus plan, and they all felt good about it. It had a schedule, it had timing, it had everything worked out to the ‘T.’
Research Question 3; Theme 3 – Schedule: The hardest post-presidency adjustment

The six former presidents said that they found the hardest adjustment to post-presidency life was the change in schedule. The once fast-paced, full-schedule of a president was significantly reduced. Participant 1 illustrates the intense commitment presidents have to their jobs when she recalled her hectic schedule,

I was so used to being out there at 7:30 in the morning until 10:30 at night. I was a workaholic, all the time. And sometimes I’d sit in the parking lot with the last student being picked up, because I didn’t want a girl sitting there by herself in the parking lot waiting for her ride to come.

Transitioning from a “workaholic” to a retiree significantly altered the participants’ daily structure. The lack of a daily schedule structure could become a challenge. Participant 3 humorously recalled her schedule adjustment to post presidency-life,

I didn't realize how sleep deprived I was because the first couple of months, I slept. I couldn't get over how late I could sleep in the mornings, because I used to be up at 5:30 or 6 every morning. I'd come out of the bedroom and say to [my husband] it’s ‘8:30! Why didn't you wake me up?’ He'd say, ‘why?’ It's true.

Participant 4 explained the schedule transition this way, “I miss the frenetic energy that accompanies the presidency. I miss being in the mix.”

Research Question 3; Theme 4 – People: What former presidents most miss

When exiting the presidency, participants universally shared how they missed the people with whom they had forged intense professional and personal relationships and the students they served. Participant 1 summarized it best when she said, “The people. I loved the people. All the students and the faculty and the staff. Just all of them.” However, participants shared that
Exiting the presidency can be a politically challenging scenario when old friends remain working at the institution. Participant 1 recalled her adjustment to finding new friends,

I had to find a lot of new friends. Because so many of my friends were college friends. But you don’t want the old president hanging around when the new president’s here with these people. And like one of my very best friends was the Finance VP. But I spoke with him very rarely for the next few years, because I didn’t want the new president to think that I was trying to influence him in any way, you know. So I just stayed away from him, because I didn’t want to be the kiss of death for him, because he’s a wonderful fellow. So I had to find some new friends and new activities, and I did.

Participant 4 echoed the sentiments of the former presidents when speaking of what he missed saying,

The people. The frenetic energy that accompanies the presidency. … What I don’t miss are the buildings, the budgets, and the board politics. I miss the board members, but not the politics of the boards. I don’t miss the 3Bs all that much, but I miss the people and I miss the involvement.

**Summary of Research Question 3 Themes**

According to the former presidents, when they felt it was time to retire, they were intentional about ensuring the long-term success of their institution. Their succession planning efforts were reflective of a desire to align with organizational strategy that included effective communication and collaboration. While there was no single factor that made them retire, the former presidents realized that when their goals were achieved they felt comfortable exiting the presidency. For the participants, life after the presidency was slower. The high-paced, high-demand schedule gave way to the ability to sleep in or “go home early.” The transition from
president to community neighbor was an adjustment, but the participants apparently knew their
decision to leave was right. According to the participants, students, college employees, and even
board members were missed; however, new friends and opportunities to remain active and
involved in the community developed over time.

**Reflection on Research Question 3 Findings**

In reflecting on the presidential retirement and its findings, it was interesting to see how
the experience of exiting the presidency mirrored the experience of entering the presidency.
Similar to the desire to pursue the presidency, the participants never spoke of a single event or
activity that lead to their desire to exit the presidency, but spoke in terms that were reflective of a
growing desire that built over time. When the president felt that they accomplished goals or had
made sufficient forward progress on goals, they began to feel the weight of their obligation to
stay, lift. This easing of responsibility helped them see a future post-presidential life. All of the
former presidents who participated in this research study exited the presidency on their own
terms. They were not fired by their board or felt forced out by a lack of confidence in their
ability to lead. They were able to set the terms and conditions of their exit and again showed the
intentional thought through succession planning that was characteristic of the thoughtfulness
with which they approached all aspects of their service.

Finally, it was interesting to hear of stories of how presidents took steps to distance
themselves from former colleagues in order to either protect those colleagues from accusations
of fraternization or to allow the new president, who succeed them, the ability to establish himself
or herself as president. There was an appropriate level of professionalism and professional
courtesy that the participants offered in their new role as “former president.” Some former
presidents moved away from the area and others remained. Each dealt with their new roles in
different ways, which were often a result of their background; however, I enjoyed learning how much they missed the relationships and from their perspective, friendships, they had forged with former colleagues.

Research Question 4 Findings

For research question four, “How do former Florida College System presidents believe the Florida College System presidency changed during and after their tenure as president,” two major themes developed from the data:

1. Technology and political intrusion have been game-changing dynamics that have intensified and significantly impacted the community college and the presidency
2. The community college baccalaureate degree has largely been a positive development for students and the community; however, political implications have been challenging to the Florida College System

Research Question 4; Theme 1 – Politics and Technology: The game-changers

Former presidents have witnessed significant changes impacting the community college and the presidency. Their broad-based experiences with internal and external stakeholders provided them insight into the inner workers of community colleges specifically and higher education generally. During their tenure, the presidents noted two developments based on multiple observations.

First, the advancement and accessibility of technology has transformed the approach to higher education. As the use of and expectation for use of technology has grown, community colleges have had to make strategic moves and decisions to incorporate these tools into their operations and meet students expectations regarding technology. A concern regarding technology has been the protection of data and the maintenance of the information technology
infrastructure. Participant 3’s comments about the technology challenge illustrate the angst presidents can feel regarding the adequacy of their information technology infrastructure and systems,

Technology will always be a challenge. I still get a little queasy about our system … and I was nervous that if we went down, we were dead in the water because you don't have a Banner system or a Datatel – a large corporation – to rescue you. So even still to this day that would be something that if I were still there we would be working on looking at, because in this day and age, you have to have a rescue security blanket that can help you run the system in case your system were to go down.

Second, former presidents expressed seeing a shift in the amount and intensity of political intervention from state lawmakers. They felt the increased level of intrusion has impacted the policy decisions of institutions but has also impacted the role of the presidency. They also felt that heightened political activity has caused the presidency to become more externally focused. Rather than spending a significant time addressing internal and operational aspects of the college, presidents felt the evolutionary need to devote more of their time and schedule to addressing political issues and ramifications. Participant 1 recalled the shift she experienced by saying, “At first I’d say, the first 10 years [my focus] was probability 90 internal and 10 percent political. … And then as the years went on, it probably became 50/50.” This shift in focus appears to be reflected in the amount and breadth of policy decisions that are passed by the legislature that require greater attention from presidents and academic leaders. Participant 1 said it this way,

The legislature's getting more and more involved in thinking that they know how to run an education institution and have really messed it up, sometimes. … And it's just gotten
worse and worse. So you really have to be on top of the legislation all the time and make sure things don't get really messed up pretty bad. Because they don't know what they're doing.

Participant 2 affirmed that political intervention has affected the role of the presidency when he stated,

The legislature has always been very involved in Florida education, but I think it used to be more of a policy perspective than it is currently, and it's a much more political, and I think politics is much nastier than it used to be, and I think that is a change, and it certainly affects the presidency.

Participants also were concerned about the political intrusion from the executive branch in board appointments and the negative impact that was having on college operations.

Participant 4 shared that litmus tests were often used when appointing board members saying,

When Rick Scott became Governor he had personal interviews with each of the people before he would appoint them as trustees, and he asked them two questions. One is how they felt about tenure, and two, how they felt about fee increases. The would-be trustees had to answer the right way to get appointed.

