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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

THE NEXT GENERATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS:
CRITICAL CHARACTERISTICS, COMPETENCIES,
AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Educational Technology

by

Kathleen Plinske

November, 2008

Farzin Madjidi, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

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DEDICATION

In memory of my Dad, Peter R. Plinske – although he was not here to complete this journey with me, his legacy has served as my compass, providing me guidance and direction. I know he would be proud. And, with his great sense of humor, he would proclaim, “Genius is hereditary!”

In honor of my Grandpa, George L. Wendt – his endless determination, incomparable work ethic, and infinite optimism have been a model not only for this journey, but also for life. Grandpa, we made it!

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I would like to express sincere gratitude and appreciation to my mentor, Walt Packard, who inspired me to dream of becoming a community college president. I will be forever grateful for your wisdom, guidance, encouragement, and support. I hope I can one day follow in your footsteps of leadership, although those would be enormous shoes to fill. It is such an honor to be able to call you my mentor, and a privilege to call you my friend. Thank you for believing in me.

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Mil gracias a Eva María Bill por apoyarme en todo, por siempre tener fé en mí, y por considerarme capaz de lograr mucho más de lo que yo creía posible. No habría podido tener tanto éxito sin tu apoyo. Estaré eternamente agradecida que me has adoptado como tu “natieca” y siempre trataré de hacerte sentir orgullosa de mí. Soy quien soy debido a ti.

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Finally, a special thank you to the trustees who graciously agreed to participate in this study. I was amazed by the willingness of so many trustees who selflessly gave of their time and enthusiastically shared their wisdom. The people of Illinois have entrusted our community colleges in excellent hands.

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ABSTRACT

Community colleges are an essential component of the higher education system and are critical to the nation's economic development. A number of challenges face community colleges, including the anticipated retirement of 84% of community college presidents within the next decade. In order to preserve their vitality, community colleges must be prepared to effectively select candidates to fill a large number of presidential vacancies. While the ultimate authority for hiring a community college president resides with boards of trustees, few studies have directly explored the perceptions of trustees regarding the desired qualifications of an ideal presidential candidate.

The purpose of this study was to explore, from the perspective of experienced members of community college boards of trustees in Illinois, characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences considered essential for future community college presidents to possess. Through a 3-phase Delphi study, 41 trustees identified and rated the importance of 68 personal attributes, competencies, communication skills, leadership skills, professional experiences, and educational backgrounds.

Nine items emerged as critically important for future community college presidents:

- (a) passionate about education – is a champion of community colleges;
- (b) good moral character – honest, has integrity, trustworthy;
- (c) articulate – ability to communicate in written and oral form clearly and professionally;
- (d) master's degree required;
- (e) dependable – follows through on commitments; arrives on-time or early for appointments and meetings;
- (f) good listener – makes people feel like what they're saying is important; is able to read body language effectively;
- (g) has the ability to establish trust;
- (h) team-player – understands the value of a team, able to recruit and

assemble an effective team; and (i) vision – recognizes where the college is today, articulates where the college should be in the future, and generates buy-in for that vision.

The findings of this study may be utilized by current and aspiring community college presidents, boards of trustees, and national associations and professional organizations. Furthermore, the results of this study indicate the need for additional research that explores trustees' expectations regarding future presidents as well as methodologies to effectively select candidates that are likely to be successful as community college presidents.

Chapter One: Overview

Community colleges are centers of educational opportunity, responding to the unique needs of the local area they serve. Committed to accessibility and affordability, community colleges have open admission policies and relatively low tuition costs, and students of diverse ages, academic preparation levels, ethnic and cultural heritages, and socioeconomic backgrounds attend community colleges. Today, community colleges offer multiple curricula, including baccalaureate-transfer programs, occupational and technical programs, workforce development, continuing education, non-credit programs, adult basic education, and developmental education. As such, community colleges have been recognized as an important component of the higher education system and vital to the nation's economic development (American Association of Community Colleges, 2007a).

History of Community Colleges

Community colleges have experienced significant growth and change since the establishment of Joliet Junior College, the nation's first public two-year college, in 1901. Early two-year colleges, often called junior colleges, were viewed merely as an extension of high school and primarily focused on offering the first two years of a baccalaureate education (Shearon & Tollefson, 1989). The role of two-year colleges expanded with the publication of the Truman Commission Report in 1947 which underscored the value of higher education, particularly two years of education beyond high school. Furthermore, the report called for two-year colleges to also offer continuing and non-credit education, and serve as a cultural center for the community. The commission used the term "community college" to describe these institutions (Vaughn, 2006, p. 29).

Enrollment soared at two-year colleges after the passage of the GI Bill in 1944, which resulted in scholarships for eligible veterans, and the publication of the Truman Commission Report, which helped to shape the mission of community colleges. As a result, the 1960s were an era of significant growth, as 457 new community colleges opened across the nation between 1961 and 1970, more than doubling the total number of community colleges in the nation to 909 (American Association of Community Colleges, 2006). In 2007, the number of community colleges in the nation exceeded 1200, enrolling over 11.6 million students, or 46% of all undergraduates in the United States (American Association of Community Colleges, 2007b).

As the number of community colleges has continued to grow, so has the scope of their mission. While still fulfilling the role of the traditional junior college by offering the first 2 years of a baccalaureate education, community colleges have increasingly been called on to offer developmental education, workforce training, continuing education, and other specialized educational opportunities to fulfill the unique needs of the local area they serve. Increasing in complexity and scope, “the community college of the 21st century, designed to fill workforce needs, brings together within one institution the former missions of junior colleges, technical colleges, and community education programs” (Romero, 2004, p. 31). Moreover, community colleges face new challenges including growing competition from the private and for-profit sector, declining state and federal financial support, increasing regulations from external agencies and greater demands for accountability, and changing student and staff demographics (Hockaday & Puyear, 2000; Sullivan, 2001). As an increasing percentage of the workforce will require postsecondary training, and as calls for universal access to higher education expand, it is

certain that the demands and challenges facing community colleges will continue to increase (Evans, 2001). Community colleges have been established "...as an essential institution, vital to the health and well-being of this country" (Roueche, Baker, & Rose, 1989, p. 5); as such, it is important that community colleges adequately respond to these new challenges and demands that lie ahead.

Role of Community College Presidents

The ability of community colleges to respond to new challenges will in part depend upon the presidents who lead them. Several recent studies have demonstrated a relationship between the effectiveness of community college presidents and the quality of their institutions (Broome, 2003; Hua, 2005; Powell, 2004). Traditionally, presidents of community colleges have been responsible for ensuring that the institution is managed efficiently and effectively, for creating a campus climate that allows students and employees the opportunity to achieve their full potential as members of the college community, and for interpreting and communicating the college mission to the students, employees, trustees, legislators, and community at-large (Vaughn, 1989).

However, as the demands placed on community colleges have increased, "the issues that upcoming community college leaders will have to address will be different and more complex than those faced by community college leaders in the past" (Hockaday & Puyear, 2000, p. 1). In fact, "expectations for community college presidents have grown more complex, demanding, and even contradictory" and have transformed the presidency "...into a calling of high expectations, broad responsibility, and limitless challenges" (Pierce & Pedersen, 1997, p. 13).

While current presidents are dealing with increasing challenges and demands, community colleges are facing an “impending leadership crisis” (Schults, 2001, p. 1). Many current presidents began their career in community colleges during the time of rapid growth in the 1960s and 1970s (Schults, 2001); therefore, large numbers of presidents are approaching retirement age. In fact, a 2006 study revealed that 84% of community college presidents anticipated retiring within 10 years (Weisman & Vaughn, 2007). These anticipated retirements are significant because “...inestimable experience and history, as well as an intimate understanding of the community college mission, values, and culture, will disappear, leaving an enormous gap in the collective memory and the leadership of community colleges” (Schults, 2001, p. 2). In order to preserve their vitality, community colleges must be prepared to effectively select candidates to fill a large number of presidential openings.

Selection of Community College Presidents

The ultimate authority for hiring a community college president resides with the board of trustees (Hildebrant, 1987). Community colleges are governed by a board, and depending upon the state where the college is located, trustees either are locally-elected, locally-appointed, state-elected, or state-appointed (Vaughn, 2006). Regardless of its structure, one of the most important roles of a community college board of trustees is to recruit, select, and hire a new president (Boggs, 2006). In this role, trustees are responsible for appointing a search committee, determining the characteristics and qualifications of an ideal candidate, overseeing advertisement of the position and recruitment of candidates, reviewing applicants, interviewing finalists, and finally, appointing a new president (Association of Community College Trustees, 2007).

While the responsibilities of boards of trustees in the presidential search process are clearly outlined, the criteria that trustees use to make hiring decisions are not as apparent. Despite the fact that presidential openings are often advertised with a published position statement that includes desired characteristics and minimum qualifications of applicants, these statements often include generic descriptions that are ambiguous and are subject to a number of different interpretations by the members of the board of trustees. For example, a random examination of recent position statements for college presidencies, conducted by the author, revealed that ideal characteristics of potential applicants include being “a strong advocate on behalf of students” (Chippewa Valley Technical College, 2007), that the candidate “understand and commit passionately to the mission of a comprehensive community college” (North Idaho College, 2007) possess “excellent communication skills” (Durham Technical Community College, 2007) and “be able to plan strategically” (Eastern Wyoming College, 2007). These advertised qualifications are often quite broad and seem to merely enumerate the minimum expectations of a chief executive. Additionally, “institutional fit” is often cited as a factor influencing the selection of community college presidents (Bumpas, 1998), but it is unclear what factors the term “fit” encompasses or how it is recognized or interpreted by board members. Accordingly, board members themselves admit to utilizing criteria beyond the qualifications listed in presidential position statements in hiring decisions (Nasworthy, 2002).

Executive Selection

The challenges that boards of trustees face in selecting a president are not unique to community colleges. While CEO selection has been identified as having widespread and substantial implications for the future success of an organization (Hollenbeck, 1994), research indicates that, in general, the executive selection process nationwide is flawed, and that the best selections are often not made (Forbes & Piercy, 1991; Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994). Sessa and Taylor (2000) report that the current state of executive selection nationwide is not good, citing various factors including boards' general lack of experience in selecting executives, lack of a clear decision-making process, and changing leadership demands of the executives they hire. Organizations that are "...more explicit in describing the organizational needs, position requirements, and candidate requirements are more likely to hire a candidate who is successful" (p. 27). As such, the broad and ambiguous position and candidate requirements often published in community college presidential position statements are cause for concern. Nevertheless, studies have been conducted that identify strategies to increase the likelihood of a successful search (Deal, Sessa, & Taylor, 1999; Sessa & Taylor, 2000).

Executive Selection Strategies

The Center for Creative Leadership has identified a systematic process designed to increase the likelihood of a successful executive search (Sessa, Kaiser, Taylor, & Campbell, 1998). The steps of this process include: clarify the organization's overall strategic needs, identify specific job requirements and determine specific candidate requirements based on the organization's strategic needs, and collect information on candidates and compare that information with the identified position requirements. Sessa

and Taylor (2000) further explored the importance of identifying specific job requirements and candidate requirements in preparation for an executive search, and concluded that one of the keys to a successful search is "...clarifying the requirements rather than leaving them in broad, ambiguous terms that may mean different things to different selectors" (p. 59). They found that organizations that framed position and candidate requirements in specific terms were more likely to conduct a successful executive search.

Similarly, Charan (2005) found that boards often struggle while searching for a CEO when using "impossibly broad criteria" (p. 79) to guide their search. Instead, boards who specify, as precisely as possible, the "...aspects of talent, know-how, and experience that are non-negotiable" (p. 79) are more likely to attract and select a candidate who successfully fills the CEO position. Likewise, Khurana (2001) identifies that as part of an optimum CEO succession, boards have the responsibility to identify the leadership skills and challenges necessary to meet the strategic and market challenges facing the organization. He underscores the importance of specificity in this identification process, warning that a "lack of clarity can lead to a botched succession" (p. 92). Furthermore, Cashman (2001) underscores the importance of bringing together "...a clearly defined, explicit model of the competencies, behaviors, and talents that are required" (p. 33) of a new CEO in order to increase the likelihood of a successful search.

In addition to increasing the likelihood of a successful executive search, clarifying the requirements of an executive position helps to build a talent pool prepared to fill positions of leadership. Blackman and Schweyer (2007) have found that clearly articulating the specific traits, skills, and competencies desired of future leaders helps to

ensure the development of a talented pool of applicants. Cashman (2001) states that clearly defining the competencies required of an executive position helps potential candidates decide if they are truly interested in the position, which in turn helps them to prepare for the role and supports the likelihood of their success. Likewise, McCall (1998) asserts that identifying the strengths or skills that are necessary for success in a position is an important and productive activity to provide opportunities for aspiring leaders to develop professionally and prepare for executive positions.

Executive Selection in Higher Education

Higher education, in principle, has long recognized the importance of identifying position and candidate requirements in presidential searches. Giles (1969) reported that developing criteria for the position was one of the key roles of the presidential selection committee. Likewise, Bromert (1984) found that successful presidential searches depend in part upon a clear articulation of the qualifications expected of candidates.

Furthermore, the Association of Community College Trustees (2007) has indicated that the determination of qualifications and ideal characteristics of a presidential candidate is one of the key roles that a board of trustees plays in the presidential selection process. Nevertheless, published position and candidate requirements for presidential openings tend to be broad and ambiguous.

A great deal of research has been conducted in an attempt to identify the criteria that community college boards of trustees use in making presidential hiring decisions (Aboudiab, 2005; Bumpas, 1998; Chaddock, 1995; Cook, 2004; Hood, 1997). However, rather than exploring trustees' perceptions directly, these studies examine the characteristics and professional experiences of current presidents or explore current

presidents' perceptions about what factors led a board of trustees to select them as president. While the results of these studies could potentially be used to extrapolate the criteria that board members have utilized when selecting a president, it would be more effective to directly explore board members' perceptions about hiring criteria. As one president responded in a study of presidents' perceptions of factors affecting the selection process, "Who cares what the president thinks. It's the board that counts; I want to know what they think" (Bumpas, 1998, p. 177). Furthermore, the roles of community college presidents are changing and the expectations placed upon them are growing more complex (Hockaday & Puyear, 2000). Therefore, it is possible that the characteristics of current presidents may not necessarily mirror the ideal characteristics that boards of trustees will identify for future presidential candidates.

Statement of the Problem

Community colleges are an important component of the higher education system and are vital to the nation's economy. While it has been demonstrated that the effectiveness of a community college in part depends upon the leadership of its president, a large number of community college presidents anticipate retiring within the next 10 years. Accordingly, a great deal of literature has been published that warns that community colleges are facing an impending leadership crisis (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002; Evelyn, 2001; Schults, 2001; Weisman & Vaughn, 2002), and that colleges must be prepared to effectively select candidates to fill a large number of presidential openings. However, the position statements that advertise presidential openings in community colleges often include only broad minimum qualifications and ambiguous characteristics

sought in ideal candidates. Given the role of the board of trustees in hiring presidents, the importance of selecting effective presidents to preserve the long-term success and vitality of community colleges, and the importance of explicit selection criteria in hiring successful executives, the perspective of boards of trustees is a critical component of the presidential selection process and requires additional investigation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore, from the perspective of experienced members of community college boards of trustees, critical components of the presidential selection process, including characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that are considered essential for future community college presidents to possess. While a great deal of research has been conducted to examine current community college presidents' perceptions of the skills and characteristics necessary for future presidents, this study will complement the existing body of research by exploring the perceptions of members of boards of trustees, who ultimately make presidential hiring decisions.

Research Questions

To explore the perceptions of experienced community college trustees, the following questions are addressed through this study:

1. What characteristics are critical for future community college presidents to exhibit?
2. What competencies are critical for future community college presidents to demonstrate?
3. What professional experiences are critical for future community college presidents to possess?

Significance of the Study

While great emphasis has been placed on giving aspiring leaders "...the opportunity to acquire and practice the skills they will need to lead colleges in the 21st century" (Schults, 2001), it is not clear how aspiring presidents would learn which skills and experiences they should develop to prepare for the presidency. The broad minimum qualifications and ambiguous characteristics of an ideal candidate often published in presidential position statements do little to help aspiring presidential candidates prepare themselves professionally for the position. Given the important role that community colleges play in the higher education system and the nation's economy, and that relationships have been found between presidential leadership and the quality of community colleges, it is essential that strong leaders be hired to fill the large number of anticipated presidential vacancies.

The literature suggests that boards of trustees that articulate specific position requirements and candidate qualifications are more likely to support the development of a qualified talent pool and successfully select senior executives. As such, the perceptions of trustees of community college boards regarding the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that are considered essential for community college presidents to possess in the future will therefore aid potential presidential candidates to prepare for the position and assist boards of trustees in conducting a successful presidential search. Furthermore, the findings of the study can be used to develop more comprehensive training programs for aspiring community college presidents that, in addition to the content that is presently covered in their curricula, will include critical information

regarding the perspectives of members of community college boards of trustees who perform the actual selection of the presidents.

Definition of Terms

Board of Trustees: The governing body of a community college, consisting of locally-elected, locally-appointed, state-elected, or state-appointed trustees.

Characteristics: Personality or professional attributes thought to be associated with successful job performance.

Community College: An accredited, publicly-funded, 2-year, post-secondary institution that primarily offers an associate degree as the highest degree.

Competencies: Skills or knowledge thought to be associated with successful job performance.

Executive Selection: The selection of a chief executive or other key top-level personnel in an organization.

President: The chief executive officer (CEO) of a community college that reports to a board of trustees.

Professional experiences: Employment in a specific industry, position, or role, or participation in a particular activity.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature related to the community college presidency and executive selection in community colleges, including a perceived impending leadership crisis, characteristics and professional background of community college presidents, challenges facing future community college presidents, competencies required of community college leaders, an overview of executive selection, the effectiveness of executive selection and recommendations for improvement, executive selection in community colleges, presidential search committees, external search consultants, recommendations for effective presidential searches in community colleges, and criteria used for presidential selection in community colleges.

Community College Presidents

Impending Leadership Crisis

A review of the literature related to the community college presidency reveals that concerns about a future leadership crisis in community colleges have existed for more than a decade. A 1996 study of community college presidents revealed that 68% of presidents planned to retire within ten years (Weisman & Vaughn, 2007). By 2001, the number of presidents planning to retire within ten years had increased to 79% (Weisman & Vaughn, 2002). Schults (2001) cautioned that community colleges are facing an “impending leadership crisis” (p. 1), and noted that with these anticipated retirements “...inestimable experience and history, as well as an intimate understanding of the community college mission, values, and culture, will disappear, leaving an enormous gap in the collective memory and the leadership of community colleges” (p. 2).

Given that more than a decade has passed since 1996, one might expect that those presidents who originally indicated their plans to retire within ten years have already done so, and that the “leadership crisis” has already occurred. On the contrary, a 2006 survey revealed that the number of presidents planning to retire within ten years actually increased to 84% (Weisman & Vaughn, 2007, p. 2). This increase could in part be explained by the fact that the average age of a community college president increased from 54 in 1996 to 58 in 2006 (p. 3). However, it is unclear if this increase in average age is due to postponement of planned retirements or if presidents are, on average, older when they are hired. Regardless of the cause, these data clearly indicate that the large percentage of presidents planning to retire in the near future which initially created concerns about an “impending leadership crisis” continues to exist in the community college system.

While there is consensus in the literature about the projected potential shortage of community college presidents in the future, Vaughn (2001) does not view the situation as a crisis, but rather contends that it “...presents a wonderful opportunity to develop leaders for the nation’s community colleges” (p. 15). With careful identification, education, mentoring, sponsorship, and preparation of future leaders, Vaughn asserts that “a leadership crisis can be averted and community college leadership can be stronger in the future than it has been in the past” (p. 3). However, Vaughn also explains that “...many of the students who enter graduate school with the presidency in mind as a career goal have little understanding of the position and even less preparation for the presidency” (p. 5). As such, information about the characteristics of community college presidents, the

challenges they will likely face, and the competencies that will be required of them in order to be successful may be useful for aspiring presidents.

Characteristics of Community College Presidents

A significant amount of research has been conducted to investigate the characteristics of current community college presidents. Since 1984, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) periodically has published results of a Career and Lifestyle Survey of community college presidents that explores presidents' demographic characteristics, educational background, professional background, and lifestyle. The most recent survey, conducted in 2006, revealed that the 545 community college presidents who responded were primarily "...White (88%), male (71%), and older than in previous surveys (57% were 58 or older), and had been community college presidents for more than 5 years (62%)" (Weisman & Vaughn, 2007, p. 1).

As illustrated in Figure 1, the Career and Lifestyle Surveys have revealed slight changes in the characteristics of presidents since 1996. On average, presidents are older and have held their current position for a slightly shorter period of time. There has been an increase in the number of female presidents, but a decrease in the number of minority presidents.

Another common characteristic among community college presidents is their level of education. Weisman & Vaughn (2007) found that 88% of presidents held an earned doctorate. Likewise, Amey & VanDerLinden (2002) found that 87% of presidents held a doctorate. Of the presidents who held a doctorate, 80% identified education as their field of study, with 2% further specifying community college leadership or administration as their area of focus.

	1996	2001	2006
<i>Average age</i>	54	56	58
<i>Average number of years in current position</i>	7.5	7.3	7.0
<i>Percentage who are female</i>	18%	28%	29%
<i>Percentage who are a racial or ethnic minority</i>	14%	14%	12%
<i>Percent holding a doctorate</i>	89%	88%	88%
<i>Percentage who were a Chief Academic Officer before first presidency</i>	40%	39%	37%
<i>Percentage who were an internal candidate for their first presidency</i>	33%	34%	35%
<i>Percentage with full-time community college teaching experience</i>	44%	45%	48%
<i>Percentage having held two or more presidencies</i>	30%	30%	33%
<i>Percentage planning to retire within ten years</i>	68%	79%	84%

Figure 1. Selected results from the 1996, 2001, and 2006 Career and Lifestyle Surveys completed by community college presidents. From Vaughn & Weisman, 1998; Weisman & Vaughn, 2002, 2007.

The 2006 Career and Lifestyle survey also examined the professional background of current community college presidents. On average, presidents who responded to the survey had been in their current position for 7 years, and nearly one-third had held more than one presidency. The most common career path to the presidency was through the “academic pipeline” as reflected by 55% of respondents who were in an academic position prior to their first presidency, and 48% who previously held a full-time faculty position at a community college (Weisman & Vaughn, 2007).

A national survey conducted in 2000 reveals a similar “academic pipeline” for presidents, as a majority of presidents responded that their immediate past position was provost (37%), president at another community college (25%), or senior academic affairs or senior instruction officer (15%) (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002). Likewise, a 2001 study that examined presidents who were appointed between 1997-1999 revealed that 56.4% followed a primarily academic pathway to the presidency (Kubala & Bailey, 2001). As Kubala & Bailey (2001) conclude, “...it is clear that most community college presidents are selected after laboring in the instructional vineyards for a number of years” (p. 795).

While the majority of community college presidents traditionally have an academic or instructional background, most do not stay in a single position for an extended period of time. In a national survey conducted by Amey & VanDerLinden (2002), respondents tended to spend 5 years or less in each position on the path to the presidency. As Vaughn (2001) notes, aspiring presidential candidates must "...be willing to assume any administrative position that comes along" (p. 6). Furthermore, most presidents also work at different colleges throughout their careers. Amey & VanDerLinden (2002) found that "only 22% of presidents were promoted from within their own institution, whereas 66% were hired from other community colleges; 12% came to the presidency from other sectors, including four-year colleges and public schools" (p. 3). However, the 2006 Career and Lifestyle Survey revealed a "slight increase in board preference for internal candidates," as 35% of presidents responded that they were internal candidates when they applied for their first presidency (Weisman & Vaughn, 2007, p. 6).