Participant 3 also shared that the use of executive branch litmus testing for board appointments may go so far as to violate governance standards from regional accrediting bodies.

Governor Scott has taken a different tactic. When he appoints trustees now he says, ‘If you raise tuition, if you vote to have salary increases, if you vote do to X, Y, and Z, I will not reappoint you,’ which, of course, is almost against SACSCOC accreditation. You can’t hold a trustee accountable for decisions outside of the structure of the college, but he does it and he can get away with it.
Research Question 4: Theme 2 – The community college baccalaureate degree: Benefits and challenges

The former presidents generally viewed the emergence of the community college baccalaureate degree as beneficial to the students and community. The degree has been seen as a logical extension of the community college access model by the participants. Participant 3 shared her evolution of opinion on the issue of the community college baccalaureate degree. Initially she was resistant to the idea, but found herself convinced by the community that the addition of the program would benefit students and the college’s community partners.

I was adamant against the baccalaureate program. I just felt like it was mission creep. I felt like we were going to lose our identity. I just felt like it was the worst thing that could happen. … And I didn’t agree to move forward until a hospital administrator said to me, “We’re sending recruiters to the Philippines to hire nurses. We can get nurses right here if you’ll agree to start doing the baccalaureate.” And then [our SUS institution] asked us to start the applied science degree. And those were two legitimate reasons that helped convince me, for us not to do those baccalaureates, it would be an injustice to our community and again, it’s what’s best, for our students. And if we can do that for our students, do that for our institution, do it for the community it was the right decision. So I was fully on board once I discovered that we could do some things that would help our community and our students and our institution.

While the emergence of the community college baccalaureate degree has generally been viewed as beneficial to students and the community, several former presidents felt the initial approval process for the degree was not handled appropriately and has created some division among presidents and institutions. Participant 2 recalled,
For the first institutions that were going to offer baccalaureate degrees, there were some backdoor, back alley agreements that were made with some key legislators, pretty much behind the backs of almost all the community college presidents, except a couple who were in that process. And when that all sort of came into the open, it really caused some damage among the presidents.

Participant 3 added, 

Quite honestly it was forced upon us by a couple of presidents … who went to the legislature and unbeknownst to any of us that was pretty much what happened. The train left the station in the middle of the night and the next day we heard there was going to be a middle college type organization, almost like the Georgia system where you have a technical school, the state college system, and then the universities.

Participant 5 noted, that after the emergence of the community college baccalaureate degree, he noticed a difference in attitude and behavior between those presidents whose institutions offered the baccalaureate degree and those presidents whose institutions did not offer the baccalaureate degree.

At that time, shortly after that happened, I became the chairperson of the Council of Presidents for the state community college system, and almost to the person the presidents of those colleges that dropped "community" from their name didn't show up very much for the Council of Presidents meetings. … I don't think they were that interested in what the Council of Presidents was doing anymore. I don't think that they wished us bad or anything of that nature. I just think they became rather inactive because they thought they were a little bit more than we were – the ones that did not offer baccalaureate degrees.
Summary of Research Question 4 Themes

The six former presidents provided several ways in which the community college presidency has changed. According to the participants, advances in technology have created new ways of communicating and new expectations from students and the community. Former presidents believe that current and future presidents must stay current on technology trends and innovations. According to the participants, the demands of tomorrow are often seeded in the technology of today and presidents must anticipate these changes and work to position their institutions for future success. Additionally, the former presidents feel the political environment surrounding the higher education environment is more active. In their opinion, the efforts of state lawmakers to influence and direct college operations have intensified. The former presidents believe current and future presidents are witnessing game-changing challenges in the areas of technology and political intervention. Finally, in the opinion of the participants, the community college baccalaureate degree has been seen as beneficial for students and the community. They view the community college commitment to access as having been extended in the Florida College System through the community college baccalaureate degree. However, according to the former presidents, the previous political maneuvers to create the baccalaureate degree should be remembered. The participants feel that unnecessary competition among Florida College System institutions can create divisions and diminish system effectiveness.

Reflection on Research Question 4 Findings

The findings of Research Question 4 presented some of the most interesting and powerful findings of the research study. During the interview process, this area provided more reflective insights and passionate responses than any other section. The participants were especially detailed and specific on their opinions regarding the political changes, challenges affecting the
Florida College System, and politicians involved in the process. I am convinced that the forthright candor shared by the participants is due to the fact that I intentionally chose former presidents as opposed to sitting presidents. Having exited the presidency and now living in retirement provides a level of insulation from punitive retaliation. I do not believe I would have received the level of transparent perspective on the political climate surrounding the Florida College System had it not been for the protections afforded to the participants by retirement.

I was intrigued to learn of the angst that still surrounds the development of the community college baccalaureate degree. All of the participants in this study served as a president in Florida at some point during the development and implementation of the community college baccalaureate degree. Not all of the presidents were involved in developing that program at their institutions; however, they all commented on the process of its development at the state level and the frustrations that accompanied its implementation. I found that the participants genuinely viewed themselves as a team of leaders who valued team communication and collaboration and when those values were side-stepped, it created frustration and even anger among the presidents. The former presidents in this study have moved beyond their frustrations regarding the development of the community college baccalaureate degree, but this episode does reveal that a history of skepticism and mistrust may still permeate the Council of Presidents and could play a factor in future Florida College System initiatives, policy, and advocacy.

Research Question 5 Findings

For research question five, “According to former Florida College system presidents, what are the challenges facing future Florida College System presidents and what competencies are needed to confront them,” one major theme developed from the data:
1. Challenges related to resource management, specifically performance-based funding, and political intervention will face future presidents but they must remain united as a system to weather the storm.

*Research Question 5; Theme 1 – System unity: Stay together when performance funding and political climate tempt to divide*

Former presidents continue to see resource management as one of the important leadership competencies needed by current and future Florida College System presidents. According to the participants, with the expansion and application of the performance-based funding model from the State University System to the Florida College System, current and future leaders will need to increase their understanding of the model and its formula and devise strategies aimed at improving specific metrics at their institutions. The six former presidents expressed concerns about the use of the performance-based funding model, but are resigned to the idea that this new development in the accountability culture does not appear to be leaving any time soon. Participant 3 commented,

I just hope that we don’t get lost in the shuffle of student performance as they have with K-12 to make that the defining factor whether your institution is quality or not. But for Pete’s sake we’ve got fifteen schools that qualified for Aspen but yet we didn’t qualify for our funding this year at the Florida level. What does that say to the state? … I think these performance measures are troublesome. I think the funding formulas based on outcomes are troublesome. I’m not suggesting there wouldn’t be some guidelines. But, you know, I think you have to have benchmarks based on what’s best for your own institution, not statewide.
The former presidents also felt that future presidents need to have skills that match the development which have occurred as a result of the increased political intervention. This political intervention has also, at times, created fractures in the unity of the Florida College System Council of Presidents. From the development of the community college baccalaureate degree to the rise of performance-based funding, the participants felt it was important for current and future presidents to remain unified in their missional understanding, support, and advocacy for the Florida College System. Participant 1 stated, “Well, first of all, you’ve got to know the history. You’ve got to understand our system backwards and forwards.” Participant 3 said,

I think our constituents need to understand the Florida college system is one of the finest ones in the nation. Performance-based funding pits us against each other. So the collegiality that presidents once had years ago to speak with one voice gets somewhat alienated when you know that your partner in [region] is picking up thousands more dollars than you are because they have a higher graduation rate and yet your economy is better.

On valuing the leadership competency of collaboration and community college advocacy at the system level, Participant 2 stated that future president need to remain committed to the system and show unity.

Do not lose focus on the importance of having a system, and working together, would be, I guess, number one. … I mean, I think the system has always known this, in its heart, that it will be better off staying together as a system than it will be trying to pick each other off for short-term advantage.
Summary of Research Question 5 Theme

According to the six former presidents, performance funding and political intervention will be the pressing challenges facing future presidents. This development coupled with moves by lawmakers to influence college operations and policy can be a recipe for disunity among Florida College System institutions. The participants felt that tomorrow’s presidents should take their heed of the call for unity in advocating for the system as a whole. The former presidents believed that the short-sighted institutional goals of today could create greater havoc in the system as a whole tomorrow. According to the former presidents, when current and future presidents are united together, those presidents can present the most effective community college vision to internal and external stakeholders.

Reflection on Research Question 5 Findings

Before engaging in the interview process, I thought I would hear a laundry list of skills or talents that current or future community college presidents would need in order to effectively serve as leaders. While the former presidents did mention various skills they thought would be helpful, they primarily focused their attention on the need for current and future presidents to remain committed to maintaining unity at the system-level. The primary vehicle to achieving this goal is through ongoing communication and collaboration through the Florida College System Council of Presidents. The participants shared that new legislative-driven policies, like performance funding, will create “winners” and “losers” in the Florida College System and that these policies have the potential to create unhealthily competition among the 28 state colleges.

I appreciated how candid the participants were in suggesting that current and future presidents consider what is best for the system and not just what may be in the short-term interests of the their institution. The remarks of the presidents evoked a feeling of legacy.
building that they wanted to impart to current and future presidents. Having exited the presidency and now reflecting on the system, they appeared to better understand the value that a united system had in benefiting the state as a whole and the hundreds of thousands of students it serves.

**Summary**

In Chapter Four I presented a review of the results from the research. Six former Florida College System presidents participated in the qualitative interview study. The results of the data collection and analysis identified 13 themes related to the five research questions. Each research question and its corresponding themes were aligned, outlined, supported from the data, and summarized. Also, a reflection on each research question’s findings was presented. In Chapter Five I will discuss the findings in relation to the literature and conceptual framework and will share the implications regarding the findings and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER 5
DISSCUSSION

The aim of this research study was to describe and understand the leadership experience of former Florida College System institution presidents. Using a qualitative interview study design, this research sought to describe and understand the changes witnessed by former Florida community college presidents and their reflections on the office they previously held: the presidency. In this study I also sought to gather the participants’ ideas regarding the relevant challenges facing current and future Florida College System institution presidents in the next three to five years.

In this chapter I will review the findings of the research presented in Chapter Four and discuss how it relates and aligns to previous research conducted on the presidential leadership experience. This chapter will also include a section on the implications of this research study, as well as, possible future research lines of inquiry based on new questions which developed after completing this study. Finally, a research reflection will be presented.

Research Questions and Themes

There were five research questions which guided this study. Those questions were:

1. What experiences affected former Florida College System presidents to seek a Florida College System presidency?
2. How do former Florida College System presidents describe their leadership experience?
3. What experiences affected former Florida College System presidents’ desire to retire from a Florida College System presidency?

4. How do former Florida College System presidents believe the Florida College system presidency changed during and after their tenure as president?

5. According to former Florida College System presidents, what are the challenges facing future Florida College System presidents and what competencies are needed to confront them?

Following the data collection and analysis, 13 themes emerged which provide answers to the study’s research questions. These themes were:

1. An inner awakening: Seek the presidency
2. Mentors are important
3. Prepared for the presidency
4. Eclectic leadership styles
5. Key to leadership development: Experience
6. Committed to complete goals
7. The desire to retire: No single factor
8. The time is right: Please with the exit
9. Schedule: The hardest post-presidency adjustment
10. People: What former presidents most miss
11. Politics and Technology: The game-changers
12. The community college baccalaureate degree: Benefits and challenges
13. System unity: Stay together when performance funding and political climate tempt to divide
Table 7 shows the alignment of each theme to its corresponding research question. By comparing the themes which developed from this study to previous research findings, a pattern of support and alignment emerges. Research through the conceptual framework of the American Association for Community Colleges (AACC) Leadership Competencies provides interesting similarities between this study and previous studies specifically as it relates to the themes aligned with research questions one and two. The themes related to research question three provide important areas of agreement and support with Vaughn’s (1989) research on presidential tenure and retirement. Finally, Dye’s (1998) Fractured Political Geography Paradigm aids in providing an important level of understanding to the themes developed from research questions four and five.

**Research Findings & AACC Leadership Competencies Research**

In 2013 the American Association for Community Colleges released an updated version of its leadership competency areas. This version included five competency areas in (1) organizational strategy, (2) institutional finance, research, funding, and resource management, (3) communication, (4) collaboration, and (5) community college advocacy.

According to the AACC (2013), organizational strategy refers to a leader’s ability to promote student success, institutional quality improvement, and mission fulfillment. Institutional finance, research, fundraising, and resource management relates to a leader’s ability to understand, manage, and provide leadership in the physical and financial assets of the institution. Communication applies to a leader’s ability to articulate priorities, goals, and vision to various internal and external stakeholders. Collaboration is a leader’s ability to develop and maintain internal and external relationships that promote student success and advance the
community college mission. Finally, community college advocacy refers to a leader’s ability to promote the mission of the community college at the local, state, and national level.

The AACC Leadership Competencies provide a conceptual framework to understand the leadership phenomenon in the context of the community college. The importance and use of the AACC Leadership Competencies to higher education leadership research has been researched (Becthel, 2010; Curphy, 2011; Duree, 2007; Hassan, 2008; Price, 2012; Robison, 2014). I have also presented in this research study findings that are consistent with previous research studies and the AACC Leadership Competencies. The importance and value of the AACC Leadership Competencies is strongly reinforced by the findings in this research study. The affirmation of the AACC Leadership Competencies in the presidential leadership experiences of the participants is a significant finding of this research.

Research Question 1; Theme 1 – *An inner awakening: Seek the Presidency*, Theme 3 – *Prepared for the presidency*, and Theme 5 – *Key to leadership development: Experience* aligned with the work of Hassan (2008), Kools (2010), and Price (2012) in the area of leadership development. Like Hassan (2008), Kools (2010), and Price (2012), this research found that while there was no single activity that motivated the participants to seek the presidency or a single experience which prepared the participants for the presidency, all the participants found that previous work experience which expanded their opportunity to lead and challenged the development of their skills were important factors in their decision to pursue the presidency and their feeling prepared for the presidency. Hassan (2008), Kools (2010), and Price (2012) consistently reported that participants in their studies claimed “progressive job responsibilities” and “challenging job assignments” as the number one and two experiences that contributed to their leadership development and preparation for the presidency. Participant 5 acknowledge that
the variety of and knowledge gained through his previous work experience was instrumental in his rise to the presidency.

When I became president that was the tenth different job I had at the college and a lot of that was because we were creating things. I was the first person to do financial aid at the college. I wrote the grants for them and so forth and then moved from there into Assistant Dean and Dean positions… and that’s how I got up there.

Participant 6 also recalled how his work experience impacted his leadership development for the presidency saying, “As I progressed in my career, from one position to another, I added responsibilities. It was all in terms of preparing myself.”