A 1999 study explored factors that contribute to the development of exemplary community college leaders by reviewing responses from 718 community college presidents regarding their professional preparation and using a peer rating method to divide the presidents into a normative group and an outstanding-leading group. The study suggests that a positive relationship may exist between being identified as an outstanding-leading community college president and the following factors: completion of a terminal degree, study of higher education and community college leadership, scholarly publishing and presentations, preparation as an agent of change, status as a community college "insider," following nontraditional paths to the presidency,

participating as a protégé in a mentor-protégé relationship, using peer networks, and knowledge of contemporary technology (McFarlin, Crittenden, & Ebbers, 1999). While Weisman & Vaughn (2007), Amey & VanDerLinden (2002), and Kubala & Bailey (2001) found that the most common pathway to the presidency was through the academic pipeline, less than half of the presidents identified as outstanding-leading had held a full-time faculty position at a community college, and McFarlin et al. (1999) conclude that “these data suggest that requiring previous full-time community college teaching experience for entry into a presidency may not be important to recruiting a candidate who will develop into an exemplary president” (p. 30).

While a great deal of research has explored the characteristics and preparatory factors common among presidents, a 2001 case study of four presidents that were identified as outstanding by their peers revealed that the presidents consistently identified “...experience on the job and mentoring as the most important preparation experiences for the presidency” (Vittetoe, 2001, p. 203). Indeed, a community college presidency involves a wide range of complex responsibilities for which no amount of training may provide adequate preparation. Moreover, it is expected that community college presidents will face an increasing amount and more diverse set of challenges in the future.

Challenges Facing Future Community College Presidents

A great deal of literature related to community colleges outlines numerous challenges that community colleges and their presidents will likely confront in the near future. Hockaday & Puyear (2000) contend that “the issues that upcoming community college leaders will have to address will be different and more complex than those faced

by community college leaders in the past” (Hockaday & Puyear, 2000, p. 1). The challenges that they expect will face community college leaders in the new millennium include: preparing graduates to participate and compete in a global economy, competing with an increasing number and variety of providers of instruction, utilizing distance education effectively to reach special populations, defining programs in terms of competencies and skills rather than the length of the instructional program, preparing for the blurring of mission boundaries, and facing new funding challenges.

Wharton (1997) concurs that “community colleges are beset with increasingly greater challenges...” including:

- being held more acutely accountable by various external agents;
- having to respond ever more flexibly to the increasingly diverse expectations of students;
- needing to substantially adjust major aspects of curriculum and course content to meet the requirements of education reform;
- having to continually reorganize and rebudget to deal with level or diminished finances. (pp. 15-16)

Sullivan (2001) agrees that community college presidents must now and in the future function in an environment characterized by a variety of challenges, as summarized by:

- a continuing scarcity of resources;
- changing student and staff demographics;
- a shift in emphasis from teaching to student learning and learning outcomes assessment;

- technological developments that absorb an increasing proportion of the operating budget, challenge traditional instructional methods, and require significant retraining of staff and faculty members;
- increasing regulation by external agencies and demands for shared governance from internal constituents;
- public skepticism about their ability to meet the earning needs of contemporary consumers;
- competition from private-sector providers of high-quality training;
- blurring of service boundaries as a result of distance learning and Internet use;
- reduced emphasis on degree completion and growing interest in other forms of credentialing; and
- finally, a nearly unbearable barrage of information. (Sullivan, 2001, pp. 559-560)

Evans (2001) concurs that community college presidents must be prepared to lead in a changing environment. With the shift from the Industrial Age to the Information Age, in combination with a growing population, community colleges will be in much greater demand. Furthermore, community colleges will need to be prepared to effectively serve a more diverse student body, including providing support to those who are not prepared for college-level work. Future community college leaders must be prepared to effectively manage change, as “funding support, recruitment techniques, student financial aid structures, student support services, the delivery of instruction, arrangements of programs and class structures, and teaching methods and techniques themselves must be changed drastically” (Evans, 2001, p. 188).

Pierce and Pedersen (1997) contend that “from a national perspective, three challenges stand out as having the greatest likelihood of significantly impacting the work of community college presidents and their institutions” (p. 18). The three challenges they identify are:

- *technology*, including balancing the benefits and costs of the revolution in technology;
- *competing demands*, particularly given limited resources and a finite capacity, the community college’s “...commitment to access may find itself at odds with its equally powerful and valid commitment to quality and accountability” (p. 18);
- *changing concept of community*, made more complicated by the fact that “in a global world economy, linked by the Internet, the connection between community and location could be severed” (p. 18).

Phelan (2005) agrees that there are increased pressures upon community college leaders. At a 2003 Michigan Community College Association meeting, presidents identified the most common issues facing their campuses: instructional technology, leadership development for presidents, local property tax support, job training, manufacturing job losses, partnerships, demographics, domestic relations, policy governance, community college baccalaureate degree, succession planning, quality and accreditation, competition, board succession, politics, capital funding, and increased accountability (p. 790). Accordingly, Phelan (2005) emphasizes the importance for leaders to “...constantly evaluate their progress in relationship to the institutional membership, board, and community” and explains that “a solid commitment to learning

is so essential for current and future community college leaders because of the ever-changing higher education landscape” (Phelan, 2005, p. 791).

	<i>Evans (2001)</i>	<i>Hockaday & Puyear (2000)</i>	<i>Phelan (2005)</i>	<i>Pierce & Pedersen (1997)</i>	<i>Sullivan (2001)</i>	<i>Wharton (1997)</i>
<i>Funding challenges</i>	•	•	•		•	•
<i>Restructuring of academic programs and curricula</i>	•	•			•	•
<i>Keeping up with emerging technologies</i>		•	•	•	•	
<i>Increased accountability</i>			•		•	•
<i>Blurring of service boundaries and distance education</i>		•		•	•	
<i>Greater competition</i>		•	•		•	
<i>Demographic changes</i>	•		•		•	
<i>Increased demands for flexibility</i>	•			•		•
<i>Blurring of community college mission</i>		•	•			
<i>Barrage of information</i>					•	
<i>Prepare graduates for an increasingly global society</i>		•				
<i>Succession planning and leadership development</i>			•			

Figure 2. Summary of challenges expected to face community colleges and their presidents in the future.

As summarized in Figure 2, a significant number of challenges that are expected to face community college and their presidents have been identified in the literature. The most commonly identified challenges include dealing with increased funding challenges, preparing to effectively restructure academic programs and curricula, keeping up with emerging technologies, responding to increased accountability, operating within blurred service boundaries made more complex by distance education offerings, facing greater competition, responding to changes in student demographics, and meeting increased demands for greater flexibility in terms of program offerings and curricular design.

In order to respond to new and more complex challenges, Sullivan (2001) explains that a “changing of the guard” is occurring in community colleges as “...many institutions are making a transition to a new generation of presidents whose leadership style is considerably different from that of their predecessors” (p. 560). These new leaders are comfortable with the personal computer and the Internet, do not think in a “flow-chart format” but rather are open to more possibilities and are menu-oriented, are skilled collaborators, emphasize workforce development rather than social justice, and “...have trained more intentionally for top leadership positions than any previous group” (Sullivan, 2001, p. 570). Given these predicted new challenges, it is no surprise that a great deal of literature has been published which identifies the competencies and traits that community college presidents should possess in order to be prepared to effectively carry out the responsibilities of the community college presidency.

Competencies Required of Community College Leaders

Hammons and Keller (1990) conducted a Delphi study to explore the competencies and personal characteristics necessary for future community college presidents. A stratified random sample of 27 presidents from different accrediting regions and colleges with varying enrollment sizes participated in the three-round study and rated the importance of 62 competencies identified by the authors through a review of the literature. The participants reached consensus that the most important competencies and characteristics for future presidents include delegation, personnel selection, decision-making, interpersonal skills, knowledge of and commitment to mission, motivation, judgment, commitment, integrity, and communication.

Hood (1997) surveyed 96 randomly-selected community college presidents to explore their perceptions about the skills and strategies that are important in carrying out the role of a community college president. The most important skills identified for carrying out the responsibilities of the presidency are decisiveness, leadership, judgment, and communication.

Townsend & Bassoppo-Moyo (1997) explored the perceptions of a stratified random sample of 61 chief academic officers at public colleges and universities regarding the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for current and future academic administrators. The results of the open-ended survey revealed that knowledge and skills in instructional technology, knowledge of cultural diversity and skill in working with culturally diverse people, and knowledge and skill in handling budgets and finance were the most common responses about the knowledge and skills necessary for administrators in the next 5 to 10 years. Furthermore, openness or open-mindedness, flexibility, and patience were the most commonly identified attitudes necessary for future administrators.

Pierce and Pedersen (1997) cautioned that the literature on the community college presidency "...has become steadily narrower in its focus" and that "...future community college presidents may not be introduced in any systematic fashion to the most basic, but not necessarily obvious, qualities upon which all effective presidencies will be based in the next century" (p. 15). Those essential qualities, as identified by Pierce and Pedersen (1997), are:

- personal adaptability, “the ability of a community college president to move comfortably among the various constituencies and stakeholders with whom he or she must work in identifying and addressing community needs” (Pierce & Pedersen, 1997, p. 15);
- role flexibility, “the ability to mediate among constituencies and stakeholders, finding those points of consensus that form the basis of interagency partnerships and similar forms of collaboration” (p. 15);
- sound judgment, which requires “the skill to listen to a wide range of often discordant opinions and the gift to cull from diverse voices points of agreement and the basis for common action” (p. 17).

Hockaday and Puyear (2000) assert that “community college leadership should seek to preserve the traits and skills that have already served to create, nurture, and place community colleges in a strategic position for further prominence in higher education in the United States” (p. 1). They describe leadership as “...simply holding the goals of the institution in one hand and the people of the institution in the other and somehow bringing these two together in a common good” (p. 1), and identified a list of traits that are found in effective community college leaders. While the authors acknowledge that the list of traits is incomplete, they wanted to “...illustrate the point that effective leaders have certain traits and that most of these can be learned and developed” (p. 1). The identified traits include:

- vision, defined as “a vivid sense of what the college should look like and where it is going in the near and intermediate future” (Hockaday & Puyear, 2000, p. 1);
- integrity, described as having followers who “...believe that the leader is reliable, will work to the best of his or her ability for the organization, and will not abandon it or its followers at a critical time” (p. 2);
- confidence, “...based on the knowledge that one has considered the alternatives, sought and received counsel from well-informed associates, and taken a direction based on sound reasoning” (p. 2);
- courage, which is described as highly related to confidence which “comes from practice and study” (p. 2);
- technical knowledge, described as knowing “...what the business of a community college should be” (p. 2);
- collaborators, described as the ability to “...deliberately and systematically develop relationships” with the leaders of other organizations (p. 3);
- persistence, described as continuing “...to press on despite obstacles and setbacks” (p. 3);
- good judgment, the result of “...understanding the social, political, interpersonal, and financial forces that are at work in the community...” (p. 3);
- a desire to lead, described as “a desire to make their mark on the future of community colleges” (p. 3).

Desjardins & Huff (2001) developed a community college leadership model from a database of interviews with 76 community college presidents who were identified as top performers. The model of effective leadership includes the following 22 competencies: demonstrates high-involvement leadership, creates a shared vision, champions change, maintains perspective, maintains equilibrium, creates a student-centered learning environment, stresses community centeredness, values cultural pluralism, creates cohesiveness, prevents crises, empowers others, fosters creativity and innovation, recognizes and rewards excellence, influences strategically, ensures effective communication, establishes effective board relations, maintains high standards, manages finances proactively, invests in professional development, strengthens infrastructure, enhances productivity, and corrects performance problems.

A 2002 study by Brown, Martinez, & Daniel explored the perceptions of 131 randomly selected chief academic officers at community colleges who held a doctorate with regard to the skills and competencies most important for community college leaders to possess. The survey revealed that instructional leaders at community colleges perceive communication skills to be the most important category of competencies necessary to perform their job effectively. The 10 most important skills identified, listed in order of importance, are: effective listening and feedback skills, effective writing skills, developing and communicating a vision, conflict resolution, mediation and negotiation, understanding of community college mission, understanding of interpersonal communication, effective public speaking skills, institutional effectiveness assessment and analysis, curriculum development, and organizing and time management skills (Brown, Martinez, & Daniel, 2002).

A 2002 study of 76 community college presidents in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia examined the professional development needs, opportunities, and limitations for community and technical college presidents. The results of the survey revealed that the three skills of most importance and value to presidents are budget management, developing positive relationships with local political leaders, and having positive relationships with state political leaders (Wallin, 2002).

A 2004 study explored the perceptions of five presidents of “effective” community colleges with regard to the traits that are necessary to be an effective community college president. For the purpose of this study, an effective community college was defined as having “high outcomes-based measurements of recruiting and completion rates for the overall and minority student populaces as compared to other community colleges” (Powell, 2004, p. 8). The presidents concurred that “being an effective communicator and good listener, creating a supporting and caring cultural climate, building and nurturing relationships with students and the community, and being a risk taker for positive change at their institution” (pp. 91-92) were the traits necessary to be an effective community college president.

Olson-Nikunen (2004) reviewed the competencies listed in position announcements for community college presidents posted in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* in the 2002 calendar year and found that the five most frequently listed competencies are: demonstrates high-involvement leadership, creates a shared vision, manages finances proactively, influences strategically, ensures effective communication, and maintains high standards.

Cook (2004) conducted a Delphi study with 16 Illinois community college presidents to identify leadership competencies needed by future community college presidents. The participants reached consensus on seven competencies deemed to be extremely important for future presidents: ability to build working relationships with a board of trustees, ability to accept personal responsibility, ability to control personal conduct, ability to effectively lead the leadership team, commitment to excellence, ability to make and stand by tough decisions, and commitment to students.

Turner (2005) used a modified version of the Delphi instrument used in Cook's (2004) study of Illinois community college presidents to investigate the perceptions of Texas community college chancellors, trustees, and presidents about the competencies necessary to become a successful community college president. Participants in this study identified 16 qualities deemed to be extremely important: ability to accept personal responsibility, ability to effectively lead the leadership team, ability to build trust, personal code of ethics, ability to influence and motivate people, ability to make and stand by tough decisions, commitment to learning, ability to control personal conduct, ability to build consensus, commitment to students, ability to maintain core values, ability to incorporate a culture of teambuilding, commitment to teaching, verbal communication, ability to delegate authority, and ability to demonstrate consistent judgment. While the exact rankings of important competencies differed among the chancellors, presidents, and board members, these 16 competencies were identified as among the most important by each of the three groups.

	Hammons & Keller (1990)	Hood (1997)	Townsend & Bassoppo-Moyo (1997)	Pierce & Pedersen (1997)	Hockaday and Puyear (2000)	Desjardins & Huff (2001)	Brown, Martinez, & Daniel (2002)	Walton (2002)	Powell (2004)	Olson-Nikunen (2004)	Cook (2004)	Turner (2005)
<i>Communication skills</i>	•	•				•	•		•	•	•	•
<i>Leadership</i>		•			•	•				•	•	•
<i>Sound judgment</i>	•	•		•	•							•
<i>Budgetary skills</i>			•			•		•		•	•	
<i>Vision</i>					•	•	•			•	•	
<i>Ability to make sound decisions</i>	•	•									•	•
<i>Ability to build relationships</i>					•	•		•	•			
<i>Integrity and ability to build trust</i>	•				•							•
<i>Ability to influence strategically</i>						•				•		•
<i>Delegates effectively and empowers others</i>	•					•						•
<i>Creates cohesiveness/teambuilding</i>						•		•				•
<i>Interpersonal skills</i>	•						•					
<i>Knowledge of and commitment to mission</i>	•						•					
<i>Embraces cultural diversity</i>			•			•						
<i>Flexibility</i>			•	•								
<i>Champions change</i>						•		•				
<i>Creates student-centered learning environment</i>						•						•
<i>Maintains high standards</i>						•				•		
<i>Accepts personal responsibility</i>											•	•
<i>Able to control personal conduct</i>											•	•
<i>Commitment to students</i>											•	•
<i>Persistence and commitment</i>	•				•							
<i>Mediation, negotiation, & consensus-building skills</i>							•					•
<i>Personnel selection</i>	•											
<i>Motivation</i>	•											
<i>Literate in technology</i>			•									
<i>Openness</i>			•									
<i>Patience</i>			•									
<i>Personal adaptability</i>				•								
<i>Confidence</i>					•							
<i>Courage</i>					•							
<i>Technical knowledge of community colleges</i>					•							
<i>Maintains perspective</i>						•						
<i>Maintains equilibrium</i>						•						
<i>Prevents crises</i>						•						
<i>Fosters creativity and innovation</i>						•						
<i>Recognizes and rewards excellence</i>						•						
<i>Invests in professional development</i>						•						
<i>Strengthens infrastructure</i>						•						
<i>Enhances productivity</i>						•						
<i>Corrects performance problems</i>						•						
<i>Conflict resolution skills</i>							•					
<i>Ability to assess institutional effectiveness</i>							•					
<i>Knowledge of curriculum development</i>							•					
<i>Organization and time management skills</i>							•					
<i>Personal code of ethics</i>												•
<i>Maintains core values</i>												•

Figure 3. Summary of competencies and characteristics recommended for community college presidents.

Figure 3 clearly indicates that a great deal of research has been conducted to identify the leadership skills and traits required of community college presidents, and there is clearly no shortage of competencies and characteristics recommended for community college presidents. Goff (2003) concludes that there appears to be little consensus in the literature, and that “the fog of the research on what traits and skills are required by the community college president has made the pathway to the presidency multiple-choice” (p. 10). Nevertheless, it is possible to identify the most commonly recommended competencies and characteristics including communication skills, leadership, sound judgment, budgetary skills, vision, ability to make sound decisions, and ability to build relationships.

The majority of the literature related to recommended competencies and characteristics of community college presidents has presented the perceptions of current presidents and other senior administrators. While their perceptions clearly offer valuable insights, few studies have explored the perceptions of community college trustees, with whom the authority for hiring community college presidents resides. As one president responded in a study of factors that influence the selection and hiring of community college presidents, “Who cares what the president thinks. It’s the board that counts; I want to know what they think” (Bumpas, 1998, p. 177).

Overview of Executive Selection

A review of the literature on executive selection reveals that the process and its effectiveness have been widely researched and that the impact of executive selection on organizations has been well documented. As Sessa & Taylor (2000) remark:

No single decision affects the survival of an organization more than that of the people selected to run it. Choosing a chief executive or other key top-level personnel is the most important strategic decision that can be made in a business.

(p. 1)

Fortunately, DeVries (1993) concludes that there is much new research from the last 30 years to help increase the odds of picking successful executives.

Hollenbeck (1994) conducted a review of the literature on executive selection and observed that each CEO succession is unique, that the CEO selection process is different from the selection processes for lower-level positions, and that while the broad outlines of the process of CEO selection are evident, a clear definition of the process is still lacking. Hollenbeck adds that a CEO does make a difference in the performance of an organization and that the selection of a new CEO has widespread implications for the organization and its members. Hollenbeck remarks that CEO selection is an extremely complex process of matching a person with an uncertain future, and the actual process that decides who the next CEO will be is largely subjective, reflective, and based on personal observations. He concludes that CEO selection is done by novices, and while the responsibility for selecting the CEO resides with the board of directors, that does not necessarily mean that the board makes the selection.

Schoyen & Rasmussen (1999) outline the strategies utilized by executive search professionals in their book *Secrets of the Executive Search Experts* and identify nine steps in the executive search process:

1. Defining the job and situation;
2. Identifying candidate sources;

3. Identifying specific candidates;
4. Telephone interview and screening;
5. In-person interview and screening;
6. Preliminary reference check;
7. Client meeting with candidate;
8. Regular reference check;
9. Closing the search (Schoyen & Rasmussen, 1999, p. 4).

Effectiveness of Executive Selection

A review of the literature reveals that most researchers believe that the executive search process could be significantly improved. For example, Hogan, Curphy & Hogan (1994) cite a 50% failure rate among senior executives, and conclude that it may be due to "...widely used but invalid selection procedures" (p. 496). Likewise, Drucker (2006) asserts that with regard to promotion and staffing decisions, "at most one-third of such decisions turn out right; one-third are minimally effective; and one-third are outright failures. In no other area of management would we put up with such miserable performance" (p. 61). Furthermore, Nadler & Nadler (1998) remark that:

In their most introspective moments, most executives readily acknowledge that selecting the right people for the right jobs constitutes one of their most important responsibilities. Few decisions they make will have as direct an impact on every facet of the organization. Yet, few other decisions are made in such an illogical, slipshod manner. (p. 229)

The Center for Effective Organizations at the University of Southern California studied the effectiveness of CEO selections and found that "board members lack the skills and

knowledge necessary to make sound and savvy selection and development decisions” (Lawler & Finegold, 1997, p. 90).

Forbes and Piercy (1991) also conclude that “...the top executive selection process is flawed and therefore the best selections are often not being made” (p. 186).

They suggest that in order to improve the process, several changes are required:

1. A much wider search for executive talent – especially inside the firm;
2. Collection and utilization of more relevant measures of performance on key jobs;
3. A greater willingness to base promotion decisions on objective performance measures (p. 187).

Sessa & Taylor (2000) concur that the current state of executive selection is precarious and outline “a host of reasons why decision makers are either unable or unwilling to address their most important job of selecting the next generation of leaders” (p. 3), including:

- executives usually have very little expertise in selection (p. 3);
- selection is not something executives feel particularly good at (p. 3);
- in making selections executives do not employ the decision-making processes that they use in other decisions (p. 4);
- organizations are not prepared to replace the senior executives who leave with competent replacements from their internal ranks, and many organizations have inadequate hiring, promotional, and succession-planning systems (p. 5);
- progress in the art and science of selection has not kept up with changes in the environment, organizations, and in resulting leadership demands (p. 5).

Sessa & Taylor (2000) recommend the use of a committee for executive selection decisions, as they found that the use of teams dramatically improved the success rate of the selection process as compared with selections made by individuals. Furthermore, they state that the use of a selection committee helps to generate buy-in and acknowledges the importance of relationships in the executive position. In addition, they recommend that organizations spend a sufficient amount of time preparing for the search, including identifying the needs of the organization, identifying the position requirements, and identifying the candidate requirements. In fact, they found that organizations that are more explicit and in-depth in describing position and candidate requirements are more likely to hire a candidate who is successful.

Furthermore, Sessa, Kaiser, Taylor & Campbell (1998) recommend that organizations conducting an executive search should:

employ a holistic, context-rich look at the corporation and connect it with candidate requirements; consider a diversity of candidates; use a group when making the decision; know that the selection process differs for external and internal candidates; understand that there is no silver bullet for successful selection; acknowledge that the executive needs support after the selection. (p. 13)

Executive Selection in Community Colleges

Just as the importance of executive selection has been clearly documented in the corporate sector, its weight is not lost in the field of higher education. Kubala and Bailey conclude that:

The hiring of a president is the most important function a board of trustees must do. Nothing else takes precedence. The board must take charge of the search

process, be sure it is well organized, monitor each step, and involve people who are knowledgeable and helpful. (Kubala & Bailey, 2001, p. 802)

Nielsen & Newton (1997) add that “choosing a person who fits the leadership needs of the community college is one of the board’s most important functions” (p. 34).