Research Question 1; Theme 3 – Prepared for the presidency confirms the research of Duree (2007) regarding presidential preparedness. Duree (2007) found that participants in his research study indicated that they felt less prepared in the areas of resource management, specifically as it applied to an entrepreneurial approach to finding alternative funding sources. The fundraising aspect of the presidency was viewed as a skill that required development after assuming the presidency. Participant 1 commented that even though she was successful at fundraising, she still, to-this-day, dislikes fundraising, “I still hate to ask people for money.” Participant 2 recalled his skill development in the area of fundraising, “… I’m talking about essentially the philanthropy side of the presidency and developing resources for the institution. … And I think that for me was a strong growth area, one I spent a lot of time on.” Participant 3 remembered how she sought training from experts in the area of resource development in order to strengthen and boost her knowledge-base. “I worked with the folks that were leaders in their areas. I said, ‘I need to learn more. I need you to educate me. I want to feel comfortable.’” The findings in this study confirm Duree’s (2007) research that even though participants did not have
absolute confidence in their leadership abilities related to the resource management competency area, that perception did not dissuade them from pursuing the presidency or seeking methods to develop proficiency in that area once they had assumed the presidency.

Research Question 1; Theme 2 – Mentors are important, aligns with the research of Boggs & Kent, 2002; Rabey 2011; Shults, 2001 and VanDerLinden, 2005. Rabey (2011) reported that future community college presidents benefited professionally by having a mentor. The presence of a mentor assisted presidential aspirants in strengthening their aptitude in and familiarity with AACC Leadership Competencies and that having a mentor significantly aided them in their preparation for their first presidency more than non-mentored candidates. All six participants in this research study reported that mentors played that similar role in their preparation for the presidency. The participants in this research study recalled conversations, regular meetings, activities, and assignments with their mentors that enhanced their professional career and personal confidence related to the community college presidency. There overall involvement was instrumental in the professional development of the participants. Participant 4 summarized the importance of the role of mentors when he said,

… Every step of my professional life, I’ve had mentors…I would not have never gotten into the community college world of work, were it not for a [mentor]. … Somehow he saw potential in me and he sort of set me on the path toward the presidency. He said, ‘You’ve got to probably have a number of jobs before you could legitimately seek a presidency, but that’s where you’re headed.’

Stubbe (2008) found that female candidates for college presidencies were significantly aided in their pursuit of a presidency when a mentor was active in their professional development.
Participant 3, a female, commented on the importance a female mentor had on her as she negotiated her contract.

[The mentor] was helpful to me as I negotiated my contract here at [institution] because women typically are not good negotiators. I say that in a broad sense. I was so thrilled to have the job I think I would have done it free, but, you know, you have to push that back and say, ‘What’s best for my family,’ and [she] got me to understand clearly what I should put in my contract to protect me and my family as the years went by at [institution].

The presence of a female mentor to a female mentee illustrates the research conclusion reached by Stubbe (2008). Embedded in Participant 3’s comments is an interesting phenomenon that would be further enriched by additional research. Questions regarding contract negotiations by female presidents compared to male presidents and the role mentors can play in improving the compensation packages and contract details for female presidents who utilize mentors compared to those who do not utilize mentors, would be beneficial to expanding the literature on the presidential leadership experience.

The results of Research Question 1; Theme 4 – Eclectic leadership styles, has an interesting connection with Bonner’s (2013) research on presidential career stages and AACC competencies. Bonner (2013) found that candidates seeking a community college presidency benefited from developing diverse professional experiences (Research Question 1; Theme 3) and that effective presidents should have several personal characteristics to effectively manage the pressures of the community college presidency. Among those were energy, persistence, and grit.

In this research study I found that participants did not use an exclusive or one-size-fits all leadership style. However, the participants did describe the need to be inclusive in their
leadership approach and use networking to build internal and external relationships in order to be effective in their role as president. This inclusive leadership commitment to and style of networking evokes the essence of the AACC Leadership Competency of collaboration. The participants frequently repeated the need to listen for and analyze information they were gathering from inside and outside the organization. Gaining understanding from multiple voices within the institution contributed to the participants’ success as president. Participant 1’s comments regarding the importance of all employees and student success reflected the former presidents’ belief that multiple individuals and offices had to work together in a collaborative fashion to achieve missional goals,

I could never figure out exactly who was the most important person on campus. Like one day I’d say, ‘No. It’s the telephone operator,’ because that’s the first phone call that comes in. Then the next I’d say, ‘No. It’s the counselor who works with a student.’ Or, ‘No, it’s the financial aid person who does all of this stuff.’ … All those people are involved. Every one of them is involved in that student’s life, and getting them here.

The participants often made references to a collaborative, inclusive leadership approach, as well as, networking as a way to develop their leadership efficacy. Hassan (2007) found that networking was cited by participants in his research as one of the top three leadership experiences that improved a president’s proficiency in the AACC Leadership Competency categories of community college advocacy and resource management. The ability to communicate with colleagues outside their institution provided a helpful strategy in effectively leading their own colleges. Participant 2’s comments illustrated the importance that networking and the ability to call on colleagues to think about and discuss issues, can play in one’s role as president.
And sometimes thinking doesn’t necessarily have to be by yourself. It can be with some other trusted people or people that you’re bouncing ideas off and maybe they’re not even people in the institution, maybe they’re colleagues. And I think it’s critically important for presidents to have good presidential colleagues that they can call on and share issues and help them think through issues.

Summary

The findings from this research study confirmed and expanded previous research that had been conducted on the AACC Leadership Competencies and the presidential leadership experience. The findings supported previous research that had been conducted in the areas of presidential preparedness, work experience, mentorship, and leadership style. My research provided detailed accounts from participants which illustrated and supported the principles and themes which have emerged from the larger body of research and leadership literature. The AACC Leadership Competencies provide a beneficial and practical conceptual framework to describe and understand the leadership phenomenon in the context of the Florida community college presidential leadership experience.

Research Findings & Vaughn’s Presidential Tenure Research

Vaughan’s (1989) Presidential Tenure Checklist was a result of his research in the area of presidential retirement (see Table 4). The Checklist included 12 assessment characteristics for presidents and boards of trustees to use when determining the appropriate time for an incumbent to exit the presidency. Three of the 12 characteristics are elements that would be beyond the control of the president (a no confidence vote, the desire to unseat the incumbent, and maintaining the status quo). The other nine characteristics are personal in nature meaning the incumbent rather than an external entity would be the driving factor in determining when is the
appropriate time to exit the presidency. This research study found several interesting connections with Vaughan’s (1989) research.

Research Question 2; Theme 4 – *Committed to complete goals* and Research Question 3; Theme 1 – *The desire to retire: No single factor* revealed that the participants had no one event or activity that led to their decision to exit the presidency. This meant that the desire to retire was a process that built over time similar to the desire to seek the presidency (Research Question 1; Theme 1). Each participant for their own reasons came to an internal consensus that it was appropriate to retire from the presidency. However, the internal consensus to exit the presidency always involved the idea that the president had completed the goals they had set for themselves or the institution. Vaughan (1989) describes this characteristic as completing the agenda. The former presidents in this research study may have had several individual goals in mind to complete, such as, the building of new campuses or buildings (P1; P3) or seeing new programs added (P3), but the idea to relinquish their leadership post came when, in the opinion of the participant, a critical mass of those goals were achieved.

Vaughan (1989) also reported the need for presidents to intellectually and psychologically prepare for life after the presidency. Each presidency has its own ethos consisting of tight scheduling appointments and important relationships which create a high-demand environment. The findings of this research study revealed several connections to Vaughan’s (1989) research. Research Question 3; Theme 3 – *Schedule: The hardest post-presidency adjustment* and Research Question 3; Theme 4 – *People: What former president most miss* align with Vaughan’s (1989) notion that presidents will face significant adjustment to post-presidential life. In this research study, the participants spent 6 to 18 months with their boards regarding their intention to retire. Prior to that timeframe, the five participants, who were
married at the time they were considering retiring, consulted with their spouse for feedback regarding their intention to retire from the presidency. This added an additional step of consultation that was taken by the participants in this research study. It confirms Vaughan’s (1989) conclusion that spousal support and consultation can be beneficial to the president who is considering exiting the presidency and can help a candidate navigate the intellectual and psychological adjustments that can result from departing a high-level leadership position.

The meticulous attention that the former presidents took in preparing for post-presidential life and the detail with which they addressed succession planning resulted in overall feelings of satisfaction regarding their retirement. This universal feeling of satisfaction, as a result of their intentional and appropriate actions, was expressed in the theme which emerged from Research Question 3; Theme 2 – *The time is right: Pleased with the exit.*

**Summary**

Vaughan (1989) provides a useful model for understanding the motivations regarding presidential retirement. The results of this research study show that for the participants in this study, the decision to retire was an internal and personal choice. The completion of personal and institutional goals along with a feeling that it was appropriate to exit the presidency aligns with Vaughan’s (1989) description of the feeling that individuals had completed their personal and professional agenda. This research also found that succession planning was an important element of presidential exit and that support from family and professional colleagues can ease the transition into post-presidential life which benefits both the institution and the individual.

**Research Findings & Dye’s Fractured Political Geography Paradigm**

The context of this research study was community college presidential leadership in Florida. The state of Florida was selected because of the unique characteristics which
differentiated it from other states. Four characteristics were identified which created a unique Florida culture relative to community college presidential leadership: (1) population size and demographic diversity, (2) post-secondary institutional success, (3) the focus on a tuition driven-state funding model, and (4) geo-political divisions and a history of political intrusion.

The characteristic of Florida’s geo-political divisions was identified by Dye (1998). He described Florida as having a fractured political geography. In this paradigm Florida was described as having distinct regions (the Panhandle region, the Northwest Gulf Coast region, the Southwest Gulf Coast region, the Southeast region, and the Central Florida region) which characterized the state and created distinct political climates. The regions each had unique demographics, economies, and political preferences that created a hyper-heterogeneous state. Colburn & Dehaven-Smith (2010) described how voters in these distinct areas in turn elect state representatives that then struggle to create a comprehensive strategy for addressing state-wide problems. Rather than having a cohesive approach to policy-making, grounded in a common understanding of a policy area, with a goal to benefit the largest segment possible, individual lawmakers often introduce legislation which further divides, separates, and creates unnecessary competition within the state.

Research Question 4; Theme 1 – Politics and Technology: The game changers and Research Question 4; Theme 2 – The community college baccalaureate degree: Benefits and challenges identified findings that are consistent with the fractured political geography paradigm (Dye, 1998) and disjointed political intrusiveness (Colburn & Dehaven-Smith, 2010). This research study found that the participants had witnessed an increase in the amount and frequency of political intrusion during their tenure as president and from the time they had exited the presidency until the present. According to the participants, increased political intrusions can be
seen in recent Florida legislative acts such as the creation of Florida’s 12th public university (SB 1994), the overhaul of developmental education (SB 1720), and the moratorium on community college baccalaureate degree programs (SB 1148). The participants felt that this level of political intrusion was exacerbated due to the presence of term limits for state lawmakers. Florida law limits the number of years legislators can serve in office to eight years. While politically popular among voters, according to the participants, term limits have created problems regarding policy adoption and implementation. Participant 3 expressed her evolution on the value of term limits and the impact it has had on public policy.

Well, in Florida, if you would have told me fifteen years ago that I wouldn’t be in favor of term limits I would have said you’re crazy. We need to get those people out that have been basically vegetating and holding a spot. But returning back to Florida after term limits were instilled, I have to say it’s the worst thing that happened to Florida politics. Because what happens is you’re in there such a short amount of time now that you have to make your inroads into leadership. Many of these young men and women are scouring to be President of the Senate and Speaker of the House before they’re even elected a second time because they’ve got to get the votes. And so they’re in roles of leadership prior to them even having any experience in the House and the Senate. And then they’re in there such a short amount of time that they’ve got to do whatever they’re going to do quickly to make their mark and then they’re gone.

The presidents believed that the constant legislator turn-over created a problem for maintaining continuity. Participant 6 commented on the negative effect rotating legislators has on public policy and institutional performance saying,
When the legislators get involved then what you end up with is chaos, where every two years, four years, six years – whatever the terms of office is – you end up with new regulations, new rules, new curricula, new requirements that then go away after three or four years, just about the time you get them implemented, and you just waste a hell of a lot of money and a lot of time and people's talents, and you take away autonomy. …

When local institutions have autonomy to do their jobs, they're going to try harder to do really good work. If they're just following the direction of a legislature to do what they do, then they're going to become demoralized, very likely, especially when they get jerked back and forth every time there's an election.

Participant 4 shared that the emergence of the community college baccalaureate degree provides a policy example of the confusion which results when legislative turn-over due to term limits sends divergent messages to institutions.

We did this [the community college baccalaureate degree] initially because it was the legislature who determined that we could not afford the California model with three tiers of universities and they, therefore, authorized community colleges – with certain caveats to have been met – to offer limited baccalaureate degree programs in career prep fields. … Then you have Senator Negron coming along opposing baccalaureate programs and implementing the moratorium and now the legislature is questioning why community colleges are doing baccalaureate education when in fact the only reason we are doing baccalaureate education is because they had given us the direction to do so some years earlier. So we’re getting these mixed signals.

The example cited repeatedly by the participants that illustrates how the Florida legislative policy process creates fractures in the Florida College System, was the emergence of
the community college baccalaureate degree. According to the participants, the idea of the community college baccalaureate degree was not the issue; the problem was created by the approach that was taken by some to approve the community college baccalaureate degree. Participant 2’s comments reflected this sentiment,

It's not the baccalaureate degree, per se, that has sort of caused the divisions. It's sort of the process for how all that went about. The baccalaureate is just sort of the driver of it. It wasn't degrees per se, it wasn't the fact that the community colleges were offering baccalaureate degrees that was divisive, it was how that all happened.

While the emergence of the degree did not create division, the process by which the policy was developed did. Rather than crafting a board-based policy which had the support of the entire system, local politicians catering to local interests passed legislation that had divisive implications. As Participant 2 noted,

For the first institutions that were going to offer baccalaureate degrees, there were some backdoor, back alley agreements that were made with some key legislators, pretty much behind the backs of almost all the community college presidents, except a couple who were in that process. And when that all sort of came into the open, it really caused some damage among the presidents.

The implementation of the community college baccalaureate degree illustrates Colburn & Dehaven-Smith’s (2010) conclusion that voters electing state representatives who do not have a comprehensive strategy for addressing state-wide problems, will adopt strategies which are advocated for and embraced by their local constituencies but have negative consequences for state or system-wide cooperation and collaboration.
Research Question 5; Theme 1 – System unity: Stay together when performance funding and political climate tempt to divide, emerged as a theme after the participants witnessed legislation passed by lawmakers which created unnecessary competition among Florida College System Institutions. The extension of the performance based funding model from the State University System to the Florida College system has been troubling to former presidents.

Participant 3’s comments captured the angst the participants felt regarding performance funding.