Though the details of the process used to select a president may differ from college to college and from search to search, the major steps in the presidential selection process appear to be clearly defined and traditionally followed. The steps of the presidential search process include (*ACCT CEO Search Service*, 1996, p. 3.1):

1. Institutional analysis, including identifying the challenges and opportunities for the next five to 10 years;
2. Profile development, including identifying the qualifications and characteristics that should be sought in the new president;
3. Candidate identification, including identifying individuals who should be encouraged to become candidates;
4. Candidate recruitment, including national, local, and regional advertising, source letters, and personal contact by the search consultant;
5. Candidate evaluation, including a paper screening process and 10-12 semi-final candidate interviews;
6. Visits by three to five final candidates, which would last two days or more and include a formal board interview as well as focus and constituent group meetings;
7. Selection, including reference reports and site visits to current institutions.

Presidential Selection Committees

Historically, it appears that such a formalized and systematic process for presidential searches was not always followed. In fact, Perez (1990) notes that prior to the 1960s the “old-boys’ network” was the primary means of recruiting presidents and that boards of trustees had a relatively free hand in appointing presidents, but “the advent of affirmative action and equal employment opportunity legislation, the push for equity in hiring and promoting, and the increased participation by constituent groups in institutional governance have brought lasting changes to the academic search and selection process” (p. 14). Indeed, a search committee is often now responsible for “...reviewing the application materials of all candidates, for interviewing the semi-final candidates, and for recommending the final candidates to the board of trustees in alphabetical, unranked order” (*ACCT CEO Search Service*, 1996, p. 4.1).

Bromert (1984) concurs that executive searches in higher education have become more participatory and inclusive in nature, reporting that:

For years, boards of trustees have used search committees in an advisory capacity to select chief administrative officers. Representative constituencies, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the community-at-large, were gathered to assist in finding the ‘perfect’ administrator, including the president or chancellor. (p. 2)

Normal functions of search committees at colleges and universities include:

- preparing a description of academic needs and responsibilities;
- recruiting candidates;
- screening candidates;
- checking references;

- participating in preliminary interviews; and
- recommending a pre-determined number of persons to a designated administrator who makes the final selection (Bromert, 1984, p. 3).

While presidential searches often involve a selection committee with representation from various campus and constituency groups, the authority for the final selection resides with the board of trustees. As Rauh (1969) explains:

Although there are many ways to choose a president and although various members of the college community may be involved in the process, no one seriously questions that the *responsibility* for the selection rests solely with the board of trustees. (p. 10)

External Search Consultants

In addition to representative selection committees, community colleges frequently use external consultants or executive search firms to aid with the presidential selection process. Executive search firms “...are professional service firms whose primary mission is to assist organizations in the search for, and recruitment of, executive management” (Khurana, 2002, p. 120). According to the 1998 National Presidents’ Study, 35.4% of public 2-year colleges used a consultant in the presidential search process between 1995 and 1998 (Ross & Greene, 2000) and “many boards now consider use of a consultant as an investment that saves time and money in the long run and also provides assurance that the search will be efficient, effective and legal” (Nasworthy, 2002, p. 70). However, the decision to use a search consultant can be controversial, in part due to the cost. Furthermore, “resistance to the use of professional search consultants is often based on

the conviction that trustees, faculty, and students understand the character and needs of the institution better than any outsider could” (Nasworthy, 2002, p. 70).

Dowdall (2004) identifies several of the advantages of using a search consultant including smoothing the search process, encouraging more intensive recruiting, and allowing for quick screening of candidates. As Nasworthy (2002) notes, “the most capable and desirable candidates are usually already employed; a consultant can actively recruit to ensure that the candidate pool is diverse and candidates are qualified, reputable, proven leaders” (p. 71). However, Dowdall (2004) also cautions that search consultants can have a poor grasp of institutional character and needs, that the use of a consultant can cause loss of institutional control, can result in recycled candidates, can result in predictable candidates and not attract nontraditional candidates, and can be costly.

As outlined in Figure 4, external search consultants primarily assist colleges in developing recruiting materials, building the candidate pool, and organizing the logistics of interviews and college visits. The authority for selecting semi-final candidates resides with the search committee, and the authority for selecting a president resides with the Board of Trustees.

Recommendations for Presidential Searches in Community Colleges

The effectiveness of a presidential selection is likely affected by the degree to which the college and its trustees prepare for the search. Several “pre-search” activities that have been identified to improve the effectiveness of searches include:

- a genuine understanding of the institution by search committee members;
- search committee membership representative of the major groups within the college community served by the position;

- search committee membership representative of the college or university at large;
- a precise charge to the committee clearly defined at the outset and adhered to steadfastly;
- definition of clearly articulated qualifications that candidates need to satisfy for consideration, especially those based on the long-term needs of the institution and its setting (Kelly, 1977).

	<i>Month 1</i>	<i>Month 2</i>	<i>Month 3</i>	<i>Month 4</i>	<i>Month 5</i>	<i>Month 6</i>
<i>Board of Trustees</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select search consultant • Establish search process • Establish compensation package 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint search committee • Revise and approve profile • Approve advertising 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview final candidates • Site visit to current institution • Negotiate contract • Notify final candidates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announce selection of new CEO • Evaluate search process
<i>Search Committee</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with profile development 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen and evaluate applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select semi-final candidates • Interview candidates • Recommend final candidates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with visits of final candidates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate search process
<i>Search Liaison</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange/assist with consultant visits and focus groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with profile development and distribution • Place local advertisements • Prepare correspondence with committee and candidates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive and acknowledge applications and nominations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with semi-final candidate interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with visits of final candidates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist board in announcing new CEO • Evaluate search process
<i>Search Consultant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit college • Develop draft progress reports • Develop draft profile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and place national advertising • Develop application screening materials • Develop sample correspondence • Recruit candidates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit candidates • Develop interview and reference materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in selecting semi-final candidates • Assist with interviews • Verify credentials • Provide reference reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with visits of final candidates • Provide in-depth background reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist board in announcing new CEO • Notify semi-final candidates and references • Evaluate search process

Figure 4. Presidential search process and responsibilities when utilizing a search consultant. From ACCT CEO Search Service, 1996.

Hildebrant (1987) surveyed 137 community college presidents that were appointed between September, 1983 and September, 1985 to identify the practices employed in community colleges for the selection of the president and summarizes the presidential search process in five steps: “(1) developing criteria for the position, (2) searching for applicants, (3) screening the applicants, (4) interviewing applicants, and (5) making the selection” (p. 174). Hildebrant (1987) found that 31% of the colleges used a search consultant, and 77% used a representative selection committee. Searches that used a presidential selection committee on average took more time, ranging from 20 to 30 weeks, as opposed to an average of 16 weeks for searches conducted without a representative selection committee. While the literature recommends the use of a representative selection committee to foster greater support and buy-in for a new president, “there was no significant difference among the presidents’ perceptions regarding how they were received by their new colleges compared to how they were selected” (Hildebrant, 1987, p. 149).

Chipp (1989) interviewed and surveyed presidents and governing board chairpersons at eight colleges who sought a president during calendar year 1987 to investigate the processes and procedures established for hiring and maintaining community college presidents. Four of the eight colleges used an external search consultant through the Association of Community College Trustees who helped develop the position vacancy announcement and job description, conducted candidate pre-screening including background analysis and reference checks, facilitated the search for and selection of an interim president, and established visits to the primary candidates’ place of employment; the process of conducting interviews and selecting the finalist

remained under the governing board's control. Chipps (1989) found that "each college which used a consultant referenced the service as excellent in quality and considered the cost a small price to pay for meeting the long-range needs of the institution" (p. 56).

Furthermore, in all eight of the searches, a position vacancy announcement was posted in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. However, the presidents believed that the announcements did not describe any problems that the institution was facing or what difficulties the new president may encounter. In fact, the presidents concurred that the position announcements stressed desired candidate qualities rather than an enumeration of the position responsibilities. Accordingly, Chipps (1989) recommends that:

1. Governing board should clearly delineate the expectations for the position of president through the development of a formal, written job description. When seeking a new president, primary expectations should be extracted from the job description and listed in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* as part of the published vacancy announcement. The vacancy announcement should contain the responsibilities of the position, and the qualities desired in the successful candidate.
2. Governing boards should use the services of an external consultant. A consultant adds continuity and depth to the process of hiring a president. The unfavorable issues of time and cost are overshadowed by the prospects of mediocre leadership for an institution.
3. Governing boards should be process-oriented in hiring and maintaining a president. A recommended linear approach to their process would be the:

- a. development of a clearly delineated, written job description;
 - b. extraction of primary expectations from the job description for use in the position vacancy announcement;
 - c. joint development and implementation of written goals and objectives to be reviewed within a pre-determined time period; and
 - d. development and utilization of a formal evaluation process, which includes a review and analysis of the degree to which the job description is fulfilled, and the established and approved goals and objectives are accomplished.
4. Governing boards should review the hiring process to include careful consideration of not only the position announcement and job description, but the application requirements, hiring of consultants, relationship with the media, structure and format of candidate interviews, degree of employee and community involvement, and time to be allotted for the total hiring process (Chipps, 1989, pp. 59-60).

Doty (1995) surveyed 74 new presidents hired in 1992 and 1993 and surveyed administrators, trustees, and faculty who were members of the presidential search committees to explore how community college presidential search processes are conducted and to analyze successful presidential searches as functions of factors in the search process. Doty found that the average size of search teams was 12 or 13, and the majority of search teams included between nine and 16 members. The search teams most often included representation from administrative services, faculty, students, student services, local business and industry, technical services, and the board of trustees.

Furthermore, over 35% of the colleges used professional consultants to assist with the search. Doty acknowledges that search professionals “may not fully comprehend the history of the college or the relationships between the college and its community” but contends that they “are the most up-to-date in their knowledge of best search practices and of the pool of best candidates available for community college presidents” (p. 139) and concludes that “colleges should use professionals as consultants who have both experience and extended training and education in the process” (p. 136).

Finally, Weary (2004) identified a series of best practices for boards during a presidential transition:

- Appoint a board-led steering committee to think through, guide, and oversee the overall transition;
- Use the transition process to raise institutional awareness and understanding of the board, the presidency, and the institutional agenda;
- Prepare a comprehensive, inclusive leadership statement to guide the president and the institution over the next three to five years;
- Utilize the transition event to update board policies and procedures and improve board performance;
- Make use of large-group interventions to welcome, orient, and educate the new president (p. 66).

Criteria Used for Presidential Selection in Community Colleges

A selection committee must decide upon the qualifications they seek in order to establish a common basis for evaluating candidates. As Chipps (1989) explains, “one of the governing board’s most important administrative functions is to select the primary

qualities needed in a president and to persuade that applicant who meets those qualifications to accept such an appointment” (p. 16). However, as Rauh (1969) points out, “unfortunately, the criteria selected are likely to be so broad that they become virtually meaningless” (p. 13). Furthermore, it has been quipped that boards are tempted to outline such grandiose qualifications and desired attributes for presidents such that “...no less than the Archangel Gabriel could meet the bill of particulars – and he is not available” (Wriston, 1959, p. 50). In 1969, typical criteria included “unquestioned character, a religious attitude, good health, youth, maturity, scholarly interest, administrative experience, advanced degrees, imagination, judicial ability, democratic spirit, platform presence, thrift, children, and a wife with social grace” (Rauh, 1969, p. 13).

Garrison (1989) recommends that search committees should develop search specifications as a generalized screening tool. Garrison points out that these specifications should not be a list of the duties and responsibilities of the person in the position, and should not be a dream list of candidate attributes. Often, these dream specifications “...never undergo a reality check until the search committee is suddenly confronted with the real world of nominations and prospects” and the committee then “...finds itself wading through a blizzard of performance and experience-related paperwork with no clear goals and objectives” (pp. 30-31). Accordingly, Chipps (1989) recommends that “what the board desires in a president should be clearly delineated and accurately defined” (p. 9).

In a 1987 study, 137 newly selected presidents were asked to rank selection criteria for community college presidents in order of importance. The criteria that they

ranked as most important include the ability to identify goals and to move the entire institution toward those goals, integrity and ethical behavior in personal and professional relations, democratic attitude and methods in working with employees and the ability to develop trust and cooperation among faculty, staff and administration, and the ability to work effectively with faculty and administration in achieving goals of the college (Hildebrant, 1987).

Bumpas (1998) surveyed 671 community college presidents to determine their perception of the factors used in the selection process for hiring a community college president. Two-thirds of the presidents agreed that the following factors are important:

- degree earned (doctorate);
- experience at a similar institution;
- college teaching experience;
- college administration experience;
- fundraising experience;
- prior position held in community college, specifically, president and/or chief academic officer;
- years experience in higher education;
- community service involvement;
- involvement in public policy;
- participation in community organizations and clubs;
- experience working with state legislatures;
- articulating a leadership style;
- articulating a college vision;

- knowledge of CEO/board relationships;
- knowledge of the community;
- personal appearance;
- communication skills;
- projecting self-confidence;
- sense of humor;
- commitment to gender equity; and,
- commitment to diversity issues (Bumpas, 1998, pp. 122-123).

Hood (1997) also surveyed 96 randomly-selected community college presidents to explore their perceptions about the factors affecting presidential selection and the skills and strategies that are important in carrying out the role of a community college president. The study revealed that the presidents perceived communication, innovation, and vision to be the most important factors that played a role in being selected to their current positions.

Summary

A review of the literature related to community college presidents clearly indicates that concerns still exist about a potential shortage of leaders in community colleges. A significant number of presidents are planning to retire in the near future, and colleges must be prepared not only to develop future leaders, but to effectively select new presidents. Overall, the state of the executive selection process has been defined as precarious, yet a significant amount of research reveals specific recommendations that can increase the likelihood of a successful executive search. At community colleges, the authority for selecting a president resides with the board of trustees. However,

presidential search committees with representation from campus constituencies, as well as professional search consultants, have made the process more inclusive and perhaps even more successful.

The literature about executive selection, both in general as well as specifically related to higher education, reveals that the likelihood of a successful search can be increased with effective preparation, including specifically identifying the characteristics and qualifications of the ideal candidate. Accordingly, this study aims to explore, from the perspective of experienced members of community college boards of trustees, critical components of the presidential selection process, including characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that are considered essential for future community college presidents to possess.

Chapter Three: Research Methods

Introduction

This chapter presents an outline of the research methodology that was employed in the study, including the research design, the process for selecting participants, methods for collecting data, procedures for analyzing data, protection of participants, and the format in which results will be presented.

Statement of the Problem

Community colleges are an important component of the higher education system and are vital to the nation's economy. While it has been demonstrated that the effectiveness of a community college in part depends upon the leadership of its president, a large number of community college presidents anticipate retiring within the next 10 years. Accordingly, a great deal of literature has been published that warns that community colleges are facing an impending leadership crisis (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002; Evelyn, 2001; Schults, 2001; Weisman & Vaughn, 2002), and that colleges must be prepared to effectively select candidates to fill a large number of presidential openings. However, the position statements that advertise presidential openings in community colleges often include only broad minimum qualifications and ambiguous characteristics sought in ideal candidates. Given the role of the board of trustees in hiring presidents, the importance of selecting effective presidents to preserve the long-term success and vitality of community colleges, and the importance of explicit selection criteria in hiring successful executives, the perspective of boards of trustees is a critical component of the presidential selection process and requires additional investigation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore, from the perspective of experienced members of community college boards of trustees, critical components of the presidential selection process, including characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that are considered essential for future community college presidents to possess. While a great deal of research has been conducted to examine current community college presidents' perceptions of the skills and characteristics necessary for future presidents, this study will complement the existing body of research by exploring the perceptions of members of boards of trustees, who ultimately make presidential hiring decisions.

Research Questions

To explore the perceptions of experienced community college trustees, the following questions are addressed through this study:

1. What characteristics are critical for future community college presidents to exhibit?
2. What competencies are critical for future community college presidents to demonstrate?
3. What professional experiences are critical for future community college presidents to possess?

Research Design

This study used a Delphi process to explore the beliefs of experienced community college trustees in the state of Illinois regarding characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences considered essential for future community college presidents. The Delphi process was first developed by the RAND Corporation to assist in forecasting

and decision-making by surveying experts who would be difficult to bring together in a face-to-face group. A Delphi study "...may be characterized as a method for structuring a group communication process so that the process is effective in allowing a group of individuals, as a whole, to deal with a complex problem" (Linstone & Turoff, 1975, p. 3). The Delphi process provides "...a method for the systematic solicitation and collection of judgments on a particular topic through a set of carefully designed sequential questionnaires interspersed with summarized information and feedback of opinions derived from earlier responses" (Delbecq, Van de Ven, & Gustafson, 1975, p. 10). It is characterized by iterative rounds of data collection with analysis between rounds, and can be viewed as a "...constructive effort in building knowledge by all who share in the process" (Kennedy, 2003, p. 505).

Appropriateness of the Delphi Process

Linstone and Turoff (1975) identified a series of seven characteristics that indicate the applicability of the Delphi process. They state that a Delphi study is appropriate when at least one of the following characteristics is applicable:

- The problem does not lend itself to precise analytical techniques but can benefit from subjective judgments on a collective basis.
- The individuals needed to contribute to the examination of a broad or complex problem have no history of adequate communication and represent diverse backgrounds with respect to experience and expertise.
- More individuals are needed than can effectively interact in a face-to-face exchange.
- Time and cost make frequent group meetings infeasible.

- The efficiency of face-to-face meetings can be increased by a supplemental group communication process.
- Disagreements among individuals are so severe or politically unpalatable that the communication process must be refereed and/or anonymity assured.
- The heterogeneity of the panel members must be preserved to assure validity of the results, i.e. avoidance of domination by quantity or by strength of personality (“bandwagon effect”) (Linstone & Turoff, 1975, p. 4).

The exploration of the beliefs of experienced trustees regarding characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences considered essential for future community college presidents requires input from a variety of experts with diverse backgrounds and benefits from the review of subjective judgments on a collective basis. Furthermore, given the large number and widespread geographic distribution of trustees across the state of Illinois, frequent group meetings would not be feasible. Given that several of the characteristics identified by Linstone and Turoff (1975) are applicable to this study, a Delphi process is appropriate.

Procedural Steps in the Delphi Process

Overview

The Delphi process begins by soliciting input individually from a panel of experts, followed by the researcher’s review and compilation of the responses. The compiled responses are then sent back to panel members for their review and ranking. The researcher then reviews and compiles the rankings, and sends the results back to the panel for reconsideration, taking into account the collective opinion of the group. The process continues iteratively for multiple rounds, until consensus or stability occurs. By

using successive questionnaires, participants have the opportunity to change their opinions based on the group's collective feedback, as well as identify items that participants may have missed or originally considered unimportant (Hasson, Keeney, & McKenna, 2000).

Panel of Experts

After developing the research questions to be addressed, the first step in the Delphi process is the selection of respondents who will form the Delphi panel. Panel members "...must have a deep interest in the problem and important knowledge or experience to share" (Delbecq et al., 1975, p. 88), and are often referred to as "experts." Given that the required expertise of panel members varies based on the topic of the study, no clearly defined criteria for selecting experts exist and there is debate present in the literature about how to adequately identify experts to participate in a Delphi panel (Hasson et al., 2000). However, as Powell (2003) explains, "most Delphi users suggest that experts should be chosen for their work in the appropriate area and credibility with the target audience" (p. 379). Furthermore, it is recommended that the panel of experts include those who will ultimately make decisions based on the results of the study (Clayton, 1997) given that "...they are more likely to become involved in the Delphi process" (Hasson et al., 2000, p. 1010).

While in the literature "...there is no agreement regarding the size of the panel" (Williams & Webb, 1993, p. 182), a Delphi panel must include enough members to uncover differing opinions regarding complex issues, but must be small enough to be manageable in terms of data analysis (Linstone & Turoff, 1975). Given the iterative data collection process, a Delphi study "...unlike other methods, requires continued

commitment from participants being questioned about the same topic over and over again” (Hasson et al., 2000, p. 1011), and a potential limitation of the Delphi process is attrition of the panel. As Dawson and Brucker explain, “...the amount of time needed to participate in these types of studies is enormous, and the researcher must be fairly cognizant and sensitive to the potential for fatigue in panelists” (2001, p. 129). Consequently, enough experts must be invited to participate to overcome potential effects of attrition.

Nevertheless, it has been found that follow-up response rates decrease in inverse proportion to the size of the panel (Hasson et al., 2000; Williams & Webb, 1993), indicating that experts in larger panels may be less likely to participate throughout the entire process. It has been found that few new ideas are generated in well-chosen homogenous groups exceeding 30 participants (Delbecq et al., 1975), and that a panel size of “...as few as five to ten” can be considered appropriate when working with a homogenous group of experts (Loo, 2002, p. 765).

Phases of a Delphi Study

After selection of the panel of experts, a Delphi study undergoes four distinct phases (Linstone & Turoff, 1975, pp. 5-6):

1. Exploration of the subject under discussion, wherein each individual contributes information he/she believes is pertinent to the issue;
2. Reaching an understanding of how the group views the subject and where members agree and disagree;

3. Exploration and evaluation of any underlying reasons for any disagreement that may occur;
4. Final evaluation after all previously gathered information has been analyzed and fed back for consideration.

As Green and Williams (1999) explain, “typically, a Delphi study involves a series of rounds of data gathering in which respondents offer and then refine their views on defined issues in an iterative process” (p. 199). They further clarify that there are usually three rounds in which “...experts are invited to put forward opinions, indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with the opinions that have been expressed, and then re-score their agreement/disagreement in light of the group responses” (p. 199).

Phase One. The first phase of a classical Delphi study includes soliciting input about a topic from the panel of experts through a series of open-ended questions which allow participants complete freedom in their responses. Given that this process can result in overwhelming amounts of data, some researchers either limit the number of responses that panelists can provide or choose to bypass this phase altogether and instead generate a list of items from the literature (Hasson et al., 2000; Whitman, 1990). However, this limits what is and is not researched, and “open-ended questions are recognized to increase the richness of the data collected” (Powell, 2003, p. 378).

Typically, a questionnaire with several open-ended questions is used for this initial data collection phase (Delbecq et al., 1975). However, McKenna (1989) found that using one-on-one interviews in the first phase of a Delphi study reduced panel attrition, suggesting that the “personal touch” enhanced participation in subsequent rounds of data collection. Furthermore, it is suggested that in Delphi studies “the use of

face-to-face interviewing is especially appropriate with participants who are in leadership positions because their time may be very limited” (Rayens & Hahn, 2000, p. 309).

Whether a questionnaire or one-on-one interviews are used to solicit initial open-ended input, “researchers have to be cautious as participants could identify many hundreds of issues in round one. Returning these items in their raw non-themed form could overwhelm the participants in round two and affect adversely the response rate” (Keeney, Hasson, & McKenna, 2006, p. 207). As such, data from this first round are analyzed so that “similar items are combined...to keep the resulting list at a reasonable length” (Whitman, 1990, p. 33). Furthermore, “where several different terms are used for what appears to be the same issue, the researcher groups them together in an attempt to provide one universal description” (Hasson et al., 2000, p. 1012). Brooks (1979) cautions that this is a “critical step” and presents an opportunity for the researcher to “introduce considerable bias” (p. 378). Accordingly, “wording used by participants, with minor editing, should be used as much as possible in listing items” and “...descriptions and grouping systems need to be verified to ensure that the data are fairly represented” (Hasson et al., 2000, p. 1012). In addition, Brooks (1979) suggests utilizing independent coders to check for consistency of analysis. The list of items generated during the analysis of data collected in the first phase of a Delphi study is the basis of the questionnaire instrument utilized in Phase Two of the study.