And this performance [funding] is scary because you’re being rewarded based on prior performance when times were good. And then when times are bad and the economy shifts and people can’t find jobs they’re going to hold the institution responsible and not give you the money. And that’s when you need the money the most is to create new programs. So the politics side of it is very dicey and can be very, very frustrating.

The former presidents acknowledged the need for unity at the system-level especially when political opportunity can be tempting for individual institutions to engage in activities that lead to the fracturing of the system. Participant 4’s comments reflect this idea.

I mean, I think the system has always known this, in its heart, that it will be better off staying together as a system than it will be trying to pick each other off for short-term advantage. But it's a constant struggle, because there are lots of pressures. And if this is your year that you have the House Speaker in your district, it's very hard not to succumb to some of those pressures, and to keep the focus on what's best for the system, and to me, that's still a critically important thing.

Summary

The presidents expressed their concern that political intrusiveness and its fracturing effect are on the rise. Dye (1998) and Colburn & Dehaven-Smith (2010) paradigm and understanding
of the Florida political system has additional examples derived from this research. This research study showed that state institutional elements, specifically, term limits, can intensify an already disjointed approach to policy-making at the state level. This further divides regions, fracturing systems. Even policies that increase access and benefit communities (e.g. the community college baccalaureate degree) can have negative implications on system effectiveness and trust if the process by which the policy is crafted violates principles of communication and collaboration.

**Research Implications & Future Research**

The findings of this research study provide new insights into the leadership experiences of Florida College System institution presidents’ leadership experience. The answers to the study’s five research questions resulted in the emergence of 13 themes. These themes confirmed and expanded the understanding of and contribution to the literature surrounding the community college presidential leadership experience. This contribution in turn has several implications that are important for leadership researchers and practitioners.

First, diverse and rich leadership experiences aid in building self-confidence in those seeking and serving in the community college presidency. The depth and breadth of previous professional development opportunities together with frequent and regular participation in leadership development opportunities build personal and professional self-confidence in participants. Those seeking a Florida College System presidency should consider identifying ways to engage in multiple professional development opportunities and seek work experiences that are diverse and challenging. No one experience will provide the confidence or knowledge needed to seek and serve in a Florida community college presidency.

Second, mentors are valuable resources for individuals seeking and serving in the presidency. Mentors provide encouragement, guidance, and opportunities for individuals to
strengthen and develop their professional leadership skills. Mentors also provide opportunities for networking that can increase the likelihood of finding and receiving a Florida College System presidency. Individuals interested in serving in a future Florida community college presidency should identify individuals who have served as a community college president and seek their advice and counsel on a regular and on-going basis to increase their opportunity of serving as a future community college president.

Third, the leadership styles of presidents are as diverse and eclectic as the individuals who serve in the office. No one leadership style is used by presidents and no one style is universally effective in leading a community college. The varied background, experiences, challenges, strengths, and non-strengths of individuals combine to create unique leadership approaches which are eclectic in nature. Those involved in selecting community college presidents, specifically search committees and boards of trustees, should understand that the unique environments of the institutions in which they serve will require equally unique leaders. Preconceived ideas which hold to the principle that leadership style “X” is most effective may obscure and detract from identifying qualified candidates to meet the leadership needs of their colleges. The AACC Leadership Competencies provide an effective conceptual framework for understanding what is needed for presidential leadership; however, the leadership style and approach can vary and remain effective.

Forth, the decision to retire from the presidency is a personal decision that is accompanied with a feeling of professional accomplishment. Exiting the presidency is a critical stage in the leadership process and should not be overlooked. Failing to adequately engage in succession planning can have detrimental effects on the institution and the individual. Boards of trustees and retiring presidents should methodically and meticulously work together to ensure
that the transition from president to community neighbor is given the organizational and individual support needed for success. It is important to note that the participants in this research study were presidents who voluntarily resigned and retired from the presidency. This is an important limitation to the study as those who leave under adverse terms would view their exit from the presidency differently from those who exit the office under more favorable conditions.

Fifth, political intrusiveness is not subsiding but is increasing which creates the need for future and current presidents to develop and enhance their political skills. The hyper-interest of the Florida legislature in the affairs of higher education is not diminishing. This requires individuals seeking and serving in the community college presidency to develop their political prowess to ensure that their institutions are well positioned for any future policy initiative. Presidents who maintain active engagement with political actors and activities will benefit the institutions and communities in which they serve.

Finally, higher education leadership programs at colleges and universities would be strengthened with the addition of courses and educational experiences which address the study and development of political skills and resource management skills. Being able to understand and navigate the external and internal political nature of organizations and to be fiscally proficient are skills sets that are increasingly becoming needed to effectively lead community colleges. Based on the research results in this study, higher education leadership programs that incorporate curricular and co-curricular elements addressing these skill sets will provide their students with valuable tools to enhance and expand their effective leadership ability.

Future Research

This study led to additional information regarding the community college presidential leadership experience. It explored questions related to individuals’ pursuit of, tenure in, and
retirement from Florida College System institution presidencies and also provided rich detail regarding former presidents’ opinions on the evolution of the presidency since their departure and what issues they felt would be most challenging for future and current presidents. During the course of this investigation, several additional areas were identified in which future and additional research would be beneficial.

First, the research study found that mentors played a significant role in helping encourage, guide, and provide professional development opportunities for individuals seeking the presidency. These mentors had an ongoing relationship with the participants that had a lasting and transformative impact on the mentees. While this study did not focus on gender differences between men and women and the role of mentors, comments from two female participants regarding the use of mentors showed that additional research related to this area would increase the body of knowledge on leadership development. Research questions such as, “In what ways do female presidential aspirants benefit from female mentors?” and “In what ways do female presidential aspirants with female mentors differ from female presidential aspirants without female mentors?” would be beneficial areas of research to consider. The answer to these questions would strengthen the body of leadership on female presidential leadership experience.

Second, this research found that no single leadership development experience was responsible for preparing presidential aspirants for the presidency. Instead a variety of experiences, building over time, contributed to the personal confidence and professional proficiency that individuals felt when seeking and serving in the presidency. This research also found that the AACC Leadership Competency of resource management, particularly fundraising and entrepreneurial initiatives, was frequently cited as an area the participants felt less confident. Additionally, this research found that political intrusiveness is on the rise and will require future
presidents to develop and enhance their political leadership skills. Research focused on infusing in-house leadership development programs with resource management, specifically fundraising and entrepreneurial initiatives, and political skill development would be beneficial. While no single leadership development experience can develop or prepare individuals for the presidency, institutions can strengthen their leadership development programs by identifying strategies to enhance the AACC Leadership Competencies of resource management and community college advocacy.

Third, this research study showed that resource management and leadership competencies regarding budgeting and finance are areas in which the participants felt they needed to become more proficient. With the expansion of the performance based funding model from the State University System to the Florida College System, additional research in the areas of performance based funding and presidential leadership is needed. Answers to questions regarding how presidents address organizational performance relative to funding formulas is needed. This area of research would be extremely beneficial in order to better understand the presidential leadership experience within the resource management competency area.

Finally, in this research study I explored the relationship between AACC Leadership Competencies and community college presidential leadership experiences. I found that according to the participants, the Florida College System was vulnerable to division as a result of Florida’s fractured political geography (Dye, 1998). Understanding the role the Council of Presidents plays in maintaining unity in the Florida College System, research investigating the AACC Leadership Competencies and the Council of Presidents would be beneficial. Research questions such as, “To what extent are the AACC Leadership Competencies valued in the function and operation of the Council of Presidents?” and “To what extent do the members of the
Council of Presidents view the AACC Leadership Competencies as important for the effective mission and operation of the Council of Presidents?” would aid in extending the understanding and application of the AACC Leadership Competencies beyond the individual- and institutional-level to a system-level approach.

**Research Study Reflection**

As I reflect on this research study and the journey I have been on, several overall thoughts surface. First, the participants in this study are highly successful professionals. Through my interactions and interviews with them, I have found an extraordinary group of men and women who are passionate about their work and have had careers in which they have reached the pinnacle of professional success. The fact that each participant who was approached, agreed to participate in this study, shows the level of interest in the subject matter that they maintain, even in retirement. It also reveals their professional passion in that they want to continue to contribute to the ongoing research surrounding the area of leadership and the community college. The participants loved their role as presidents. When I asked them if they “do it all over again” and serve as a community college president, they all responded with a strong and affirmative, “yes.” I witnessed that the individuals in this research study did not see leadership as something they did but who they were. Their leadership actions were not separate from the everyday life they lived. They were not clinically detached or absent from their experience. Their experience was their reality and their service as leaders was their purpose in life. For the participants to not serve as a fully-committed leader would be to deny themselves. They were passionate about leadership and the people (trustees, employees, students, and community partners) with which they lived, served, and lead.
Second, I enjoyed how close I felt I became to the participants in such a short amount of time. Over the course of this research, during the interviews, phone calls, and email exchanges, we traded family pictures, discussed holiday plans, and received updates on how “life” was treating each other. The participants frequently asked me how they could help me in my professional and personal life. They offered to be a “listening ear” or a professional confident should I need future direction, advice, or guidance. I also appreciated the deep candor and details the participants shared with me on many sensitive stories involving leadership scenarios they encountered. After sharing such stories, a follow-up email would often arrive asking me to respect the confidentiality of that episode. The fact that the participants would trust me with such sensitive data reflected the depth of the relationships I quickly forged. I am grateful for their participation and involvement and hope to check in with them from time-to-time.

Finally, I found myself energized by the process. I often would complete an interview and feel I had just been transported to another time and place, living through the rich stories that were that participant’s life. I enjoyed the active listening that accompanied each interview. Hearing the words they chose, and emotional context that can only be experienced through the process of hearing, was fascinating. In these interview moments, my mind was able to concentrate on the participant’s words and their meaning. Hearing how they arranged and thought about the research ideas and concepts we were discussing was invigorating. The ability to synthesize and identify themes from the data provided closure and created in me a feeling of accomplishment. As the data gave birth to meaning, I found myself in awe of the participants and their rich personal and professional histories. It was through this process that I gained a new respect for and admiration for the qualitative research process. I felt a genuine excitement in
being able to contribute to the body of knowledge that surrounds the subject and to provide new insights and understandings to the phenomenon of leadership and higher education.

Conclusion

In Chapter Five I presented a discussion of the research study’s findings relative to the conceptual framework, theories, and previous research on community college presidential leadership. I discussed how the themes which emerged from the data analysis supported and enhanced the literature surrounding the presidential leadership experience. By choosing Florida as the context of the study, this study’s findings advanced the knowledge and understanding of the community college presidential leadership experience in an area that has not been extensively researched. In this chapter I also outlined implications regarding leadership and its application to individuals seeking a presidency, individuals serving in a presidency, and groups serving in a capacity to search for and select an institutional president. I also presented three areas of additional research which would further expand and enhance the understanding of the community college leadership experience. Finally, a research study reflection was shared.

The forthcoming exodus of community college presidents will have a powerful impact on the higher education system nationally and at the state level. This change will reorder many existing relationships. Simultaneously, the environment that new presidents enter into will not resemble the environment in which their predecessors lead. New and unique challenges formed from the combination of old and emerging challenges will create new problems and opportunities for developing leaders. A new agenda will be formed by the next generation of community college presidents who will need to continue to balance an ever-growing institutional mission while remaining committed to deeply-rooted values forged in the core of the community
college ethos. The next chapter of the community college presidential leadership experience is quickly approaching; calling those who are ready for the challenge.
REFERENCES


Rush, R. (2012). *Examining two doors to the community college presidency: Can certain departing president and trustee characteristics predict who new community college presidents will be?.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). The Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL.


APPENDIX A

EMAIL REQUESTING INTERVIEW

From: [Redacted]
Sent: [Redacted]
To: [Redacted]
Subject: Interview Request from USF Doctoral Student

Dear Dr. ______________,

Good morning, my name is Kevin O’Farrell and I am contacting you at the recommendation of _____________. He has suggested you might be interested in participating in several interviews I am conducting for my dissertation at the University of South Florida.

The purpose of my study is to describe and explain the leadership experience of former presidents of Florida College Systems institutions. The study will identify the personal and professional experiences of the participants which they believe effectively contribute to the development of leadership skills for current and future community college presidents. It will also explore changes to the presidency and challenges future presidents will face.

If you are willing to participate in this research, up to three 60 minute interviews would be scheduled at your convenience, at a location of your choosing, or over the phone or via video conferencing. Each interview will be audio-recorded and professionally transcribed and I will send you a copy of the transcription for your review. Your name and information will be kept anonymous.

If you are willing to participate in this research, please let me know so we can schedule an appointment. I will send you my initial questions by email prior to our interview.

If you decided to participate in these interviews, please inform me if I have your permission to share your name with my professor or if you prefer me not to share your name.

Thank you for considering my invitation and I look forward to speaking with you soon. Please feel free to call or email me.

Kind regards,

Kevin O’Farrell
407-492-8267 cell
APPENDIX B

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE HUMAN RESEARCH CURRICULUM COMPLETION REPORT

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)

COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS REPORT*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- Name: Kevin OFarrell U90323826 (ID: 32838945)
- Email: kofarrell@ufl.edu
- Institution Affiliation: University of South Florida (ID: 425)
- Phone: 000-000-0000

- Curriculum Group: Human Research
- Course Learner Group: Rare Member
- Stage: Stage 2 - Refresher Courses

- Report ID: 10026755
- Completion Date: 02/23/2015
- Expiration Date: 02/23/2017
- Minimum Passing: 80
- Reported Score**: 100

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For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscription institution identified above or have been a paid independent learner.

CITI Program
Email: citiuniversity@citiprogram.com
Phone: 305-243-7778
Web: https://www.citiprogram.org

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COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)

COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT REPORT

** NOTE: Scores on this Transcript Report reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- **Name:** [Redacted]
- **Email:** [Redacted]
- **Institution Affiliation:** University of South Florida (ID: 425)
- **Phone:** 00000

- **Curriculum Group:** Human Research
- **Course Learner Group:** IRB Members
- **Stage:** Stage 2 - Refresher Course

- **Report ID:** 15386755
- **Report Date:** 02/23/2015
- **Current Score:** 100

**REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES**

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CITI Program
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Phone: 305-243-7670
Web: https://www.citiprogram.org
APPENDIX C

USF RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE APPROVAL LETTER

December 14, 2015

Kevin O’Farrell
Teaching and Learning
Tampa, FL 34647

RE: Expedited Approval for Initial Review
IRB#: Pro00023010
Title: Preparation, Change, Retirement, and Future Challenge: The Leadership Experience of former Florida College System Presidents

Study Approval Period: 12/14/2015 to 12/14/2016

Dear Mr. O’Farrell:

On 12/14/2015, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and APPROVED the above application and all documents contained within, including those outlined below.

Approved Item(s):
Protocol Document(s):
Research Protocol.pdf

Consent/Assent Document(s)*:
INFORMED CONSENT SE Version #1 Version Date 12.8.15.pdf

*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachments" tab. Please note, these consent/assent document(s) are only valid during the approval period indicated at the top of the form(s).