Phase Two. The second phase of a Delphi study consists of “reaching an understanding of how the group views the issue (i.e., where the members agree or disagree and what they mean by relative terms such as importance, desirability, or feasibility)” (Linstone & Turoff, 1975, p. 6). Each member of the expert panel is sent a

copy of the list of items generated in Phase One, and asked to individually rate or rank each item. This is frequently achieved through the placement of a 5- or 7-point Likert scale next to each item on the questionnaire (Clayton, 1997; Jenkins & Smith, 1994) that "...is anchored at one end with a term such as 'strongly agree,' while the other end is anchored with 'strongly disagree'" (Jenkins & Smith, 1994, p. 41).

The data collected in this second phase are analyzed and a statistical summary, including a measure of central tendency and level of dispersion, is calculated for each item. Commonly, this includes a calculation of the median and interquartile range (Jenkins & Smith, 1994). This information, included on questionnaires in subsequent rounds, "...enables participants to see where their response stands in relation to that of the group" (Hasson et al., 2000, p. 1012).

Phase Three. In the third phase, panel members are sent a questionnaire that includes each of the items for which consensus was not achieved with its corresponding statistical summary that was calculated in the second phase, along with a scale to re-evaluate the items. The items on the questionnaire should be "ordered randomly...to minimize formation of response sets" (McBride, Pates, Ramadan, & McGowan, 2003, p. 491). Each member of the panel is asked to individually "...examine the data and, in effect, to reassess his own position based on the group's responses" (Brooks, 1979, p. 378). Just as in the second phase, the data collected in Phase Three are analyzed and statistical summaries are calculated for each of the items.

Consensus. The primary purpose for using the Delphi process "...is to gain consensus or judgment among a group of perceived experts on a topic" (Keeney et al., 2006, pp. 209-210). As such, the data collected in the second and third phase are

analyzed to determine if consensus has been reached among the experts. The literature, however, does not provide clear criteria for selecting measures of consensus (Keeney et al., 2006), and levels of consensus vary from study to study (Rayens & Hahn, 2000).

One common method for determining consensus is to examine the interquartile range (IQR) of the ratings of the each of the items (Rayens & Hahn, 2000; Rojewski & Meers, 1991). As Rayens & Hahn explain, “the interquartile range is the absolute value of the difference between the 75th and 25th percentiles, with smaller values indicating higher consensus” (p. 311). As demonstrated in Table 1, a variety of IQR values have been used in Delphi studies to determine consensus. In part, this is to be expected as the potential range of IQR values varies depending upon the number of response choices in the scale, with larger IQR values expected as the number of choices increases (Rayens & Hahn, 2000). Still, upon examining IQR values used in Delphi studies to determine consensus as a percentage of the number of choices in the scale, it is apparent that variation exists from study to study.

Despite this variation in the literature, the desired numerical level of consensus should be selected before data analysis begins (Williams & Webb, 1993) given that “...items for which consensus has been achieved are not included in subsequent stages” (Rayens & Hahn, 2000, p. 310). Based on the literature, an IQR that is 20% of the rating scale appears to be a conservative but acceptable criterion for determining consensus.

Subsequent rounds. As Brooks (1979) explains, the iterative Delphi process “is continued until consensus is reached or until it becomes apparent that little, if any, further shifting of positions will occur” (p. 378). Consensus is usually achieved after the third or fourth phase, but Loo (2002) cautions that the study should stop “...when the criteria for

consensus are achieved, when results become repetitive, or when an impasse is reached.

We must appreciate that panel members can lose interest if too many rounds are demanded” (Loo, 2002, p. 766).

Table 1. IQR Values Used to Determine Consensus in Delphi studies

Author(s)	Year	Scale	Maximum IQR Used to Establish Consensus	IQR as % of the Scale
Stines	2003	6	1	17%
Kaliner et al.	2005	100	20	20%
Wicklein & Rojewski	1999	5	1	20%
Wright	2007	5	1	20%
Rayens & Hahn	2000	4	1	25%
Kim, Barnett, & Bragg	2003	7	2	29%
Osika	2006	7	2	29%
Brunner, Lienhardt, Kissling, Bachmann, & Weber	In press	10	3	30%
Mackellar, Ashcroft, Bell, James, & Marriott	2007	9	3	33%
Rasmussen, Sondergaard, Kampmann, & Andersen	2004	9	3	33%
Na	2006	7	2.5	36%
Comer, Birkenholz, & Stewart	2004	5	2	40%

While IQR values can be used to determine if consensus has been achieved for each item, the literature provides little guidance as to the percentage of items for which consensus should be achieved before concluding the study. Furthermore, it is possible that consensus will not be achieved, even after multiple rounds. As such, it is also useful to analyze responses for stability as well as consensus. Stability has been defined as less than a 15% change in response between rounds (Scheibe, Skutsch, & Shofer, 1975). In addition, little or no change can be expected in panelists’ responses after four rounds (Brooks, 1979). As such, given considerations of participant fatigue, it is appropriate to

conclude a Delphi study after four rounds, even if consensus or stability has not been achieved on a majority of the items.

Validity and Reliability

The Delphi process is characterized by iterative rounds of data collection in which experts provide their beliefs regarding a specific set of questions. After each round of data collection, the researcher compiles the results and reports the results back to the panel of experts, who are in turn asked to check the validity of those results. The iterative nature of the process, including checking for accuracy with the panel of experts who participate in the study, supports the external validity of the study. However, "...the validity of the results will be ultimately affected by the response rates" (Hasson et al., 2000, p. 1013). As such, the researcher planned to make significant efforts to encourage participation from all of the panel members in each of the phases of the study, including mailing a stamped addressed envelope with all of the paper questionnaires and following-up with panelists who did not respond.

One limitation of the Delphi process is that there is no standardized method for analyzing the open-ended responses collected in the first phase (Whitman, 1990). In order to reduce researcher bias in the content analysis of the Phase One data, the researcher planned to utilize Thomas's (2003) inductive coding process involving constant comparison. Furthermore, the researcher planned to invite an independent coder to follow the procedures for conducting double coding as described by Boyatzis (1998).

Procedures and Analysis

Overview

A Delphi process was utilized in this study. As previously discussed, the Delphi process begins by soliciting each individual panel member's input, followed by the researcher's review and compilation of the responses. The compiled responses are then sent back to panel members for their review and ranking. The researcher then reviews and compiles the rankings, and sends the results back to the panel for their review. The process continues iteratively until consensus or stability occurs on a majority of the items, or after four rounds of data collection.

Selection of Experts

The selection process for the panel of experts for this Delphi study began by considering all 312 community college trustees in the state of Illinois (Illinois Community College Trustees Association, 2007). The sampling frame included only those trustees who are locally elected, excluding the 39 student trustees in the state and the seven members of the Board of Trustees of the City Colleges of Chicago who are appointed, for a total of 266 trustees. Criteria for inclusion in the panel were at least 5 years of service on a community college board, and participation in at least one presidential search process. While anticipating potential attrition but at the same time considering that response rates tend to decline in Delphi studies with large panel sizes, a panel size of at least 12 to 15 members was considered appropriate for this study.

Human Subjects Considerations

This study involved interview and survey research with an adult population that is not a protected group. Participants in the study are community college trustees that are

publicly elected officials. The study neither presented more than a minimal risk to participants nor would disclosure of the data outside the study place the participants at risk of criminal/civil liability or damage their financial standing, employability, or reputation, and no deception was used. As such, this study appeared to meet the requirements for exemption under section 45 CFR 46.101(b)(3) of the federal regulations of the United States Department of Health and Human Services that govern the protection of human subjects (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2005). Furthermore, the only foreseeable risk in this study was imposition on the participants' time.

Accordingly, an application for the claim of exemption was filed with the Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University. In addition, all participants received an informed consent form (see Appendix A) containing: (a) the purpose of the study; (b) the methodology of the study; (c) the benefits of the study; (d) an estimate of the required time commitment; (e) a statement indicating that participation was voluntary and that participants could withdraw at any time during the process; and (f) a statement that the identity of participants, should they choose, would remain confidential.

The researcher ensured the confidentiality of participants and planned to report results only in aggregate form. Only the researcher has access to the raw survey data. Paper questionnaires and notes are kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home, and all electronic data is maintained in a password protected electronic file. All identifying information on survey responses is unavailable to anyone other than the researcher, and all data under the researcher's jurisdiction will be destroyed after a period of three years from the completion of the study.

Recruitment of Participants

To solicit participation on this panel of experts, a letter was mailed to all locally elected community college trustees in Illinois which explained the purpose of the study, described the benefits of the study, outlined the eligibility requirements to participate, and described the anticipated time commitment of the Delphi process (see Appendix B). The letter invited all board members who met the eligibility requirements to participate voluntarily and requested that they demonstrate their interest by completing and returning a preliminary questionnaire (see Appendix C) and signing and returning an informed consent form (see Appendix A) in an enclosed stamped envelope addressed to the researcher. In order to facilitate the scheduling of interviews with panelists, the preliminary questionnaire included a question that asked if the trustee was planning to attend the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) National Legislative Summit in Washington, DC between February 10-12, 2008. The researcher planned to conduct as many interviews as possible at the National Legislative Summit in order to make the scheduling of face-to-face interviews as convenient as possible for trustees.

If fewer than 12 to 15 qualified board members agreed to participate in the study, the researcher planned to ask those board members who did respond to nominate other board members to participate. If more than 12 to 15 qualified board members agreed to participate in the study, the researcher planned to select participants in order to achieve maximum variation in the community college districts and geographic areas represented.

Sixty trustees responded to the original request for participation; 41 of those respondents were eligible to participate. Of the 41 eligible trustees, 22 indicated that they were planning to attend the National Legislative Summit. The 19 trustees who indicated

that they were not planning to attend the Legislative Summit added richness to the study both in terms of diversity of community college districts represented, as well as in terms of years of experience serving on a board and number of presidential searches in which they participated. Therefore, all 41 eligible trustees were included in the study.

The researcher intended to attempt to schedule interviews with the 22 trustees planning to attend the National Legislative Summit, and to invite all 41 trustees to participate in the consensus-building phases of the study. Accordingly, a letter was sent to the trustees who indicated that they were planning to attend the ACCT National Legislative Summit to thank them for their interest in participating in the study and to request that they respond with their availability to participate in an interview and with their preferred contact information (Appendix D), along with an ACCT National Legislative Summit conference schedule (Appendix E), an interview schedule request form (Appendix F), a preferred contact form (Appendix G), and a stamped enveloped addressed to the researcher. Trustees who indicated that they were not planning to attend the ACCT National Legislative Summit were sent a letter thanking them for their interest in participating, informing them that they would receive the first questionnaire near the middle of February, and requesting that they respond with their preferred contact information (Appendix H), along with a preferred contact form (Appendix G) and a stamped enveloped addressed to the researcher.

Phase One

Seventeen of the 22 trustees who indicated that they were planning to attend the ACCT National Legislative Summit responded to the request to schedule an interview. Two of the 17 trustees who responded indicated that they had changed their plans and were no

longer going to attend the National Legislative Summit; however, these two trustees still expressed an interest in participating in an interview, and participated in an interview via telephone. Also, due to logistical difficulties of scheduling a large number of interviews during a four-day conference, the three participants from McHenry County College agreed to participate in an in-person interview in Crystal Lake, Illinois. The remaining twelve trustees were interviewed before and during the National Legislative Summit in Washington, DC between February 9-12, 2008.

In this research, one-on-one semi-structured interviews with members of the panel of experts were used to solicit initial input. While structured interviews require the researcher to follow a script and ask a series of predetermined questions, and unstructured interviews allow for an informal discussion guided by open-ended questions, semi-structured interviews are guided by a list of questions, but the wording and the order of the questions is not fixed. Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to remain “reasonably objective while still permitting a thorough understanding of the respondent's opinions and the reasons behind them” (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p. 452). Accordingly, during the interview, the researcher asked for clarification using probes, with prompts such as ““Could you give me an example?” ‘Can you tell me more about that?’ and ‘What can you tell me about...?’” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 166). Interviews were expected to last 30 minutes but the researcher was open and flexible to the time required.

Before beginning the interview, the researcher asked permission of the panel member to record the interview. The researcher used a digital audio recorder to record the interview for transcription purposes, and used a backup analog recorder to ensure the quality of the interview for transcription. During the interview, the researcher also took

notes to clarify responses, and an extra copy of the notes was made and stored in a separate file in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home office.

The researcher began each interview by asking the panel member to identify characteristics critical for community college presidents to possess in the future. The researcher asked follow-up questions such as "Could you give an example?" or "Could you explain that further?" to achieve greater clarity of responses. Once the panel member had identified all of the characteristics that he/she believed were critical for future community college presidents to possess, the researcher then asked the panel member to identify what competencies are critical for future community college presidents. Once again, the researcher asked follow-up questions as necessary. After the panel member identified all of the competencies that he/she believed were critical for future community college presidents to possess, the researcher then asked the panel member to identify the professional experiences that are critical for future community college presidents to possess, along with follow-up questions as necessary. Once the interviews were completed, the researcher transcribed the recordings. Content analysis was conducted on the transcripts to determine a list of characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences identified by panel members that are critical for future community college presidents to possess.

Instrument. The researcher utilized an interview protocol (see Appendix I) with "...ample space between the questions to write responses to the interviewee's comments" (Creswell, 2007, p. 133). The researcher took notes during the interviews, including listing items that required further clarification from the interviewee.

Content analysis. After all the interviews were transcribed, the researcher utilized an inductive coding procedure as described by Thomas (2003) that allowed for categories and groupings to emerge from the responses to the interview questions. The procedure involved:

1. *Preparation of raw data files (data cleaning)* - the researcher formatted the raw data files in a common format (e.g. font size, margins) and made a backup of each transcription.
2. *Close reading of text* - once the text was prepared, the raw text was read in detail so that the researcher became familiar with the content and gained an understanding of the themes and details in the text.
3. *Creation of categories* - the researcher identified and defined categories or themes. The upper-level or more general categories were likely to be derived from the research aims. The lower-level or specific categories were derived from multiple readings of the raw data (in vivo coding). For “in vivo” coding, categories were created from meaning units or actual phrases used in specific text segments. The researcher used a word processor to copy and paste marked text segments into each category.
4. *Overlapping coded and uncoded text* – the researcher coded some segments of text into more than one category, and a considerable amount of the text was not assigned to any category, as much of the text was not directly relevant to the research objectives.

5. *Continuing revision and refinement of category system* - within each category, the researcher searched for subtopics, including contradictory points of view and new insights. The researcher selected appropriate quotes that conveyed the core theme or essence of a category. The researcher combined or linked categories under a superordinate category when the meanings were similar (Thomas, 2003, p. 5).

As Brooks (1979) has suggested that the danger of researcher bias can be reduced if independent coders review the initial input collected and validate the coding process, the procedures outlined by Boyatzis (1998) for conducting double coding were implemented. The researcher provided to an independent coder the research objectives, categories identified in the coding process, and descriptions of each category without the raw text from the transcriptions attached. The independent coder was also given a sample of the transcribed interviews (previously coded by the researcher) and was asked to assign sections of the text to the categories that were developed. Percentage agreement of interrater reliability was calculated "...as the number of times of observation or coding in which the two coders agree divided by the number of possible observations" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 154). For this study, percentage agreement of 70% or better was to be considered acceptable (Boyatzis, 1998). Furthermore, given the iterative nature of a Delphi study, the procedures for "stakeholder checks" as identified by Thomas (2003, p. 7) naturally occurred in subsequent rounds, enhancing the credibility of the findings.

Phase Two

A comprehensive list of characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that are important for future community college presidents to possess was

compiled from content analysis performed on the interview transcripts. A questionnaire was constructed in which each of the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that emerged during the coding process was listed. A 7-point Likert scale with one indicating no importance and seven indicating critical importance was associated with each item and used to assess its importance. On the questionnaire, panelists were instructed to read every item carefully and rate the importance of each item using the 7-point scale provided. Furthermore, panelists had the opportunity to respond to an open-ended question to identify any additional characteristics, competencies, or professional experiences that were not included in the first questionnaire.

The first questionnaire was sent to all 41 eligible trustees who responded that they were willing to participate in the study. Those trustees who indicated that they preferred to communicate via postal mail were sent a letter with instructions regarding the questionnaire (Appendix J) and a print copy of the questionnaire (Appendix K), along with a stamped envelope addressed to the researcher. Trustees were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it to the researcher within 16 days. A numeric code was randomly assigned to each panel member whose chose to communicate via postal mail. The code was written on the top of the questionnaire sent to the corresponding panelist which allowed the researcher to follow-up with panelists who did not return the questionnaire.

Those trustees who indicated that they preferred to communicate electronically were sent an email which included instructions regarding the questionnaire (Appendix L), and a link to an online version of the questionnaire (Appendix M) which was created in

Zoomerang, an online survey tool. Trustees were asked to complete the questionnaire within 16 days. Zoomerang provided an online tracking tool that allowed the researcher to follow-up with trustees who did not complete the questionnaire.

The researcher sent a follow-up reminder letter (Appendix N) and an additional copy of the questionnaire (Appendix K) to all trustees participating via postal mail from whom the researcher did not receive a response after 12 days from the original mailing. The researcher also sent a follow-up email reminder (Appendix O) to all trustees participating electronically from whom the researcher did not receive a response after seven days after the original mailing.

After 16 days had elapsed from the date when the researcher sent out the initial questionnaires, ratings on every item were recorded and a median score and inter-quartile range for each item was calculated. The researcher checked to determine if consensus had been achieved on any of the items. For the purposes of this study, consensus was defined as an IQR equal to or less than 20% of the rating scale. Accordingly, given that the scale ranged from one to seven, consensus was defined by an IQR equal to or less than 1.4. Also, the researcher compiled trustees' responses of additional characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences considered critically important for future community college presidents that were included as responses to the open-ended question in the first questionnaire.

Phase Three

A second questionnaire was created in which the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences on which consensus was not achieved in the second phase were listed along with their median importance ratings. Furthermore, the additional

characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences identified in responses to the open-ended question on the first questionnaire were also included. Items on the second questionnaire were listed in random order to reduce the potential for formation of response sets.

The second questionnaire was sent to all 41 eligible trustees who responded that they were willing to participate in the study. Those trustees who indicated that they preferred to communicate via postal mail were sent a letter (Appendix P) with instructions to review each item and its median score, and once again rate the importance of each of the items, a print copy of the second questionnaire (Appendix Q), and the compiled results from the first questionnaire (Appendix R), along with a stamped envelope addressed to the researcher. Trustees were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it to the researcher within 16 days. The numeric code assigned to each trustee for the first questionnaire was also included on the second questionnaires which allowed the researcher to follow-up with panelists who did not respond.

Those trustees who indicated that they preferred to communicate electronically were sent an email (Appendix S) that included instructions to review each item and its median score, and once again rate the importance of each of the items, along with a link to an online version of the questionnaire (Appendix T) that was created in Zoomerang. Trustees were asked to complete the questionnaire within 16 days. Zoomerang provides an online tracking tool which allowed the researcher to follow-up with trustees who did not complete the questionnaire.

The researcher sent a follow-up reminder letter (Appendix U) and an additional copy of the questionnaire (Appendix Q) to all trustees participating via postal mail from

whom the researcher did not receive a response after 10 days. The researcher also sent a follow-up email reminder (Appendix V) to all trustees participating electronically from whom the researcher did not receive a response after 10 days. After 16 days had elapsed from the date when the researcher initially sent out the second questionnaires, ratings on every item were recorded and a median score and inter-quartile range for each item was calculated.

Once again, the researcher checked to determine if consensus occurred for any of the items, which was defined as an IQR of 1.4 or less. Furthermore, the researcher checked to determine if stability had occurred on any of the items that had been included on both the first and second questionnaires. Stability was defined as a change in the distribution of responses between rounds of less than 15%. If consensus or stability had not occurred on more than half of the original items, the researcher planned to construct a third questionnaire which would have included the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences identified by the panel members for which consensus or stability had not occurred along with the median values calculated in the third phase.

Nevertheless, data from the first and second questionnaires revealed that consensus or stability did occur on more than 50% of the original items. Accordingly, the researcher created a final list of characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences considered critically important for future community college presidents presented in a table in which items were sorted in order of importance based on their median score.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study, that is shared by all Delphi studies, is that it is potentially subject to the biases of the researcher, particularly in relation to the selection of experts, the structure of the questionnaires, and the analysis of collected data (Lang, 1994). As a further limitation, few clear and specific guidelines exist in the literature regarding Delphi studies, particularly in relation to panel size (Williams & Webb, 1993) and criteria for determination of consensus (Keeney et al., 2006).

An additional limitation is the cross-sectional nature of this research, in that data was collected during a fixed period of time. Given the increasing and changing demands placed on community colleges, it is possible that the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences perceived to be critical for future community college presidents may change over time.

Furthermore, the panelists in this study included only experienced trustees from community colleges in Illinois. It is possible that community colleges in other states face slightly different challenges and that the results of this study may not be fully generalizable. Likewise, while this study explored only the perceptions of experienced trustees, experienced and inexperienced trustees alike participate in the presidential selection process, and it is possible that inexperienced trustees have different perceptions about the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences critical for future community college presidents to possess.

Chapter Four: Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study, including demographics of the study participants, a summary of the data collected in each of the phases of the study, and an analysis of the data collected in each phase.

Recruitment of Participants

The selection process for participants in the study began by considering all 312 community college trustees in the state of Illinois. The sampling frame included only those trustees who are locally elected, excluding the 39 student trustees in the state and the seven members of the Board of Trustees of the City College of Chicago who are appointed, for a total of 266 trustees. To be eligible to participate in the study, trustees must have served on a community college board for at least 5 years, and have participated in at least one presidential search.

In order to solicit participation in the study, an invitation letter was mailed to all 266 locally elected community college trustees in the state of Illinois which explained the purpose of the study, described the benefits of the study, outlined the eligibility requirements to participate, and described the anticipated time commitment of the Delphi process (see Appendix B). The letter invited all board members who met the eligibility requirements to participate voluntarily and requested that they demonstrate their interest by completing and returning a preliminary questionnaire (Appendix C) and signing and returning an informed consent form (Appendix A) in an enclosed stamped envelope addressed to the researcher.

Sixty trustees responded to the original request for participation, for an overall response rate of 22.5% percent. It is important to note that many trustees may have chosen not to respond because they did not meet eligibility requirements. Data is not available on the number of trustees who have served on a community college board for at least 5 years and have participated in at least one presidential search; therefore, the response rate of trustees eligible to participate in the study is unknown.

Characteristics of Eligible Participants

Of the 60 trustees who responded, 41 trustees were eligible to participate in the study. As illustrated in Figure 5 and Table 2, these 41 trustees represented 23 of the 39 community college districts in the state of Illinois (59%).

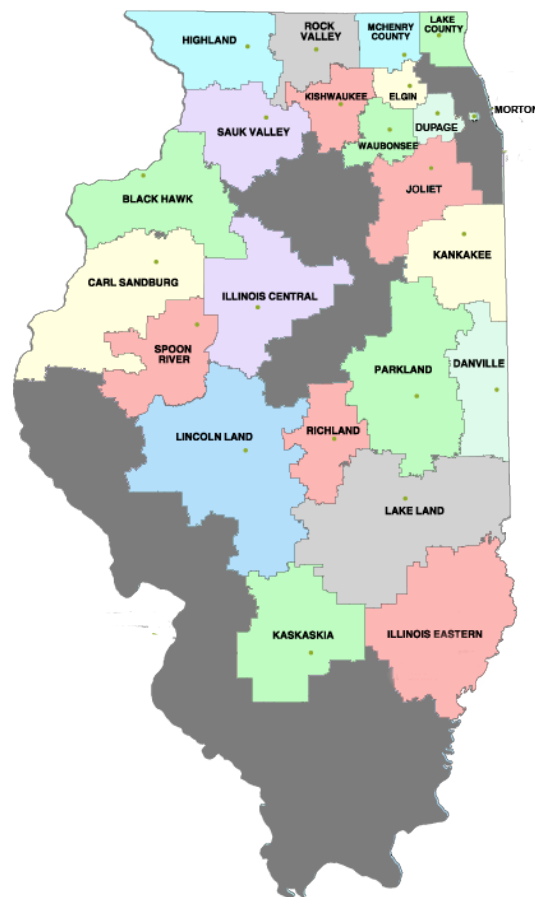


Figure 5. Community college districts represented by study participants.

Table 2. *Participants in the Study and Their Respective Community College Districts*

Trustee	Community College District
John Ahern	Black Hawk College
Fred Leggett	Black Hawk College
Evelyn Phillips	Black Hawk College
John Huston	Carl Sandburg College
Kathy Wessel	College of DuPage
William Griffin	College of Lake County
Barb Oilschlager	College of Lake County
Rich Anderson	College of Lake County
Richard Cheney	Danville Area Community College
John Duffy	Elgin Community College
Clare Ollayos	Elgin Community College
Steve Kroeger	Highland Community College
Diane Gallagher	Highland Community College
Rob Urish	Highland Community College
Robert Ehrich	Illinois Central College
Brenda Culver	Illinois Eastern Community Colleges
Dick Dystrup	Joliet Junior College
Hugh Van Voorst	Kankakee Community College
J. Dennis Marek	Kankakee Community College
Jim Beasley	Kaskaskia Community College
Leland Glazebrook	Lake Land College
James Shaffer	Lake Land College
Mike Sullivan	Lake Land College
Carl Oblinger	Lincoln Land Community College
Carol Larson	McHenry County College
George Lowe	McHenry County College
Barbara Walters	McHenry County College
Edward Ledvina	Morton College
James Ayers	Parkland College
Carol Chiligris	Richland Community College
Larry Osborne	Richland Community College
Randy Schaefer	Rock Valley College
Ed Cox	Sauk Valley Community College
Edward Andersen	Sauk Valley Community College
Henry Dare	Spoon River College
Dave Maguire	Spoon River College
Ronald Quiñones	Spoon River College
Jim Pilmer	Waubensee Community College
Anonymous	
Anonymous	
Anonymous	

Participants in the study represented diverse backgrounds in terms of their experience on a community college board and their participation in presidential searches. As illustrated in Figure 6, the number of years that study participants had participated on a community college board ranged from 5 to 33. The median number of years during which study participants had participated on a community college board was 14.0 years; the mean was 15.1 years of experience. The total combined years of experience on a community college board for all participants was 621 years.

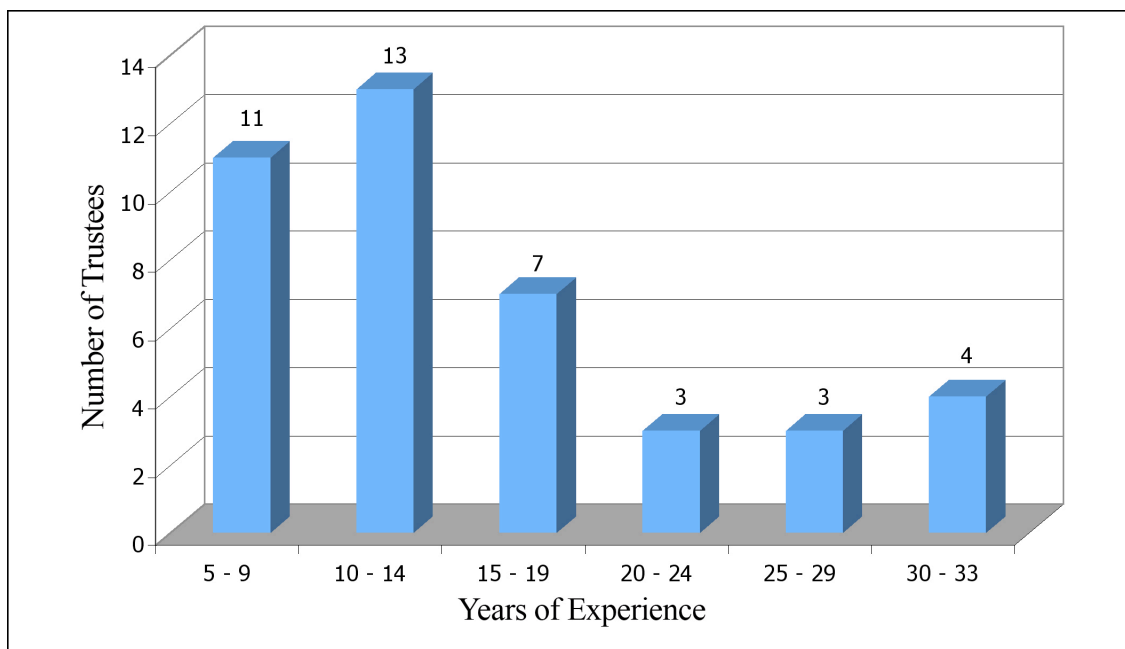


Figure 6. Participants' years of experience on a community college board.

As illustrated in Figure 7, the number of presidential searches in which study participants had participated ranged from 1.0 to 6.0. The median number of searches in which study participants participated was 2.0 searches; the mean was 2.4 searches. The total number of presidential searches in which study participants had participated was 97, and 29 of the 41 trustees had participated in at least two presidential searches.

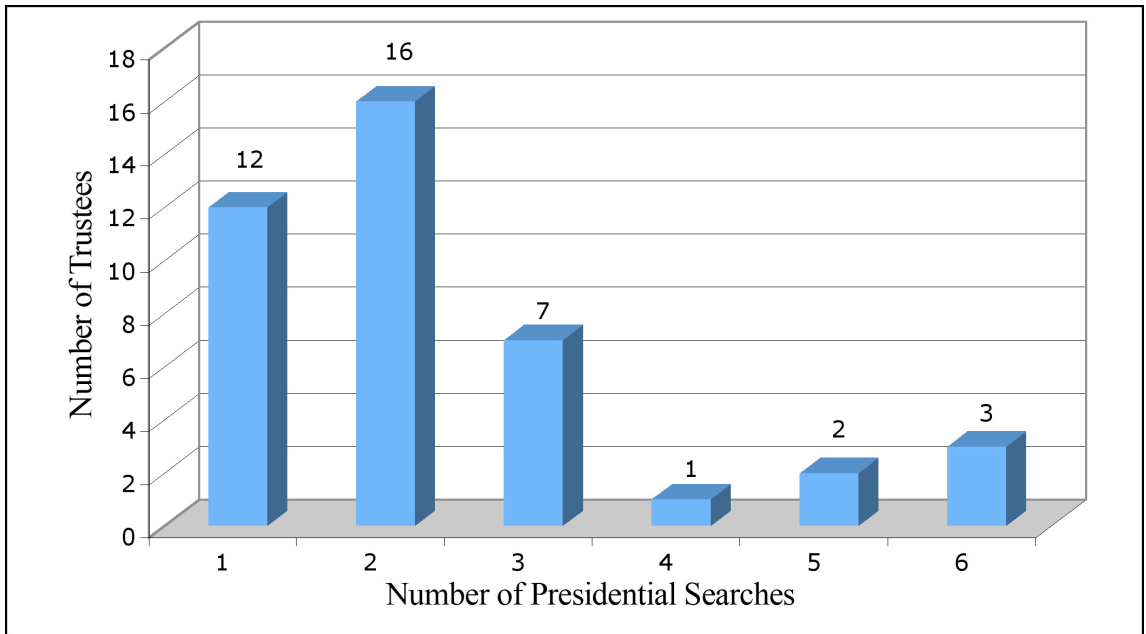


Figure 7. Number of presidential searches in which study participants had participated.

Selection of Participants

In order to facilitate the scheduling of interviews with participants, the preliminary questionnaire included a question that asked if the trustee was planning to attend the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) National Legislative Summit in Washington, DC between February 10-12, 2008. The researcher planned to conduct as many interviews as possible at the National Legislative Summit in order to make the scheduling of face-to-face interviews most convenient for trustees. Of the 41 eligible trustees, 22 indicated that they would be attending the National Legislative Summit.

In order to schedule interviews, the researcher sent an interview schedule request form (Appendix F) to the 22 trustees who indicated that they planned to attend the ACCT National Legislative Summit. Seventeen of the 22 trustees responded to the request to

schedule an interview. The researcher examined the demographic characteristics of these 17 trustees in order to determine if they were representative of all 41 eligible trustees who agreed to participate in the study.

As illustrated in Figure 8, the 17 trustees who responded to a request to schedule an interview were from 13 different community college districts, representing 33.3% of the districts in the state, and 56.5% of the districts represented by the eligible trustees who agreed to participate in the study. The number of years of experience on a community college board held by trustees who agreed to participate in an interview ranged from five to 33 years, mirroring the range of years of experience of the entire sample of eligible trustees that agreed to participate in the study. The median number of years of experience on a community college board held by trustees who agreed to participate in an interview was 10.0 years; the mean was 14.5 years of experience. Likewise, the number of presidential searches in which trustees who agreed to participate in an interview had participated ranged from one to six, mirroring the range of the number of presidential searches in which the entire sample of eligible trustees had participated. The median number of presidential searches in which trustees who agreed to participate in an interview had participated was two; the mean was also two.

Given that the demographic characteristics of the trustees who agreed to participate in an interview were similar to the entire sample of eligible trustees who agreed to participate in the study, and given that the researcher originally planned to include 12 to 15 trustees in the study, the researcher concluded that sufficient input would be gathered in the first phase by interviewing the 17 trustees who agreed to participate in an interview. The researcher recognized, however, that the other 24 trustees who agreed

to participate in the study would add richness and diversity to the study population. Accordingly, the researcher proceeded by interviewing the 17 trustees who agreed to participate in an interview in the first phase, and including all 41 trustees in the second and third phases of the study.

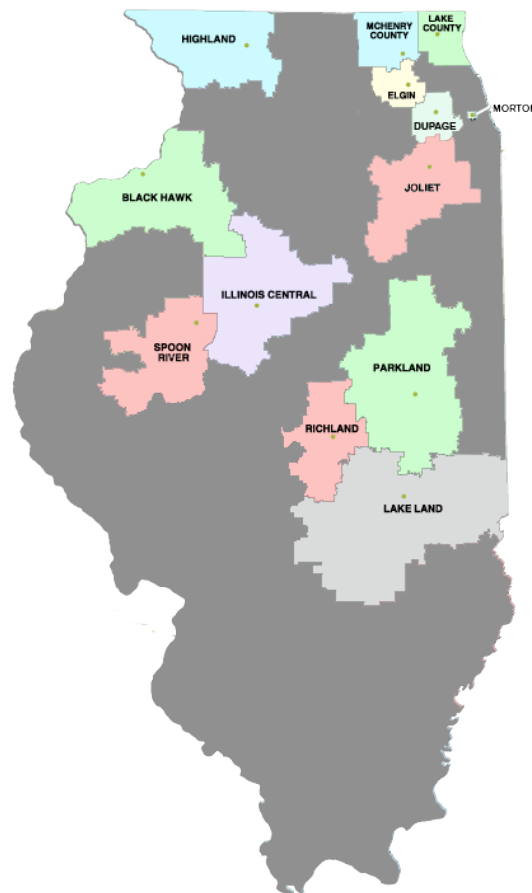


Figure 8. Community college districts represented by interviewees in Phase One.

Phase One

In this research, one-on-one semi-structured interviews were used in the first phase to solicit initial input.

Scheduling of Interviews

Of the 17 trustees who responded to the request to schedule an interview, two indicated that they had changed plans and were no longer going to attend the ACCT

National Legislative Summit. Those two trustees participated in an interview via telephone. Furthermore, in order to facilitate the scheduling of a large number of interviews at the ACCT National Legislative Summit, the three participants from McHenry County College agreed to participate in an in-person interview in Crystal Lake, Illinois. The remaining 12 trustees participated in an in-person interview at the ACCT National Legislative Summit in Washington, D.C.

Interview Process

The researcher began each interview by introducing herself, thanking the interviewee for taking the time to participate in the study, and explaining the purpose and structure of the study. The researcher then requested permission from the panelist to record the interview in order to preserve the accuracy of each trustee's input. Each trustee granted permission to the researcher to record the interview; the researcher used a digital audio recorder to record the interview as well as an analog tape recorder as a back-up recording device. Furthermore, the researcher took notes throughout the interview.

The researcher asked each panelist to identify the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that they considered critically important for future community college presidents to possess. The researcher often asked follow-up questions such as "Could you give me an example?" or "Could you explain that further?" to achieve greater clarity of responses. The interviews ranged in length from 8:03 minutes to 40:34 minutes; the mean length of the interviews was 23:50 minutes. The total combined length of all interviews was 405 minutes (6 hours and 45 minutes).

Transcription and Coding

To begin the data analysis process, the researcher first transcribed each of the 17 interviews. After all of the interviews were transcribed, the researcher utilized an inductive coding procedure as described by Thomas (2003) that allowed for categories and groupings to emerge from the responses to the interview questions. The researcher first prepared the raw data files in a common format and made a backup of each transcription, and then read the raw text in detail to become familiar with the details in the text. Then, based on this close reading of the text, the researcher identified and defined categories and themes. Three upper-level categories were initially derived from the research questions: characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences considered critical for future community college presidents to possess. However, multiple readings of the raw text revealed more clearly defined upper-level categories: personal attributes, competencies, communication skills, leadership skills, professional experiences, and educational backgrounds.

The researcher conducted an “in vivo” coding process, identifying specific lower-level categories from meaning units or actual phrases used in specific text segments. Some segments of text were coded into multiple categories, while a considerable amount of text was not assigned to any category. The researcher continually revised and refined the category system, selecting appropriate quotes that conveyed the core theme or essence of the categories, and combining or linking categories when meanings were similar.

Results from Phase One

Sixty-six personal attributes, competencies, communication skills, leadership skills, professional experiences, and educational backgrounds were identified as a result of the coding process. Themes and their corresponding definitions were derived from actual phrases used in the interviews.

Personal attributes. Thirteen personal attributes emerged as a result of the coding process:

1. Calm under pressure – ability to juggle multiple challenges;
2. Community involvement – membership in Rotary Club or Kiwanis;
3. Dependable – follows through on commitments; arrives on-time or early for appointments and meetings;
4. Energetic – has a high energy level and is in good health;
5. Family person – is married;
6. Friendly – good sense of humor;
7. Organized – ability to manage time and resources effectively;
8. Passionate about education – is a champion of community colleges;
9. Presence – looks the part of a president, is the image of the institution;
10. Renaissance person – well-rounded and well-versed in multiple areas;
11. Self-motivated – willing to take on challenges;
12. Tactful – can provide constructive criticism diplomatically;
13. Well-balanced – has a balanced personal and professional life; pursues hobbies and diversions.

Competencies. Twelve competencies emerged as a result of the coding process:

1. Has an understanding of accounting and finance – possesses financial acumen, is able to read a financial statement, is able to understand a budget;
2. Has an understanding of community college funding – including state and local funds, tuition, grants, federal programs, and fundraising;
3. Has an understanding of legal issues facing community colleges;
4. Has an understanding of marketing – how to attract customers;
5. Has an understanding of multiculturalism – is comfortable working with people from diverse cultures;
6. Has an understanding of negotiations and contracts;
7. Has an understanding of technology – possesses technological literacy;
8. Has an understanding of the challenges and opportunities of the specific college at which he/she is applying; has “done homework” by reviewing minutes of past board meetings;
9. Has an understanding of the community college system in general;
10. Has an understanding of the different communities in the College district and their respective needs;
11. Has an understanding of the mission of community colleges;
12. Has an understanding of unions and labor laws.

Communication skills. Eight communication skills emerged as a result of the coding process:

1. Articulate – ability to communicate in written and oral form clearly and professionally;
2. Good listener – makes people feel like what they’re saying is important; is able to read body language effectively;
3. Media savvy - Comfortable working with the media and familiar with media issues;
4. Networking – skilled at building partnerships and coalitions;
5. People-person – ability to talk with almost anyone, including different employee groups and constituencies;
6. Politically savvy – understands the importance of building relationships with legislators and is comfortable with lobbying efforts;
7. Public speaking - comfortable speaking extemporaneously in front of a large group;
8. Student-focused - ability to relate to a diverse student body and understand their needs.

Leadership skills. Twelve leadership skills emerged as a result of the coding process:

1. Ability to build consensus – knows how to listen to all sides and help people collate different ideas and reach a good conclusion;
2. Confronts challenges – faces issues head on and doesn’t pretend they don’t exist;
3. Good moral character – honest, has integrity, is trustworthy;

4. Innovative – flexible and open to change;
5. Leads by example – is able to motivate employees and bring out the best in them;
6. Persuasive – generates buy-in for decisions, particularly by using facts and data;
7. Risk-taker – is comfortable taking measured risks;
8. Sense of confidence and humility – leads without always having to be in the limelight;
9. Structured and logical – can outline the steps necessary to realize a vision; able to delegate effectively;
10. Team-player – understands the value of a team, able to recruit and assemble an effective team;
11. Thick-skinned – have a personality that can withstand not always being liked for the decisions he/she makes;
12. Vision – recognizes where the college is today, articulates where the college should be in the future, and generates buy-in for that vision.

Professional experiences. Seventeen professional experiences emerged as a result of the coding process:

1. Experience at any higher education institution;
2. Experience at a community college;
3. Experience in senior management/administration in any field;
4. Experience as a senior administrator specifically at a community college;
5. Experience in a senior management position specifically in the business/private sector;
6. Experience at an organization that is unionized;

7. Employment at institutions with a good reputation;
8. Experience in the state or region;
9. Experience teaching (at any level; full-time or part-time);
10. Experience teaching at the community college level (full-time or part-time);
11. Fundraising experience;
12. Demonstrates professional commitment – has not simply spent a year or two in previous positions;
13. Experience serving on a board;
14. Experience working in a political environment – experience working with representatives and regulators;
15. Experience with outcome-based accountability initiatives (i.e. AQIP);
16. Having been mentored by or having experience working for a well-respected leader;
17. Is well-respected in the community college professional community – participates in national organizations, has published papers.

Educational background. Four educational backgrounds emerged as a result of the coding process:

1. Bachelor's degree required;
2. Master's degree required;
3. Doctorate required;
4. Has a liberal arts background.

Double Coding and Interrater Reliability

One limitation of any Delphi study is that there is no standardized method for analyzing the open-ended responses collected in the first phase, and there is a risk that researcher bias could be introduced during the analysis process. Brooks (1979) has suggested that the danger of researcher bias can be reduced if an independent coder reviews the initial input collected and validates the coding process. Accordingly, the procedures outlined by Boyatzis (1998) for conducting double coding were implemented.

The researcher invited the vice president of an Illinois community college who holds a doctorate in education to serve as an independent coder for this study. The independent coder was asked to review a sample of the interview transcriptions and identify portions of the text that fit within the themes identified in the coding process. Accordingly, the researcher presented the independent coder with the 66 personal attributes, competencies, communication skills, leadership skills, professional experiences, and educational backgrounds that emerged during the coding process along with one transcribed page from 14 of the interviews; the three interviews with trustees from the community college where the vice president was employed were not included to eliminate any potential breach of confidentiality. The researcher chose to provide the third transcribed page from each of the interviews to the independent coder for review. This selection was made to ensure that the transcription samples would each be a full page of text given that each interview transcription was at least four pages long, and to increase the likelihood that the transcribed page would include content-rich text rather than introductory remarks not relevant to the research objectives.

The independent coder was instructed to identify the pages which included text that fit within any of the 66 personal attributes, competencies, communication skills, leadership skills, professional experiences, and educational backgrounds that were identified during the coding process. The independent coder was also informed that portions of the text could potentially fit into multiple categories, and that some pages might not contain any text that fit into one of the identified categories. The independent coder's results (Appendix W) were compared with the researcher's results from the original coding process (Appendix X), and interrater reliability was calculated by taking the number of matching observations divided by the total number of possible observations. The independent coder and researcher agreed on 26 observations out of a total of 35 possible observations, for an interrater reliability of 74.3%. For the purposes of this study, an interrater reliability of 70% was to be considered acceptable. Therefore, the researcher continued with the second phase of the study, using the 66 personal attributes, competencies, communication skills, leadership skills, professional experiences, and educational backgrounds that were identified during the coding process to develop the questionnaire to be utilized in the second phase.

Phase Two

To initiate the second phase of the study, the researcher constructed a questionnaire in which the 66 personal attributes, competencies, communication skills, leadership skills, professional experiences, and educational backgrounds identified during the coding process were listed. A 7-point Likert scale was associated with each item, where one indicated *no importance* and seven indicated *critical importance*.

Response Rates

The researcher sent a letter (Appendix J) and a print version of the questionnaire (Appendix K) to the 17 participants who indicated that they preferred to communicate via postal mail. The researcher sent an email (Appendix L) with a link to an online version of the questionnaire (Appendix M) to the 24 participants who indicated that they preferred to communicate electronically. Trustees were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it to the researcher within 16 days.

After 7 days, the researcher sent a follow-up email (Appendix O) to the 11 trustees participating electronically from whom the researcher had not yet received a response. The researcher also sent a follow-up reminder letter (Appendix N) and an additional copy of the questionnaire (Appendix K) to the six trustees participating via postal mail from whom the researcher had not received a response after 12 days. One of the trustees responded to this follow-up letter with a request to participate electronically; the researcher sent an email with a link to the online version of the questionnaire to this trustee. After 16 days had elapsed from the mailing date of the initial questionnaire, 13 of the 16 trustees participating by postal mail had responded, for a response rate of 81.3%, and 22 of the 25 trustees participating electronically had responded, for a response rate of 88.0%. In total, 35 of the 41 participants responded to the first questionnaire, for an overall response rate of 85.3%. One additional questionnaire was received via postal mail after 16 days had elapsed from the original mailing and was not included in the data analysis.

Analysis

The researcher compiled the data and calculated the median importance rating and interquartile range for each of the items. Then, the researcher examined the results to identify items for which consensus had been achieved, as indicated by an interquartile range equal to or less than 20% of the scale (equal to or less than 1.4). As illustrated in Table 3, consensus was achieved on 49 of the 66 items included in the first questionnaire; as illustrated in Table 4, consensus was not achieved on 17 of the 66 items included in the first questionnaire.

Table 3. *Items Included in First Questionnaire on which Consensus Was Achieved*

	Mdn	IQR
Personal Attributes		
Passionate about education - is a champion of community colleges	7.0	0.0
Dependable – follows through on commitments; arrives on-time or early for appointments and meetings	7.0	1.0
Calm under pressure – ability to juggle multiple challenges	6.0	1.0
Community involvement - membership in Rotary Club or Kiwanis	6.0	1.0
Organized – ability to manage time and resources effectively	6.0	1.0
Presence – looks the part of a president, is the image of the institution	6.0	1.0
Renaissance person – well-rounded and well-versed in multiple areas	6.0	1.0
Self-motivated – willing to take on challenges	6.0	1.0
Tactful – can provide constructive criticism diplomatically	6.0	1.0
Well-balanced – has a balanced personal and professional life; pursues hobbies and diversions	6.0	1.0

(table continues)

	Mdn	IQR
Friendly - good sense of humor	5.5	1.0
Competencies		
Has an understanding of accounting and finance – possesses financial acumen, is able to read a financial statement, is able to understand a budget	6.5	1.0
Has an understanding of community college funding – including state and local funds, tuition, grants, federal programs, and fundraising	6.5	1.0
Has an understanding of the different communities in the College district and their respective needs	6.0	0.0
Has an understanding of legal issues facing community colleges	6.0	1.0
Has an understanding of marketing – how to attract customers	6.0	1.0
Has an understanding of technology – possesses technological literacy	6.0	1.0
Has an understanding of the community college system in general	6.0	1.0
Has an understanding of the mission of community colleges	6.0	1.0
Has an understanding of unions and labor laws	5.0	1.0
Communication Skills		
Articulate – ability to communicate in written and oral form clearly and professionally	7.0	0.0
Good listener – makes people feel like what they’re saying is important; is able to read body language effectively	7.0	1.0
Media savvy - Comfortable working with the media and familiar with media issues	6.0	0.0
Networking – skilled at building partnerships and coalitions	6.0	1.0
People-person – ability to talk with almost anyone, including different employee groups and constituencies	6.0	1.0
Politically savvy – understands the importance of building relationships with legislators and is comfortable with lobbying efforts	6.0	1.0

(table continues)

	Mdn	IQR
Public speaking - comfortable speaking extemporaneously in front of a large group	6.0	1.0
Student-focused - ability to relate to a diverse student body and understand their needs	6.0	1.0
Leadership Skills		
Good moral character – honest, has integrity, is trustworthy	7.0	0.0
Team-player – understands the value of a team, able to recruit and assemble an effective team	7.0	1.0
Vision – recognizes where the college is today, articulates where the college should be in the future, and generates buy-in for that vision	7.0	1.0
Leads by example – is able to motivate employees and bring out the best in them	6.5	1.0
Innovative – flexible and open to change	6.0	0.0
Persuasive – generates buy-in for decisions, particularly by using facts and data	6.0	0.0
Risk-taker – is comfortable taking measured risks	6.0	0.0
Sense of confidence and humility – leads without always having to be in the limelight	6.0	0.0
Thick-skinned – have a personality that can withstand not always being liked for the decisions he/she makes	6.0	0.75
Ability to build consensus – knows how to listen to all sides and help people collate different ideas and reach a good conclusion	6.0	1.0
Confronts challenges – faces issues head on and doesn't pretend they don't exist	6.0	1.0
Structured and logical – can outline the steps necessary to realize a vision; able to delegate effectively	6.0	1.0
Professional Experiences		
Experience at a community college	5.5	1.0

(table continues)

	Mdn	IQR
Experience as a senior administrator specifically at a community college	5.5	1.0
Experience with outcome-based accountability initiatives (i.e. AQIP)	5.5	1.0
Having been mentored by or having experience working for a well-respected leader	5.0	0.75
Experience at any higher education institution	5.0	1.0
Experience teaching at the community college level (full-time or part-time)	5.0	1.0
Fundraising experience	5.0	1.0
Educational Background		
Bachelor's degree required ^a	7.0	0.0
Master's degree required	7.0	0.0

Note. Ratings were made on 7-point scales (1 = *no importance*, 7 = *critical importance*).

^aGiven that a bachelor's degree is a pre-requisite for a master's degree, the two items were collapsed into a single item titled "master's degree required."

Table 4. *Items Included in First Questionnaire on which Consensus Was Not Achieved*

	Mdn	IQR
Personal Attributes		
Energetic – has a high energy level and is in good health	6.0	2.0
Family person – is married	3.0	2.0
Competencies		
Has an understanding of multiculturalism – is comfortable working with people from diverse cultures	6.0	1.75

(table continues)

	Mdn	IQR
Has an understanding of negotiations and contracts	6.0	1.75
Has an understanding of the challenges and opportunities of the specific college at which he/she is applying; has “done homework” by reviewing minutes of past board meetings	6.0	1.75
Professional Experiences		
Experience in senior management/administration in any field	6.0	2.0
Demonstrates professional commitment – has not simply spent a year or two in previous positions	6.0	2.0
Is well-respected in the community college professional community – participates in national organizations, has published papers	5.0	1.75
Employment at institutions with a good reputation	5.0	2.0
Experience teaching (at any level; full-time or part-time)	5.0	2.0
Experience working in a political environment – experience working with representatives and regulators	5.0	2.0
Experience serving on a board	5.0	2.75
Experience at an organization that is unionized	4.5	2.0
Employment in the state or region	4.0	2.0
Experience in a senior management position specifically in the business/private sector	4.0	2.75
Educational Background		
Doctorate required	6.0	2.0
Has a liberal arts background	5.0	2.75

Note. Ratings were made on 7-point scales (1 = *no importance*, 7 = *critical importance*).

Additional Items

The first questionnaire also included an open-ended question to which trustees had the opportunity to respond with additional characteristics, competencies, or

professional experiences that they thought were critically important for future community college presidents that were not included in the first questionnaire. Two new personal attributes (*charismatic – is well-liked and respected* and *self-aware – has a sense of who he/she is as a person*) and one new competency (*has the ability to establish trust*) were identified in responses to this open-ended question.

Phase Three

To initiate the third phase of the study, the researcher constructed a questionnaire which included the 17 items from the first questionnaire on which consensus had not been achieved along with their median importance ratings. Furthermore, the three new items that were identified from the first questionnaire were also included. A 7-point Likert scale was associated with each item, where 1 indicated *no importance* and 7 indicated *critical importance*. Items were listed in random order to reduce the potential for formation of response sets.

Response Rates

The researcher sent a letter (Appendix P) and a print version of the second questionnaire (Appendix Q) to the 16 participants who indicated that they preferred to communicate via postal mail along with a list of items on which consensus had been achieved in the first round (Appendix R). The researcher sent an email (Appendix S) with a link to an online version of the second questionnaire (Appendix T) to the 25 participants who indicated that they preferred to communicate electronically, along with a link to the list of items on which consensus had been achieved in the first round (Appendix R). In the letter and email, trustees were instructed to review each item and consider its median score, and once again rate the importance of each of the items.

Trustees were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it to the researcher within 16 days.

After 10 days, the researcher sent a follow-up reminder letter (Appendix U) and an additional copy of the second questionnaire (Appendix Q) to the seven trustees participating via postal mail from whom the researcher had not yet received a response. Also, the researcher sent a follow-up email (Appendix V) to the six trustees participating electronically from whom the researcher did not receive a response after 10 days. After 16 days had elapsed from the initial mailing date of the second questionnaire, 13 of the 16 trustees participating by postal mail had responded, for a response rate of 81.3%, and 24 of the 25 trustees participating electronically had responded, for a response rate of 96.0%. In total, 37 of the 41 participants responded to the second questionnaire, for an overall response rate of 90.2%. One additional questionnaire was received via postal mail after 16 days had elapsed from the original mailing and was not included in the data analysis.

Analysis

The researcher compiled the data and calculated the median importance rating and interquartile range for each of the items included in the second questionnaire. Then, the researcher examined the results from the second questionnaire to identify items for which consensus had been achieved, as indicated by an interquartile range equal to or less than 20% of the scale (equal to or less than 1.4). As illustrated in Table 5, consensus was achieved on 14 of the 20 items included in the second questionnaire; consensus was not achieved on 6 of the 20 items included in the second questionnaire, as shown in Table 6.

Table 5. *Items Included in Second Questionnaire on which Consensus Was Achieved*

	Mdn	IQR
Personal Attributes		
Energetic – has a high energy level and is in good health	6.0	0.0
Charismatic – is well-liked and respected	6.0	1.0
Self-aware – has a sense of who he/she is as a person	6.0	1.0
Family person – is married	4.0	1.0
Competencies		
Has the ability to establish trust	7.0	1.0
Has an understanding of multiculturalism – is comfortable working with people from diverse cultures	6.0	1.0
Has an understanding of negotiations and contracts	6.0	1.0
Has an understanding of the challenges and opportunities of the specific college at which he/she is applying; has “done homework” by reviewing minutes of past board meetings	6.0	1.0
Professional Experiences		
Experience in senior management/administration in any field	6.0	0.5
Demonstrates professional commitment – has not simply spent a year or two in previous positions	6.0	1.0
Experience working in a political environment – experience working with representatives and regulators	6.0	1.0
Experience serving on a board	5.0	1.0
Educational Background		
Doctorate Required	6.0	1.25
Has a liberal arts background	4.0	1.0

Note. Ratings were made on 7-point scales (1 = *no importance*, 7 = *critical importance*).

Table 6. *Items Included in Second Questionnaire on which Consensus Was Not Achieved*

	Median	IQR
Professional Experiences		
Employment at institutions with a good reputation	6.0	2.0
Is well-respected in the community college professional community – participates in national organizations, has published papers	5.0	1.5
Experience teaching (at any level; full-time or part-time)	5.0	2.0
Experience at an organization that is unionized	5.0	2.0
Employment in the state or region	4.0	2.0
Experience in a senior management position specifically in the business/private sector	4.0	2.0

Note. Ratings were made on 7-point scales (1 = *no importance*, 7 = *critical importance*).

The researcher then examined the data to determine if stability had occurred on any of the six items included in the second questionnaire on which consensus did not occur. For this study, stability was defined as a change in the median score between rounds equal to or less than 15% of the scale, or 1.05. As illustrated in Table 7, stability occurred for all six of the items included in the second questionnaire on which consensus did not occur.

Given that consensus or stability occurred on all 68 of the personal attributes, competencies, communication skills, leadership skills, professional experiences, and educational backgrounds identified by participants as important for community college presidents to possess in the future, the researcher concluded the study after the third phase.

Table 7. *Items Included in Second Questionnaire on which Stability Occurred*

	Median Score		Change in Median Score	
	First Questionnaire	Second Questionnaire	Value	% of Scale
Employment at institutions with a good reputation	5.0	6.0	1.0	14.3%
Experience teaching (at any level; full-time or part time)	5.0	5.0	0.0	0.0
Is well-respected in the community college professional community – participates in national organizations, has published papers	5.0	5.0	0.0	0.0%
Experience at an organization that is unionized	4.5	5.0	0.5	7.1%
Experience in a senior management position specifically in the business/private sector	4.0	4.0	0.0	0.0%
Employment in the state or region	4.0	4.0	0.0	0.0%

Note. Ratings were made on 7-point scales (1 = *no importance*, 7 = *critical importance*).

Final Results

A list of the 68 of the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences identified by participants as important for community college presidents to possess in the future are listed in Table 8, in descending order of importance. The items are sorted primarily based upon their consensus median score, which indicates the trustees' perception of the importance of the item, and secondarily based upon their interquartile range, which indicates the degree to which trustees agreed on the importance of the item.

A higher median score indicates greater importance; a lower IQR indicates a greater degree of consensus.

Table 8. *List of Characteristics, Competencies, and Professional Experiences Considered Important for Future Community College Presidents to Possess*

	Mdn	IQR
Passionate about education - is a champion of community colleges	7.0	0.0
Good moral character – honest, has integrity, is trustworthy	7.0	0.0
Articulate – ability to communicate in written and oral form clearly and professionally	7.0	0.0
Master’s degree required	7.0	0.0
Dependable – follows through on commitments; arrives on-time or early for appointments and meetings	7.0	1.0
Good listener – makes people feel like what they’re saying is important; is able to read body language effectively	7.0	1.0
Has the ability to establish trust	7.0	1.0
Team-player – understands the value of a team, able to recruit and assemble an effective team	7.0	1.0
Vision – recognizes where the college is today, articulates where the college should be in the future, and generates buy-in for that vision	7.0	1.0
Has an understanding of accounting and finance – possesses financial acumen, is able to read a financial statement, is able to understand a budget	6.5	1.0
Has an understanding of community college funding – including state and local funds, tuition, grants, federal programs, and fundraising	6.5	1.0
Leads by example – is able to motivate employees and bring out the best in them	6.5	1.0

(table continues)

	Mdn	IQR
Energetic – has a high energy level and is in good health	6.0	0.0
Has an understanding of the different communities in the college district and their respective needs	6.0	0.0
Innovative – flexible and open to change	6.0	0.0
Media savvy - Comfortable working with the media and familiar with media issues	6.0	0.0
Persuasive – generates buy-in for decisions, particularly by using facts and data	6.0	0.0
Risk-taker – is comfortable taking measured risks	6.0	0.0
Sense of confidence and humility – leads without always having to be in the limelight	6.0	0.0
Experience in senior management/administration in any field	6.0	0.5
Thick-skinned – have a personality that can withstand not always being liked for the decisions he/she makes	6.0	0.75
Ability to build consensus – knows how to listen to all sides and help people collate different ideas and reach a good conclusion	6.0	1.0
Calm under pressure – ability to juggle multiple challenges	6.0	1.0
Charismatic – is well-liked and respected	6.0	1.0
Community involvement - membership in Rotary Club or Kiwanis	6.0	1.0
Confronts challenges – faces issues head on and doesn't pretend they don't exist	6.0	1.0
Demonstrates professional commitment – has not simply spent a year or two in previous positions	6.0	1.0
Experience working in a political environment – experience working with representatives and regulators	6.0	1.0
Has an understanding of legal issues facing community colleges	6.0	1.0
Has an understanding of marketing – how to attract customers	6.0	1.0

(table continues)

	Mdn	IQR
Has an understanding of multiculturalism – is comfortable working with people from diverse cultures	6.0	1.0
Has an understanding of negotiations and contracts	6.0	1.0
Has an understanding of technology – possesses technological literacy	6.0	1.0
Has an understanding of the challenges and opportunities of the specific college at which he/she is applying; has “done homework” by reviewing minutes of past board meetings	6.0	1.0
Has an understanding of the community college system in general	6.0	1.0
Has an understanding of the mission of community colleges	6.0	1.0
Networking – skilled at building partnerships and coalitions	6.0	1.0
Organized – ability to manage time and resources effectively	6.0	1.0
People-person – ability to talk with almost anyone, including different employee groups and constituencies	6.0	1.0
Politically savvy – understands the importance of building relationships with legislators and is comfortable with lobbying efforts	6.0	1.0
Presence – looks the part of a president, is the image of the institution	6.0	1.0
Public speaking - comfortable speaking extemporaneously in front of a large group	6.0	1.0
Renaissance person – well-rounded and well-versed in multiple areas	6.0	1.0
Self-aware – has a sense of who he/she is as a person	6.0	1.0
Self-motivated – willing to take on challenges	6.0	1.0
Structured and logical – can outline the steps necessary to realize a vision; able to delegate effectively	6.0	1.0
Student-focused - ability to relate to a diverse student body and understand their needs	6.0	1.0
Tactful – can provide constructive criticism diplomatically	6.0	1.0

(table continues)

	Mdn	IQR
Well-balanced – has a balanced personal and professional life; pursues hobbies and diversions	6.0	1.0
Doctorate required	6.0	1.25
Employment at institutions with a good reputation	6.0	2.0
Experience as a senior administrator specifically at a community college	5.5	1.0
Experience at a community college	5.5	1.0
Experience with outcome-based accountability initiatives (i.e. AQIP)	5.5	1.0
Friendly - good sense of humor	5.5	1.0
Having been mentored by or having experience working for a well-respected leader	5.0	0.75
Experience at any higher education institution	5.0	1.0
Experience serving on a board	5.0	1.0
Experience teaching at the community college level (full-time or part-time)	5.0	1.0
Fundraising experience	5.0	1.0
Has an understanding of unions and labor laws	5.0	1.0
Is well-respected in the community college professional community – participates in national organizations, has published papers	5.0	1.5
Experience at an organization that is unionized	5.0	2.0
Experience teaching (at any level; full-time or part-time)	5.0	2.0
Has a liberal arts background	4.0	1.0
Family person – is married	4.0	1.0
Employment in the state or region	4.0	2.0
Experience in a senior management position specifically in the business/private sector	4.0	2.0

Note. Ratings were made on 7-point scales (1 = *no importance*, 7 = *critical importance*).

Summary

Through a three-round Delphi process, participants in the study identified 68 different characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that they considered to be important for future community college presidents to possess. The 41 trustees participating in the study rated the importance of each of the items, and consensus or stability was reached on the importance of all 68 items. Of the 68 items, four items emerged as critically important (Mdn=7.0) with little or no disagreement among trustees (IQR=0.0): (a) passionate about education – is a champion of community colleges; (b) good moral character – honest, has integrity, trustworthy; (c) articulate – ability to communicate in written and oral form clearly and professionally; and (d) master’s degree required.

Five other items emerged as critically important (Mdn = 7.0) with some disagreement among trustees (IQR=1.0): (a) dependable – follows through on commitments; arrives on-time or early for appointments and meetings; (b) good listener – makes people feel like what they’re saying is important, is able to read body language effectively; (c) has the ability to establish trust; (d) team-player – understands the value of a team, able to recruit and assemble an effective team; and (e) vision – recognizes where the college is today, articulates where the college should be in the future, and generates buy-in for that vision.

Accordingly, as a result of this study, nine items emerged overall as critically important for future community college presidents:

1. Passionate about education – is a champion of community colleges;
2. Good moral character – honest, has integrity, trustworthy;

3. Articulate – ability to communicate in written and oral form clearly and professionally;
4. Master’s degree required;
5. Dependable – follows through on commitments; arrives on-time or early for appointments and meetings;
6. Good listener – makes people feel like what they’re saying is important, is able to read body language effectively;
7. Has the ability to establish trust;
8. Team-player – understands the value of a team, able to recruit and assemble an effective team;
9. Vision – recognizes where the college is today, articulates where the college should be in the future, and generates buy-in for that vision.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations

Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore, from the perspective of experienced members of community college boards of trustees, critical components of the presidential selection process, including characteristics, competencies and professional experiences that are considered essential for future community college presidents to possess. As a result of this study, a list of characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences considered critically important for future community college presidents to possess was generated by a panel of experienced trustees. This chapter presents the results of the study, a discussion of findings of interest, recommendations for utilization of research findings, recommendations for future research, and general conclusions.

Results

Three research questions were addressed through this study:

1. What characteristics are critical for future community college presidents to exhibit?
2. What competencies are critical for future community college presidents to demonstrate?
3. What professional experiences are critical for future community college presidents to possess?

Characteristics Important for Future Community College Presidents

Participants in the study identified 15 personal attributes that they considered to be important for future community college presidents to possess. These personal

attributes are listed below in order of importance as ranked by the participants:

1. Passionate about education – is a champion of community colleges (Mdn=7.0; IQR=0.0);
2. Dependable – follows through on commitments; arrives on-time or early for appointments and meetings (Mdn=7.0; IQR=1.0);
3. Energetic – has a high energy level and is in good health (Mdn=6.0; IQR=0.0);
4. Calm under pressure – ability to juggle multiple challenges (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
5. Charismatic – is well-liked and respected (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
6. Community involvement – membership in Rotary Club or Kiwanis (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
7. Organized – ability to manage time and resources effectively (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
8. Presence – looks the part of a president, is the image of the institution (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
9. Renaissance person – well-rounded and well-versed in multiple areas (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
10. Self-aware – has a sense of who he/she is as a person (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
11. Self-motivated – willing to take on challenges (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
12. Tactful – can provide constructive criticism diplomatically (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
13. Well-balanced – has a balanced personal and professional life; pursues hobbies and diversions (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
14. Friendly – good sense of humor (Mdn=5.5; IQR=1.0);
15. Family person – is married (Mdn=4.0; IQR=1.0).

Several of these items have previously been identified in the literature as important characteristics for community college presidents. However, many of these items were not reflected in the review of the literature. While other studies have indicated that it is important for a president to be passionate about education, charismatic, and organized, the importance for a president to be dependable, calm under pressure, self-aware, well-balanced, energetic, married, involved in the community, and to “look like a president,” have not been thoroughly discussed in recent literature. It appears that other studies have focused more on recommended competencies for presidents, rather than personal attributes.

Competencies Important for Future Community College Presidents

Participants in the study identified 13 general competencies, eight communication skills, and 12 leadership skills that they considered to be important for future community college presidents to demonstrate. The identified general competencies are listed below in order of importance as ranked by the participants:

1. Has the ability to establish trust (Mdn=7.0; IQR=1.0);
2. Has an understanding of accounting and finance – possesses financial acumen, is able to read a financial statement, is able to understand a budget (Mdn=6.5; IQR=1.0);
3. Has an understanding of community college funding – including state and local funds, tuition, grants, federal programs, and fundraising (Mdn=6.5; IQR=1.0);
4. Has an understanding of the different communities in the college district and their respective needs (Mdn=6.0; IQR=0.0);

5. Has an understanding of legal issues facing community colleges (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
6. Has an understanding of marketing – how to attract customers (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
7. Has an understanding of multiculturalism – is comfortable working with people from diverse cultures (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
8. Has an understanding of negotiations and contracts (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
9. Has an understanding of technology – possesses technological literacy (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
10. Has an understanding of the challenges and opportunities of the specific college at which he/she is applying; has done “homework” by reviewing minutes of past board meetings (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
11. Has an understanding of the community college system in general (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
12. Has an understanding of the mission of community colleges (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
13. Has an understanding of unions and labor laws (Mdn=5.0; IQR=1.0).

The majority of these competencies have been previously identified in the literature as important skills for community college presidents. In particular, broad and general competencies such as budgetary skills, technical skills, and the ability to build trust are prevalent in the literature related to the community college presidency. Nevertheless, several narrowly defined competencies emerged from this study that were not specifically identified in the review of the literature, including an understanding of the different communities in the college’s district and their respective needs, an

understanding of legal issues facing community colleges, an understanding of marketing, an understanding of the specific college at which a presidential candidate applies, and an understanding of unions and labor laws. The identification of these additional specific competencies may potentially assist aspiring presidents prepare professionally for the position, as well as aid boards of trustees as they define the skills they expect their future presidents to possess.

The eight communication skills identified in this study important for future community college presidents to exhibit are listed below in order of importance as ranked by the participants:

1. Articulate – ability to communicate in written and oral form clearly and professionally (Mdn=7.0; IQR=0.0);
2. Good listener – makes people feel like what they’re saying is important; is able to read body language effectively (Mdn=7.0; IQR=1.0);
3. Media savvy – comfortable working with the media and familiar with media issues (Mdn=6.0; IQR=0.0);
4. Networking – skilled at building partnerships and coalitions (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
5. People-person – ability to talk with almost anyone, including different employee groups and constituencies (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
6. Politically savvy – understands the importance of building relationships with legislators and is comfortable with lobbying efforts (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);

7. Public speaking – comfortable speaking extemporaneously in front of a large group (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
8. Student-focused – ability to relate to a diverse student body and understand their needs (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0).

In the review of the literature, the most frequently occurring recommendation for community college presidents was to possess strong communication skills (Brown, Martinez, & Daniel, 2002; Desjardins & Huff, 2001; Hammons & Keller, 1990; Hood, 1997; Olson-Nikunen, 2004; Powell, 2004; Turner, 2005). The items that emerged in this study help to further clarify and refine the specific competencies that are contained within the overall theme of communication skills. Trustees in this study reached consensus on the importance of eight communication skills, and agreed that it is critically important for future community college presidents to be articulate and good listeners.

The 12 leadership skills considered important for future community college presidents to exhibit are listed below in order of importance as ranked by the participants:

1. Good moral character – honest, has integrity, is trustworthy (Mdn=7.0; IQR=0.0);
2. Team-player – understands the value of a team, able to recruit and assemble an effective team (Mdn=7.0; IQR=1.0);
3. Vision – recognizes where the college is today, articulates where the college should be in the future, and generates buy-in for that vision (Mdn=7.0; IQR=1.0);
4. Leads by example – is able to motivate employees and bring out the best in them (Mdn=6.5; IQR=1.0);
5. Innovative – flexible and open to change (Mdn=6.0; IQR=0.0);

6. Persuasive – generates buy-in for decisions, particularly by using facts and data (Mdn=6.0; IQR=0.0);
7. Risk-taker – is comfortable taking measured risks (Mdn=6.0; IQR=0.0);
8. Sense of confidence and humility – leads without always having to be in the limelight (Mdn=6.0; IQR=0.0);
9. Thick-skinned – have a personality that can withstand not always being liked for the decisions he/she makes (Mdn=6.0; IQR=0.75);
10. Ability to build consensus – knows how to listen to all sides and help people collate different ideas and reach a good conclusion (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
11. Confronts challenges – faces issues head on and doesn't pretend they don't exist (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
12. Structured and logical – can outline the steps necessary to realize a vision; able to delegate effectively (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0).

Just as the importance of strong communication skills for community college presidents is mentioned frequently in the literature, many studies also discuss the importance for community college presidents to possess strong leadership skills (Cook, 2004; Desjardins & Huff, 2001; Hockaday & Puyear, 2000; Hood, 1997; Olson-Nikunen, 2004; Turner, 2005). The items that emerged in this study help to further define the specific skills contained within the overall theme of leadership. Trustees in this study reached consensus on the importance of 12 leadership competencies, and agreed that it is critically important for future community college presidents to have good moral character, to be a team-player, and to have the ability to articulate a vision.

Professional Experiences Important for Future Community College Presidents

Participants in the study identified 17 professional experiences and three educational backgrounds that they considered to be important for future community college presidents to possess. These professional experiences are listed below in order of importance as ranked by the participants:

1. Experience in senior management/administration in any field (Mdn=6.0; IQR=0.5);
2. Demonstrates professional commitment – has not simply spent a year or two in previous positions (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
3. Experience working in a political environment – experience working with representatives and regulators (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.0);
4. Employment at institutions with a good reputation (Mdn=6.0; IQR=2.0);
5. Experience as a senior administrator specifically at a community college (Mdn=5.5; IQR=1.0);
6. Experience at a community college (Mdn=5.5; IQR=1.0);
7. Experience with outcome-based accountability initiatives (i.e. AQIP) (Mdn=5.5; IQR=1.0);
8. Having been mentored by or having experience working for a well-respected leader (Mdn=5.0; IQR=0.75);
9. Experience at any higher education institution (Mdn=5.0; IQR=1.0);
10. Experience serving on a board (Mdn=5.0; IQR=1.0);
11. Experience teaching at the community college level (full-time or part-time) (Mdn=5.0; IQR=1.0);

12. Fundraising experience (Mdn=5.0; IQR=1.0);
13. Is well-respected in the community college professional community – participates in national organizations, has published papers (Mdn=5.0; IQR=1.5);
14. Experience at an organization that is unionized (Mdn=5.0; IQR=2.0);
15. Experience teaching (at any level; full-time or part-time) (Mdn=5.0; IQR=2.0);
16. Employment in the state or region (Mdn=4.0; IQR=2.0);
17. Experience in a senior management position specifically in the business/private sector (Mdn=4.0; IQR=2.0).

Many of the professional experiences that emerged from this study as important for future community college presidents are supported in the literature. Specifically, the majority of competencies on which consensus was reached regarding their degree of importance have been previously identified in other studies. However, trustees in this study agreed on the importance of two additional professional experiences that were not specifically identified in the literature review (see Figure 3): professional commitment, and experience at organizations with a good reputation. Furthermore, trustees in this study identified several other professional experiences that they considered important for future community college presidents, but participants did not reach consensus on their degree of importance. Accordingly, these particular professional experiences have not been identified in the literature as critically important for community college presidents: employment in the state or region, administrative experience specifically in the business/private sector, or experience at an organization that is unionized.

The educational backgrounds identified in this study are listed below in order of importance, as ranked by the participants:

1. Master's degree required (Mdn=7.0; IQR=0.0);
2. Doctorate required (Mdn=6.0; IQR=1.25);
3. Has a liberal arts background (Mdn=4.0; IQR=1.0).

Trustees reached consensus that a master's degree is critically important for a community college president. While a doctorate was not considered critically important, its median importance rating of 6.0 indicates that trustees still place importance on a doctoral degree. This finding is supported by the literature in that 88% of current community college presidents hold an earned doctorate (Weisman & Vaughn, 2007); while a doctorate is not an absolute requirement, it still is extremely common among community college presidents.

Items of Critical Importance

Of the 68 total characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences identified as important for community college presidents to possess in the future, nine emerged as critically important: (a) passionate about education – is a champion of community colleges; (b) good moral character – honest, has integrity, trustworthy; (c) articulate – ability to communicate in written and oral form clearly and professionally; (d) master's degree required; (e) dependable – follows through on commitments; arrives on-time or early for appointments and meetings; (f) good listener – makes people feel like what they're saying is important; is able to read body language effectively; (g) has the ability to establish trust; (h) team-player – understands the value of a team, able to recruit and assemble an effective team; and (i) vision – recognizes where the college is today, articulates where the college should be in the future, and generates buy-in for that vision.

Findings of Interest

Items of Critical Importance with Greatest Consensus

As a result of this study, four items emerged as critically important for future community college presidents with the greatest degree of consensus among participants, as indicated by an IQR = 0.0.

Good moral character. Importance ratings for this item ranged from 5 to 7, and 26 of 35 trustees rated the importance of this item as a 7, indicating critical importance. During the interviews in the first phase of the study, many trustees offered “integrity” as their first response to the question, “What characteristics are critical for future community college presidents to exhibit?” Trustees provided a number of descriptions of “good moral character.” As one trustee plainly stated, “I want someone who is fair and honest” (Anonymous, personal communication, January 28, 2008). Another described good moral character as “When you can look them straight in the eye and just feel that you’re getting the pure, unvarnished truth, whatever the issue might be” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 1, 2008). In addition, several trustees commented on why they believed good moral character was critically important, particularly as it related to building trust. As one trustee explained, “If one has the integrity, the honesty, and really the heart and soul of the community college interest at the top of what you are trying to do, the majority of people will believe in that person” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 11, 2008).

Passionate about education. Importance ratings for this item ranged from 5 to 7; 27 of the 35 trustees rated the importance of this item as a 7, indicating critical importance. A number of trustees indicated that “a deep commitment to education” is

critical for future community college presidents and that the “person must be a champion of the community college.” One trustee elaborated that “they have to be the spokesperson, they have to be the cheerleader...a real champion of the community college is what we want to see, not someone who just takes it as a bureaucratic job” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 11, 2008). Another trustee explained, “I don’t care how much you know until I know how much you care,” and further clarified that “how much you know will help you get the job; how much you care will help you keep the job” (Anonymous, personal communication, March 10, 2008).

Articulate. Importance ratings for this item ranged from 6 to 7; 26 of the 35 trustees rated the importance of this item as a 7, indicating critical importance. During the interviews in the first phase of the study, many trustees offered “communication skills” as their first response to the question, “What competencies are critical for future community college presidents to demonstrate?” One trustee explained that “being a good communicator is the most important thing” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 8, 2008), and another clarified that a critical competency for a president is the “ability to communicate, both written and verbal” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008).

Master’s degree required. While many trustees specifically mentioned that they do not believe a doctorate is critically important for future community college presidents, the majority of trustees believe that a master’s degree is critically important. Importance ratings for this item ranged from 3 to 7; 26 of the 35 trustees rated the importance of this item as a 7, indicating critical importance. One trustee who specifically commented that a president does not need a doctorate to “run an institution,” clarified her belief by

adding, “I do feel that the person has to have a minimum of a Master’s degree” (Anonymous, personal communication, January 30, 2008).

Items on Which Consensus Was Not Reached

After the third phase of the Delphi process, there were six items on which consensus (an IQR equal to or less than 1.4) was not reached. However, stability (a change in median value equal to or less than 1.05 between rounds) was reached on all six items.

Employment at institutions with a good reputation. During the interviews in the first phase of the study, one trustee commented on the importance of future community college presidents having been employed at institutions with good reputations. He commented, “Generally I think the track record of what they’ve done before is an indicator...I think having gone to good colleges and seeing good modeling is usually a good predictor” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008). Nevertheless, importance ratings for this item ranged from 2 to 7, and only one trustee out of 33 rated the item as a 7, indicating critical importance. While consensus was not achieved on the item (IQR=2.0), stability was achieved after the third phase with a median importance rating of 6.0.

Is well-respected in the community college professional community. During the interviews in the first phase of the study, several trustees mentioned the importance for future community college presidents to be active in national organizations and to understand the “pulse” of community colleges. Another trustee specifically mentioned, “I think it would be interesting to know if they have written papers, if they have been published” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008).

Nevertheless, other trustees expressed concern that national community college organizations were creating a “good old boys” network, and explained that they didn’t value presidential participation in national associations. Accordingly, ratings of importance for this item ranged from 1 to 7, and three trustees out of 35 rated the item as a 7, indicating critical importance. While consensus was not achieved on the item (IQR=1.5), stability was achieved after the third phase with a median importance rating of 5.0.

Experience teaching (at any level; full-time or part-time). Many trustees indicated during the interviews in the first phase of the study that they believed it was critically important for future presidents to have some teaching experience, regardless of the grade level. As one trustee indicated, “I think everyone who heads a college should have taught in a classroom somewhere along the line” (Anonymous, personal communication, January 28, 2008). Another trustee commented, “I don’t necessarily think that it has to come from the traditional background of where we’ve sought other community college presidents,” but added that “...it may be helpful for that person to have taught somewhere in their career, to have been in a classroom, maybe as an adjunct faculty member” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 11, 2008).

However, other trustees indicated that they did not believe teaching experience was a critical factor. As one trustee mentioned, “I’m not married to the prejudice of it has to be a traditional individual that has come through the educational system to become a president” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008). Others cautioned that requiring a president to have teaching experience potentially eliminates strong candidates unnecessarily. One trustee remarked, “The emphasis to have candidates with

a strong academic background, to the detriment of other background factors, I think gets you in trouble” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 11, 2008). Another added, “If you limit the pool of potential applicants, you don’t know what you might be missing” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 10, 2008). Accordingly, importance ratings for this item ranged from 2 to 7, and 3 trustees out of 35 rated the item as a 7, indicating critical importance. While consensus was not achieved on the item (IQR=2.0), stability was achieved after the third phase with a median importance rating of 5.0.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that consensus was achieved on the importance of teaching experience specifically at the community college level, with a median importance rating of 5.0. Therefore, while trustees did not agree on the importance of teaching experience at any level, they did agree on the importance of teaching experience specifically at the community college level. Furthermore, it is interesting that full-time teaching experience did not emerge as a professional experience important for future community college presidents. The literature often refers to full-time teaching experience as part of the “traditional” career path for community college presidents (Kubala & Bailey, 2001), and in 2006, 48% of community college presidents had full-time teaching experience at the community college level (Weisman & Vaughn, 2007). Nevertheless, trustees in this study did not identify full-time teaching experience as an important professional experience for future community college presidents.

Experience at an organization that is unionized. Several trustees mentioned the importance of experience at an organization that is unionized during the interviews in the first phase of the study. As one trustee noted, “Probably the most important thing, at

least in the Illinois system, is an ability to be able to surf the troubled waters of the unionized organization” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 11, 2008). Other trustees commented, “There’s nothing like a union experience” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008). “It would be better if they had worked someplace that had a union because they’d see how it would function” (Anonymous, personal communication, January 28, 2008), and one added, “It might be a make or break” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 10, 2008).

However, not all trustees believed that experience at an institution that is unionized is critically important for future community college presidents. This disagreement among trustees is not unexpected; it is likely that trustees’ perception of the importance of this item depends in part upon the number and strength of the unions in their community college district. Accordingly, importance ratings for this item ranged from 2 to 7, and only 1 out of 35 trustees rated the item as a 7, indicating critical importance. While consensus was not achieved on the item (IQR=2.0), stability was achieved after the third phase with a median importance rating of 5.0.

Experience in a senior management position specifically in the business/private sector. During the interviews in the first phase of the study, several trustees mentioned that they believed that administrative experience specifically in the business or private sector was of critical importance for future community college presidents. One trustee explained that he was looking for future presidents to have “...a background in good business skills rather than education skills, because a good leader can hire sergeants and captains and related staff to back him up, or her” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 10, 2008).

Several trustees expressed concern that the “traditional” practice of hiring presidents with an academic background excludes candidates who could potentially bring a different perspective to community colleges. As one trustee remarked, “I think we need that cross-pollination...I’ve told [our president] and his vice presidents...look at yourselves, you all have exactly the same education experience, the same background experience, what different things do any one of you bring to the table?” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 11, 2008). Another trustee added, “I think it’s helpful to have some experience in the private sector...hopefully that’s a high-level administrative type position. I think it’s helpful to have outside of higher education experience, maybe bring a different perspective, that’s helpful” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 11, 2008).

Trustees also cited the multidimensional nature of the mission of community colleges as rationale for considering experience in the business or private sector critically important for future presidents. As one trustee explained, “I believe that we’ve got to start looking outside the academia world, we’ve got to look in the business world, and bring those people in, because in a community college,” adding, “...we’re working constantly with businesses to do their training, so we need somebody that knows something about that” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 12, 2008).

Nevertheless, not all trustees agreed that experience in the business or private sector is critically important for future community college presidents. One trustee cautioned, “Community college people...have a different outlook than do people in business” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 2, 2008). Another trustee added, “It would have to be a special person not to have a community college

background” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 12, 2008). Accordingly, importance ratings for this item ranged from 1 to 7, and 2 out of 35 trustees rated the item as a seven, indicating critical importance. While consensus was not achieved on the item (IQR=2.0), stability was achieved after the third phase with a median importance rating of 4.0.

Employment in the state or region. During the interviews in the first phase of the study, several trustees mentioned that they believed that it was important for future community college presidents to have professional experience in the state or region. As one trustee explained,

I look for talent, local talent, and it doesn't have to be from the city, or from the county of the district, but certainly in the tri-state area, maybe Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, you know the Great Lakes region, somebody that's familiar with the system, familiar with the needs of the community, familiar with the economy demands of the area, and the possibilities of the area, and the history is very important too. (Anonymous, personal communication, February 12, 2008)

However, another trustee cautioned against limiting a search to local applicants, explaining, “I think it's really critical that you go through the national search process because you've got to have that feeling that you gave it your best shot and that you got your best candidate” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 10, 2008).

Ratings of importance for this item ranged from 1 to 6, and while consensus was not achieved on the item (IQR=2.0), stability was achieved after the third phase with a median importance rating of 4.0.

Other Findings of Interest

In addition to the items identified as critically important and the items on which consensus was not reached, trustees identified a number of other items that have not been thoroughly addressed in the literature.

Doctorate required. During the interviews in the first phase of the study, many trustees specifically mentioned the doctoral degree; some perceived its importance to be critical, while others specifically mentioned that a doctorate is not necessary for a community college president. On one hand, a trustee responded that a president would “need to have a Ph.D. to be legitimate” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008) while another trustee explained, “I don’t hold to the common belief that you have to have a person with a doctorate degree” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 12, 2008).

Several trustees explained that they didn’t believe a doctorate was necessary for a president. One trustee remarked, “I think that the community college system in Illinois is matured to the point that we no longer need presidents who need Ph.D.’s in educational administration” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 11, 2008). Another trustee agreed, adding, “Do you really need to have a doctorate to manage and run an institution? I’m going to say it is not always necessary” (Anonymous, personal communication, January 30, 2008).

Many trustees expressed concern that the number of applicants for presidential positions is declining, and potential applicants should not be overlooked simply because they don’t have a doctorate. One trustee explained, “Our pool is getting smaller, it just keeps going down.” He added, “...we still have a lot of people that are out there

saying...because it's a college...it needs that statue with a somebody that's got a Ph.D. There's not that many out there, so we've got to open it up" (Anonymous, personal communication, February 12, 2008). Another trustee commented, "I fear what's happening with the Ph.D.'s is that...they've created a 'good old boys' club for themselves. And they've got this zone of comfort where if you're not one of us, you don't belong here" (Anonymous, personal communication, February 12, 2008).

While other trustees were open to the idea of a president without a doctorate, they still expressed concerns or reservations. One trustee explained,

We have to deal with the prejudice of the faculty who feel that their president has to have a doctoral, terminal degree. I think that boards of trustees have to be sensitive to that, but the fact is they don't run the institution, the board of trustees runs the institution. (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008)

Another commented, "If you hire someone without a doctoral degree, the individual is going to have to have some unique abilities to compensate for that" (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008).

Given the amount of disagreement evident in the interviews, it is not surprising that the importance ratings for this item ranged from 1 to 7. Seven of 36 trustees rated the item as a 7, indicating critical importance, and one trustee rated the item as a one, indicating no importance. Consensus was achieved for this item after the third phase (IQR=1.0), with a median importance rating of 6.0. Accordingly, while it does not appear that a doctorate is an absolute requirement for the community college presidency, candidates who possess an earned doctorate appear to be at an advantage during the selection process.

People-person. During the interviews in the first phase of the study, several trustees specifically mentioned the importance for a president to have the ability to communicate effectively with a wide variety of constituencies. As one trustee explained, “You have so many constituencies out there and you have to not only understand but relate to them all” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008) while another commented that she thought a president needs to be “...a people person, [to] go out there, shake hands, talk to almost anyone” (Anonymous, personal communication, January 28, 2008).

Many trustees went into great detail describing this particular competency. One trustee explained that a president needs to have

...the ability to relate to the different strata of society. If you’ve got some farm guy that’s having trouble putting together a proper English sentence, ...he’s a taxpayer, he still has value in what he’s thinking. You have to be able to hear it and interpret it just as you would, you know, the president of a bank. (Anonymous, personal communication, February 10, 2008)

Another explained,

You’ve got to be able to walk into the welding shop, and talk to them, and walk out of there and your next appointment in a bank, to a bank president, so you have to be able to intermingle and talk the language in a sense, on the level of the businesses that you’re in. (Anonymous, personal communication, February 12, 2008)

Another trustee commented, “The need for the president...is to be able to, on the one hand...relate sort of on an even keel with the CEO of...a 100 million dollar company,

and then maybe that evening speak with the local farm service” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 10, 2008). All trustees agreed that this item was important, as ratings for this item ranged from 5 to 7. Fourteen of 35 trustees rated the item as a 7, indicating critical importance. Consensus was reached on this item after the second phase (IQR=1.0), with a median importance score of 6.0.

Presence. Several trustees mentioned the importance of “presence” or “looking the part of the president” during the interviews in the first phase of the study. As one trustee explained, “They need to have a presence about them. If you’re going to be the president, you need to look like the president” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008). Another trustee clarified, “The institution has to feel good about the person that they put in charge. They have to look the part.” He added, that “it’s not necessarily just looks, because it isn’t, that’s really shallow...it’s the image of the institution; you have to be careful” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008).

While several trustees lamented that it seemed superficial, one commented, “Appearance is a very vital factor” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 10, 2008). However, another trustee clarified, “They come in all shapes and forms...it’s not about physical size, it’s all about how they carry themselves, how they present themselves” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008). One trustee further explained, “Call it shelf appeal, whatever it is. You just get a gut feeling when you walk in” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008). Not all trustees agreed that “presence” is critically important, however, as importance ratings for this item ranged from 1 to 7. Seven out of 34 trustees rated the item as a 7, indicating critical

importance, and two of the 34 trustees rated the item as a 1, indicating no importance. Nevertheless, consensus was reached on this item after the second phase (IQR=1.0), with a median importance rating of 6.0.

Family person. During the interviews in the first phase of the study, several trustees mentioned that they believed that it was critical for future community college presidents to be married. As one trustee explained, “I think I’d have a hard problem a president being single.” She clarified, “I think having a family or being part of a family teaches you something that no single person can understand. I noticed it with my kids, once they got married, it was like they learned to compromise, to share” (Anonymous, personal communication, January 28, 2008). Another trustee agreed that a potential president’s marital status is important, adding, “I think it shows stability...I know how it’s very easy for the community to make an image of a person if a person is not married, so being married is easier” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008). One trustee commented that the marital status of a potential president “...is a slippery slope to go down, but it really is part of the decision... In today’s society, is that right? Is that wrong? I don’t know, but it’s the reality of it” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008). Another trustee added, “It’s not a deciding factor, but it is a factor, and to say it’s not is being blind” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008).

One trustee explained that he believed a president’s marital status was important, not because of social norms, but because “The president doesn’t have a confidant. He or she has a board that they work for, and they have subordinates who work for them. It’s almost like they’re isolated. So a partner is very important” (Anonymous, personal

communication, February 9, 2008). Another trustee explained that he didn't believe marital status would be a critical factor in all geographic areas, commenting, "It depends on where you're located. In metropolitan areas it may not be a big difference. In small, rural areas it's a big difference" (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008). Accordingly, not all trustees perceived this item to be important, as ratings ranged from 1 to 6. Consensus was achieved on this item (IQR=1.0) after the third phase, with a median importance rating of 4.0.

Researcher Observations

In addition to providing information about the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences they considered to critically important for future community college presidents to possess, the trustees who participated in this study enthusiastically shared additional insight and experiences. Accordingly, the researcher made several observations that were not directly related to the research questions, which are presented below.

Enthusiasm of Trustees

The trustees that participated in this study were extremely enthusiastic and exceptionally willing to openly share their perspectives and experiences with the researcher. Although the researcher had originally set a target panel size of 12 to 15 experts, the response to the initial request for participation was overwhelming, with replies from nearly four times the number of expected participants. Furthermore, several trustees who did not meet the minimum qualifications that were outlined in the invitation letter requested special consideration to be allowed to participate in the study.

It was very clear that the participants in this study take their responsibilities as trustees very seriously, and strive to lead their colleges to greatness. One trustee emphasized that trustees must "...understand the electorate because the key word in trustee is trust." He clarified, "We are entrusted by them to work for them to make their college the best it can be for their community. It's not my college, it's their college" (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008).

Throughout the study, trustees demonstrated an exceptional amount of dedication and commitment. Response rates exceeded 85% on both questionnaires, and the researcher received many responses from participants within one day of mailing the questionnaires. On multiple occasions, trustees called the researcher to share additional observations that they felt were critical to include in the study.

Expectations for Presidents Remain Virtually Unchanged

During the interviews in the first phase of the study, several trustees made comments that closely mirrored observations that were recorded in the literature over 40 years ago. First, it was common for trustees to comment on the unreasonable expectations placed on community college presidents. As one trustee observed, "the expectations for a president are just short of walking on water" (Anonymous, personal communication, February 10, 2008). Another summarized her requirements for a president by commenting that she and her fellow trustees typically look for "super people" (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008). These observations mirror the commentary of Henry Wriston (1959), a former college president, who quipped that boards tend to outline such grandiose qualifications and desired attributes for presidents that "...no less than the Archangel Gabriel could meet the bill of

particulars – and he is not available” (p. 50). After nearly fifty years, trustees clearly continue to hold extremely high expectations for aspiring presidents. One of the participants in this study wrote on the second questionnaire, “...it appears many trustees are ‘unrealistic’ to think one person can possess all these criteria.”

Just as the level of expectations for college presidents remains extremely high, the specific desired qualifications have changed little in four decades. In 1969, Rauh observed that typical criteria for college presidents included “unquestioned character, a religious attitude, good health, youth, maturity, scholarly interest, administrative experience, advanced degrees, imagination, judicial ability, democratic spirit, platform presence, thrift, children, and a wife with social grace” (p. 13). While the specific vocabulary used to identify these criteria has changed, many of the underlying assumptions regarding the desired qualifications for college presidents remain unchanged. Although much of the recent literature does not address issues such as the marital status or physical appearance of aspiring presidents, the results of this study reveal that these “unspoken” characteristics may indeed play a role in the presidential selection process.

It does, however, appear that many trustees are willing to consider presidential candidates from outside the traditional “academic pipeline.” Many trustees mentioned that they would be willing to consider an applicant from business and industry, our would be willing to consider an applicant who did not hold a doctoral degree. Several expressed concerns that the “pool” of traditional applicants has been declining in size, and explained that it would be necessary to consider candidates from outside of academia.

Nevertheless, most concurred that the individual would have to “be a special person” or “have unique competencies” to compensate for a non-traditional background.

Presidential Searches

During the interviews in the first phase of this study, many participants spoke specifically about their experiences in presidential searches. Trustees enthusiastically shared what they believed worked well, as well as what they believed could be improved, in the presidential search process.

Search consultants. Several trustees discussed their experience with search consultants, and there appeared to be a wide range of opinions regarding their effectiveness. While one trustee complained that his board utilized the services of a “...consultant who ended up being a waste of 50,000 dollars” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 12, 2008), another trustee explained that a consultant “... really helped [his college] a lot, because it had that professional flavor added to the mix” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 10, 2008). The trustee clarified that he believed the professional nature of the search conducted by his college attracted the most qualified applicants because “the potential president is evaluating you as well as you are evaluating them, so it works two ways, it’s a two-way street” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 10, 2008).

Some trustees expressed concern that national organizations, which often offer search consultant services, have created a “good old boys” network and exclude non-traditional applicants. Other trustees commented that they believed search consultants tended to support particular applicants, sometimes influencing the outcome of searches. Nevertheless, other trustees explained that they believed that a consultant helps to

streamline the presidential selection process and ensure an effective and efficient search. While the research questions addressed in this study did not encompass the effect of consultants on presidential searches, it appears as though consensus does not exist among trustees regarding the effectiveness of search consultants.

Search process. While consensus does not appear to exist regarding search consultants, many participants in the study expressed several different concerns regarding the presidential search process. One trustee expressed discomfort with the practice of publicly announcing the names of finalists in presidential searches because it places those candidates who are not offered or who do not accept the position in a difficult situation. While he acknowledged that announcing the finalists is perhaps the only practical way to allow the community to provide input in the selection process, he explained, “You destroy too many careers. Personally, if we could get away without even announcing who the two, three, or four finalists are and avoid bringing them in... You’re just negatively influencing people’s careers” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 11, 2008).

Other trustees expressed concerns about the “political” nature of a presidential search committee. While a search committee is meant to broaden the input utilized and ensure a fair selection process, some trustees believe that committees jeopardize the integrity of a search. One trustee advised,

you have to be very careful, particularly when you mix unions with politicians...

We almost saw our committee unravel...and it became very apparent that this was going to be a fix...so one needs to be cautious about those committees that we put together because they’re behind the scenes kind of planning, I don’t want to use

the word malicious, that's a little strong, but you know what I'm saying, stacking the deck. (Anonymous, personal communication, February 10, 2008)

Another participant expressed distrust about a search committee's role in forwarding the most qualified applicants for the board's consideration. She explained, It's very difficult for a board to accept a new president when there are three candidates to choose from, that have been really chosen or picked by other people. Yes, we get the cream of the three candidates, but do we *really* get the cream of the three candidates? (Anonymous, personal communication, January 30, 2008)

In addition to expressing concerns about search committees, trustees also expressed dissatisfaction with the interview process utilized in the presidential selection process. As one trustee explained,

Interviews are pretty much, interviews are like a beauty pageant, ...and that's not to meant to be nasty about it, but it is. This is almost a marriage between a board and a president, and you want it to be for multiple years, so for a match to occur, you have got to have a good feeling about that relationship, and you can't do it in just a single interview. (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008)

Another trustee cautioned that

...there's a lot of training programs out there to teach people how to be the next president of a college, ...how to prepare for an interview, ... how to have it on a PowerPoint, and how to really make you go 'wow,' and that helps, but what about when they show up to go to work, then of course then it's pretty late. So you have

to try to get past that ‘wow factor,’ and get into what’s the person really like.

(Anonymous, personal communication, February 12, 2008)

Unsuccessful Searches

It is clear that trustees share a variety of concerns regarding the presidential selection process, and it appears that many of these misgivings originate from an overall concern about selecting a candidate who ultimately is unsuccessful as a president. As one trustee explained, “...what we’ve seen in Illinois, is in this last year we’ve had some unsuccessful candidates, ...all have turned over the position with what we all thought were good candidates, but it just didn’t work” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008). Another trustee identified as a serious concern “...the high number of presidential failures we’ve had in Illinois.” He explained,

We’ve had, in the last 3 or 4 years, we’ve had eight or 10 presidents fail. Why, why do we have this failure rate? ...you have people that are lasting 12 to 18 months, and run afoul with the board, run afoul with internal constituencies, what’s the reason for those failures? I can’t tell you. But I’d like to research it and find out. (Anonymous, personal communication, February 11, 2008)

Preparing for the Future

While participants in this study identified “having been mentored by or having experience working for a well-respected leader” as an important professional experience for future community college presidents to possess, several trustees emphasized the important role that current presidents should take in mentoring aspiring presidents. One trustee explained that it is critical for current presidents to have “...the ability to identify young talent and to encourage the development of the future leadership of and for

community colleges” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 10, 2008). Another trustee defined “mentoring” as a critical competency for presidents, and clarified, “...if you have on your staff some of the young bucks...that have some potential...coach them, move them along, encourage them, every now and then you might have to slap a wrist, that’s all a part of it” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 10, 2008). Accordingly, trustees appear to value both sides of mentoring relationships, and expect current presidents to actively prepare young leaders to fill the impending leadership gap that is expected to face community colleges.

Matching the Needs of a Specific College

At various points throughout the study, many participants shared their belief that trustees’ perceptions of the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that would be critical for a prospective president would vary based on the needs and the environment of their particular college and district. For example, one trustee shared, “It’s almost like the board needs to put together a shopping list of what it needs and where it wants to be, and then look at the abilities of the people applying for that position, and then match the two together. No two presidents will be the same” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008).

One trustee further clarified what might be on a trustee’s “shopping list,” explaining,

... if your institution is trying to build its campus’ physical plant, you look and see if there has been some past ability to handle construction, development, funding, and all the things that go with construction. If you’ve had a contentious relationship with your bargaining units, then you make sure that you have

someone who has had competencies in dealing with collective bargaining, or negotiating with collective bargaining units. If it's time to build your academic program,you can go down the list. You pick the areas which you need to be sure that you're providing, and you match their ability to put those types of programs together. (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008)

Another participant shared that a board's history with previous presidents would shape trustees' perceptions, explaining,

Trustees' view of what they'd like to see in a new president would be colored to a certain extent by why they lost previous presidents. You know, if he just retired, then that's one thing. If he went on to bigger and better things, that's something else, they might like to look for a stronger commitment to the institution to where they are. And if they were a victim of a malfeasance of some sort, why then that would be high on their list to protect them from that sort of thing. (Anonymous, personal communication, February 2, 2008)

Several trustees commented that they believed that a president at a smaller college would need to have more versatile skills and a greater degree of specific community college administrative expertise, given that smaller colleges tend to have fewer administrative staff. As one trustee explained, "Some of the bigger schools have more support systems...look at McHenry, it has a lot more support, in a small school you really have to be a jack of all trades, you don't have people to pass [things] off" (Anonymous, personal communication, February 9, 2008). Another trustee, while discussing critical competencies related to the financial aspects of community college administration, further clarified, "If you're coming to a very large college you might not have to have as

intricate knowledge of the business aspect, of the financial aspect, as someone going to a smaller school where you better know every little bit” (Anonymous, personal communication, February 10, 2008).

Another trustee described what is commonly referred to in the literature at “institutional fit” (Bumpas, 1998), explaining,

You need someone that fits the environment, or the family that you have in your college. [College of DuPage] is different than [College of Lake County] which is different than Kaskaskia which is different than us, you know, there’s a difference, you have to have someone who can respond to the college where they are. (Anonymous, personal communication, January 28, 2008)

Based on these observations, it is not surprising that trustees did not reach consensus on all 68 of the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that were identified as important for future community college presidents to possess. Nevertheless, trustees did reach consensus on the importance of 62 items, and collectively identified nine characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that are critically important for future community college presidents to possess.

Recommendations for Utilization of Findings

Given that the participants of this study reached consensus on a series of characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that are important for future community college presidents to possess, findings from this study can be utilized by aspiring community college presidents, current community college presidents, boards of trustees, national associations, and professional organizations.

Current and Aspiring Presidents

Both aspiring and current community college presidents alike can utilize the findings of this study for self-assessment purposes and to guide in the selection of professional development opportunities. Current and aspiring presidents can consider their own personal characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences, and compare them with the items that were identified in this study. Furthermore, current presidents who serve as mentors for aspiring presidents can utilize these findings to help guide future leaders and ensure that they have opportunities to develop the competencies and skills that were identified as critically important by trustees.

Boards of Trustees

One of the first phases of the presidential selection process is the identification of desired qualifications of an ideal candidate. Accordingly, the findings from this research can be utilized by boards of trustees as a catalyst for the discussion of desired characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences of an ideal presidential candidate. Furthermore, given concerns raised by trustees about the high failure rate of new presidents, it is possible that boards of trustees could utilize the findings of this study to identify the potential weaknesses of a new president. The board and new president could use this analysis to identify potential professional development opportunities to increase the likelihood of a successful presidential tenure.

National Associations and Professional Organizations

There are a number of national associations and professional organizations that offer training for aspiring community college leaders, and the results of this study could be utilized to help shape professional development opportunities for future presidents.

For example, workshops are frequently offered that aim to prepare presidential candidates for the interview process; the findings of this study could be used to help applicants identify what trustees might be looking for in a future president. Furthermore, many state and national organizations exist to support the professional development of trustees; the results of this study could be used to help inexperienced trustees understand the critical characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences of ideal presidential candidates.

Recommendations for Future Research

The results of this study indicate the need for additional research in several areas, specifically: (a) the perspective of community college trustees in other states regarding characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences critical for future community college presidents; (b) the perspective of inexperienced community college trustees regarding characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences critical for future community college presidents; (c) the perspective of trustees at four-year colleges and universities regarding characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences critical for future college and university presidents; (d) best practices for applicant screening and interview methodologies to improve the likelihood of the selection of a successful presidential candidate; (e) the impact of the pre-screening process conducted by presidential search committees; (f) reasons why newly hired presidents fail; and (g) if the success of a new president can be predicted by the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that the applicant possesses.

Perspective of Trustees in Other States

Just as trustees in this study mentioned the possibility that the perspective of trustees regarding the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that are

critical for future community college presidents to possess may vary based on the needs and environment of the college they serve, it is possible that the perspective of trustees in different states may vary from the perspective of trustees in the state of Illinois. Other states utilize different methods for selecting trustees, have different statewide governance structures, and perhaps face different challenges and opportunities, which would substantiate the need to replicate this study in other states.

Perspective of Inexperienced Trustees

While this study explored the perceptions of experienced community college trustees in the state of Illinois, both experienced and inexperienced trustees alike weigh in on presidential selections. Accordingly, it is important to understand the perspective of inexperienced trustees regarding the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences critical for future community college presidents to possess, and to determine if differences in perceptions exist between the two groups. Furthermore, if variations do exist, it would be important to understand why their perceptions differ.

Perspective of Trustees at Four-Year Colleges and Universities

In addition to exploring any differences in the perceptions of participants in this study and the perceptions of community college trustees in other states, as well as the perceptions of inexperienced trustees, it would be interesting to explore the perceptions of trustees of four-year colleges and universities to determine if the expectations for community college presidents are similar to the expectations for college and university presidents. Given that the mission and scope of four-year colleges and universities tend to be different from the mission and scope of community colleges, it is likely that the

characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that trustees consider critical for college and university presidents to possess would be different from what is considered critical for community college presidents. However, it is also possible that there is a common core of characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that trustees universally perceive to be critical for presidents, regardless of the level of the institution they serve.

Effective Screening and Interview Methodologies

During the interviews in the first phase of the study, many trustees expressed frustration with the screening and interview process that is currently utilized in presidential searches, and explained that it was often difficult to select a successful presidential candidate using current methodologies. While one trustee equated the presidential interview process with a beauty pageant, another trustee complained that a strong interview performance does not necessarily equate with strong job performance once a candidate is hired. Other trustees expressed concern that the public announcement of finalists for a presidency can negatively impact the careers of those candidates who are not offered or who do not accept a position. Accordingly, research on the most effective strategies to successfully select a president is warranted.

Impact of the Presidential Search Committee

Although a presidential search committee is often utilized to ensure wide representation of constituencies during the selection process, several trustees expressed distrust regarding the impact of such committees, believing that they screen out the strongest candidates for political reasons. While the results of this study summarize the perceptions of experienced community college trustees regarding the characteristics,

competencies, and professional experiences critical for future community college presidents to possess, it is unclear if presidential search committees share the same perceptions regarding the ideal qualifications of a presidential candidate. Accordingly, if these committees perceive a different set of characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences to be critically important for future presidents, it is possible that search committees would eliminate applicants from the search that trustees would have ultimately considered to be strong candidates. The impact of search committees on the applicant screening process, as well as the perspective of search committees regarding the desired qualifications of an ideal candidate, should be investigated.

Failure Rate of New Presidents

During the interviews in the first phase of the study, many participants expressed concern regarding the failure rate of newly hired presidents. Trustees explained that an unsuccessful presidential search ultimately comes at a high cost to a college, both in terms of the amount of time spent on search activities, as well as institutional turmoil. Accordingly, it is important to understand the reasons why some new presidents are not successful in their new role, and to identify ways to increase the likelihood that a new president will have a successful tenure.

Characteristics of Successful Presidents

Just as it is important to understand why some new presidents are unsuccessful, it is also important to identify if there are characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that predict the success of a new president. If such a correlation exists, it would help trustees make informed presidential selection decisions, and would help aspiring presidents prepare effectively for the position. Accordingly, future researchers

may wish to explore the existence of a correlation between the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences possessed by a newly hired president and the likelihood of success in his/her new role.

Conclusions

Given the number of students they serve and their broad mission and scope, community colleges are clearly a critical component of the higher education system and are vital to the nation's economic development. Community colleges currently face a myriad of challenges, including the anticipated retirement of a significant number of presidents. In order to preserve their vitality, community colleges must be prepared to effectively fill a large number of presidential vacancies in the next decade.

One of the most important roles of a board of trustees has been and will continue to be the recruitment, selection, and hiring of a new president. While the ultimate authority for hiring a community college president resides with the board of trustees, few studies have been conducted to explore the perceptions of trustees regarding the desired characteristics and qualifications of an ideal presidential candidate. Accordingly, the results of this study provide important insight into the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that experienced community college trustees from the state of Illinois perceive to be critically important for future presidents to possess. Nevertheless, many opportunities for future research exist to further explore trustees' expectations for future community college presidents. Given the enthusiasm exhibited by the trustees who participated in this study, future researchers should have no difficulty in recruiting trustees who are willing to share their wisdom and expertise.

Based on the responses of the participants in this study, it is evident that trustees are

committed to the community college mission, and understand that their district's community college is vital to the well-being of the communities it serves. It is clear that the participants in this study take very seriously their role as trustees and the responsibilities of serving on a board. The people of Illinois have entrusted their community colleges in excellent hands.

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APPENDIX A: Informed Consent Form

The following information is provided to help you decide whether you wish to participate in this study.

The purpose of this study is to explore the beliefs of experienced trustees regarding characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences considered essential for community college presidents. This study is conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Technology at Pepperdine University. The results of the study can be used to develop guidelines articulating the desired qualifications for community college presidents that will be helpful in the selection process, increasing the likelihood of successful searches and attracting a more talented pool.

In order for me to use what I learn from you in my research and publications, I am required to ask for your permission and if you would agree with one of the following arrangements. Please initial the appropriate line:

_____ I agree to permit the researcher to use my name, professional affiliation
(please initial) and the name of the community college I represent as a member of the panel of experts in this study. I understand that my individual responses will not be associated with my name or institution, and results will only be presented in aggregate form.

OR

_____ I agree to permit the researcher to refer to me only by a pseudonym from
(please initial) a “generic community college” (e.g. Mrs. Jones from Knowledge Community College). I understand my identity and the name of my organization will be kept confidential at all times.

In either case, you should be aware that the foreseeable risks or potential discomfort to you as a result of participating in this study are minimal. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with me, Pepperdine University, or any other entity. Upon your request, I will provide a copy of any published papers or professional presentations that take place as a result of this study.

Please feel free to ask any questions about this study before we begin or during the course of the study by contacting Kathleen Plinske, Principal Investigator, at 815-703-5857 (kathleen.plinske@pepperdine.edu), or Dr. Farzin Madjidi dissertation chairperson, at 310-568-5726 (fmadjidi@pepperdine.edu). For information regarding your rights, please contact Dr. Stephanie Woo, IRB Chairperson at Pepperdine University at 310-568-5600 (swoo@pepperdine.edu).

Signature

Date

Please also complete the enclosed questionnaire and return both this form and the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope.

APPENDIX B: Invitation Letter to Participate

<<TITLE>><<FIRST>><<LAST>>
<<COLLEGE>>
<<ADDRESS>>
<<CITY>>, <<STATE>><<ZIP>>

Dear <<TITLE>>. <<LAST>>,

As you know, community colleges are facing an impending leadership crisis. A 2001 study indicated that 75% of community college presidents anticipated retiring within the next ten years. Community colleges must be prepared to effectively select candidates to fill a large number of presidential openings.

I would like to invite you to participate in a study I am conducting for the completion of my doctoral dissertation at Pepperdine University. The purpose of the study is to explore the beliefs of experienced Illinois community college trustees about the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that are critically important for future community college presidents to possess.

You are eligible to participate in the study if:

1. You have served on an Illinois community college board of trustees for at least five years.
2. You have participated in a least one presidential search process.

This study will be conducted using a Delphi process, which will involve an in-person interview and two or three rounds of data collection via questionnaires to develop collective expertise. It is anticipated that each individual round will require no more than 20-30 minutes of your time. The anticipated timeframe for this study is to begin interviews in February, 2008 and complete the final round of data collection in April, 2008. All board members who participate will receive a copy of the completed study.

The results of the study can be used to develop guidelines articulating the desired qualifications for community college presidents that will be helpful in the selection process, increasing the likelihood of successful searches and attracting a more talented pool. If you meet the eligibility requirements and are willing to participate in the study, please complete the enclosed questionnaire, sign the informed consent form, and return both to me in the envelope provided.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may choose to participate anonymously and keep confidential the name of the community college you represent, and you may withdraw from the study at any time that you wish. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Plinske
Doctoral Student, Pepperdine University

APPENDIX C: Preliminary Questionnaire

In order to contact you to set up an interview, your name and preferred mailing address are required. Your individual responses will be maintained confidentially, and reported responses will not be linked to you or your institution.

The results of the study can be used to develop guidelines articulating the desired qualifications for community college presidents that will be helpful in the selection process, increasing the likelihood of successful searches and attracting a more talented pool. Thank you in advance for your participation!

Name: _____

Preferred
Mailing Address: _____

Email address: _____

On which community college's board of trustees do you serve?

For how many years have you served on an Illinois community college board of trustees?

In how many community college presidential searches have you participated as a board member?

Are you planning to attend the ACCT National Legislative Summit in Washington, D.C. February 11-13, 2008?

Please also sign the enclosed "Informed Consent" form and return both this questionnaire and the form in the enclosed envelope.

APPENDIX D: Letter to Trustees Planning to Attend National Legislative Summit

January 2, 2008

«Title» «First» «Last»
«Address»
«City», «State» «Zip»

Dear «Title» «Last»:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study that I am conducting for the completion of my doctoral dissertation at Pepperdine University. The first step in the study is an individual, in-person interview to explore your perceptions of the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that are critically important for future community college presidents to possess.

If possible, I would like to conduct this interview at the ACCT National Legislative Summit in Washington, DC in February. The interview should take approximately thirty minutes of your time. Enclosed you will find an Interview Schedule Form. If you are still planning on attending the ACCT National Legislative Summit and would be willing to participate in an interview while in Washington, DC, please circle the times that you would be available and return the form to me in the enclosed envelope. For your reference, I have enclosed a copy of an overview of the Summit schedule.

After I have received interview schedule forms from all trustees who are attending the ACCT National Legislative Summit, I will schedule your interview based on your availability and will send you a letter confirming your interview date and time.

After I complete the interviews, the study will involve two or three questionnaires. You may choose to complete the questionnaires electronically or by mail. Please indicate your preference on the enclosed Preferred Contact Form and return the form to me in the enclosed envelope. The first questionnaire will arrive near the end of February, the second questionnaire in mid-March, and the third questionnaire, if necessary, at the beginning of April.

Once again, thank you for your participation. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at (815) 703-5857 or by email at kathleen.plinske@pepperdine.edu.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Plinske
Doctoral Student, Pepperdine University

Enclosures

APPENDIX E: ACCT National Legislative Summit Conference Schedule

2008 Summit at a Glance and Special Meetings
National Legislative Summit

(<http://acct.matrixgroup.net/events/legislativesummit/summit-glance.php>)

Sunday, February 10

3 p.m. - 8 p.m. Registration
5 p.m. - 6.30 p.m. Pre-NLS Session

Monday, February 11

7 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Registration
8 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. Opening General Sessions
9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Roundtable Seminar for Community College Lawyers
10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Community College Priorities Session
12:15 p.m. - 2:15 p.m. General Session Luncheon with Charlie Cook and Stuart Rothenberg *
2:30 p.m. - 4 p.m. Policy Focus Sessions
5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. National Capital Reception

Tuesday, February 12

7 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Registration
7 a.m. - 8:15 a.m. State Breakfast Meetings (at hotel)
8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. General Sessions
Noon - 2 p.m. Taste of DC (lunch on your own)
Afternoon Visits to House, Senate, and Executive Branch Offices Begin
7 p.m. - 9 p.m. Capital Awards and Entertainment Banquet*

Wednesday, February 13

8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. General Session Breakfast*
Morning Visits to House, Senate and Executive Branch Offices
Afternoon Additional visits to House, Senate and Executive Branch Offices

*Tickets Required

****Special Meetings ****

Saturday, February 9**

ACCT Board Committees
- Diversity
- Finance & Audit
- Governance & Bylaws
- Member Communications & Education
- Public Policy

Sunday, February 10**

- ACCT Board of Directors
- AACC/ACCT Joint
- Commission on Federal Relations
- ACCT Regional Nominating Committees
- ACCT Regional and State Network
- ACCT Trust Fund Board

Tuesday, February 12

- ACCT Advisory Committee of Presidents
- ACCT Corporate Council

**Please note that the start of these meetings is prior to the official start of the NLS program.

All meetings take place at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel unless otherwise noted.

Meeting times/sessions are subject to change.

APPENDIX F: Interview Schedule Form

Interview Schedule Form

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____
 (preferably a cell phone number to contact you in Washington, DC, if necessary)

Please circle the times that you **would be available** for an interview at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel (where most conference events will take place) in Washington, D.C. The interview