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review
category:

(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval via an amendment. Additionally, all unanticipated problems must be reported to the USF IRB within five (5) calendar days.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

John Schinka, Ph.D., Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Time of Interview: 
Date of Interview: 
Place of Interview: 
Participant: 

Introductory Comments:

Offer general greetings and thank the respondent for their participation in the interview and research study.

Briefly explain the research purpose and explain to the participant why she/he was selected for the interview.

Ensure the respondent understands their informed consent to participate in the research.

Briefly explain the research questions.

Interview Questions:

1. Was your presidency here in Florida your first presidency?
2. Would you think back to the time when you decided to apply for the presidency in Florida and share with me some of your thoughts on that decision?
3. Were there significant individuals, mentors, or conditions in your life that influenced you to seek the presidency in Florida? If so, can you tell me about how they influenced your thinking about becoming a community college president in Florida?
4. While a Florida community college president, did you ever have an opportunity to leave the presidency for one in another state? If so, why did you choose to remain in Florida?
5. In reflecting back, do you feel you were prepared for the job when you became president?

6. What were the biggest surprises, if any, after you assumed the position? Were there things you wish you had known more about before starting?

7. What leadership skills do you think were critically important to your success as a president?

8. As president, what skills were your strengths? What skills did you not feel as confident?

9. What personal and/or professional experiences do you believe developed your leadership skills?

10. As president, how would you describe your leadership style? What metaphors, if any, have you used to describe your leadership style?

11. What has been the most rewarding aspect of your service as a president?

12. Can you share an experience that was personally challenging and/or caused you stress, but was finally resolved with some level of success?

13. As president, are there things you wished you had done differently?

14. Prior to your retirement, was there a time you considered resigning and did not do so? If so, what changed your mind?

15. Was there a defining moment when you wanted to retire from the presidency? If so, describe that moment for me.

16. How long had you been considering retirement prior to making an official announcement?

17. How important was the opinion of your spouse or significant partner in your decision to retire?

18. Do you have any regrets regarding the timing of your retirement?
19. What do you miss about being president?

20. What has been difficult about adjusting to life after the presidency?

21. As you reflect on your time as president, what were some of the changes you experienced that impacted the role and nature of the presidency?

22. What were some of the political and institutional pressures you experienced that affected how you approached your role as president in the community and at your institution?

23. How has the rise of the community college baccalaureate degree changed the role of the presidency?

24. How do you feel you were able to anticipate the rise of the community college baccalaureate degree?

25. How do you feel you contributed to the rise of the community college baccalaureate degree?

26. Since retiring from the presidency, how do you feel the presidency has evolved?

27. Having witnessed the evolution of the presidency, would you be interested in serving as a president today? Why or why not?

28. As you reflect on the current higher education environment in Florida, what challenges do you see Florida community college presidents facing in the next three to five years?

29. What leadership skills are needed for future Florida community college presidents to be successful?

30. What are the best strategies for developing those skills?

31. What advice would you offer to future Florida community college presidents?

32. Do you have any additional information you would like to add to this interview?
Informed Consent to Participate in Research

Information to Consider Before Taking Part in this Research Study

Pro # 00023010

Social Behavioral Version #1 Version Date: 12/8/15

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Research studies include only people who choose to take part. This document is called an informed consent form. Please read this information carefully and take your time making your decision. Ask the researcher to discuss this consent form with you, please ask him to explain any words or information you do not clearly understand. We encourage you to talk with your family and friends before you decide to take part in this research study. The nature of the study, risks, inconveniences, discomforts, and other important information about the study are listed below.

We are asking you to take part in a research study called:

Preparation, Change, Retirement, and Future Challenge: The Leadership Experience of former Florida College System Presidents

The person who is in charge of this research study is Kevin O’Farrell. This person is called the Principal Investigator. However, other research staff may be involved and can act on behalf of the person in charge. He is being guided in this research by Dr. Donald Dellow.

The research will be conducted at USF, but your interview will occur at a location and format that is most convenient for you.
**Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to describe and explain the leadership experience perspectives of selected former presidents of Florida College Systems institutions. The study will identify the personal and professional experiences of the participants which they believe effectively contribute to the development of leadership skills for current and future community college presidents. It will also explore changes to the presidency and challenges future presidents will face. This research is being conducted by a doctoral student for his dissertation.

**Why are you being asked to take part?**

We are asking you to take part in this research study because of your personal and professional experiences as related to your leadership experience as a former Florida College System institution president.

**Study Procedures**

If you take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in up to three short interviews with the researcher.

The procedure of the research involves asking you about your personal and professional experiences as related to your leadership experience as a former Florida College System Institution president. There will be up to three interviews. The first and second interview will occur in person at a location which is most convenient for you or over the phone or via video conferencing and will last approximately 60 minutes. If needed a third interview will be conducted and will last approximately 60 minutes. These interviews will be digitally audio recorded and professionally transcribed. Your personal identifying information will be redacted. These files will be kept on a private password-protected drive for five years. Only the research team will have access to these files during this time. At the end of five years, the digital files will be permanently deleted and the paper transcripts will be shredded.

**Total Number of Participants**

About six individuals will take part in this study at USF.

**Alternatives / Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal**

You do not have to participate in this research study.

You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in this study.
Benefits
You will receive no benefit(s) by participating in this research study.

Risks or Discomfort
This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks associated with this study are the same as what you face every day. There are no known additional risks to those who take part in this study.

Compensation
You will receive no payment or other compensation for taking part in this study.

Cost
It will not cost you anything to take part in the study.

Conflict of Interest Statement
A conflict of interest management plan is a plan developed by the researcher to manage any conflict of interest and effectively protect the human participants in the research study.

The Principle Investigator is not aware of any actual or perceived conflict of interest related to the research study. However, should a conflict of interest be identified by the Principle Investigator, faculty advisor, research staff, or research participant, the Principle Investigator will notify his faculty advisor, dissertation committee, and the USF Institutional Review Board (IRB). Participants in the research study will be notified by the Principle Investigator of the conflict of interest. Participants will be reminded that their participation in the research study is voluntarily and that they may exit the study at any time for any reason. Should a research participant choose to exit the study, their information and contribution to the research study will be excluded from the final results.

Privacy and Confidentiality
We will keep your study records private and confidential. Certain people may need to see your study records. Anyone who looks at your records must keep them confidential. These individuals include:

- The research team, including the Principal Investigator, study coordinator, and all other research staff.
- Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study, and individuals who provide oversight to ensure that we are doing the study in the right way.
- Any agency of the federal, state, or local government that regulates this research.
• The USF Institutional Review Board (IRB) and related staff who have oversight responsibilities for this study, including staff in USF Research Integrity and Compliance.

We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not include your name. We will not publish anything that would let people know who you are.

**You can get the answers to your questions, concerns, or complaints**

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, or experience an unanticipated problem, call Kevin O’Farrell at (407) 492-8267.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or have complaints, concerns or issues you want to discuss with someone outside the research, call the USF IRB at (813) 974-5638.
Consent to Take Part in this Research Study

I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to take part in research. I have received a copy of this form to take with me.

_____________________________________________ ________________
Signature of Person Taking Part in Study Date

Printed Name of Person Taking Part in Study

Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect from their participation. I confirm that this research subject speaks the language that was used to explain this research and is receiving an informed consent form in their primary language. This research subject has provided legally effective informed consent.

_____________________________________________ ________________
Signature of Person obtaining Informed Consent Date

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent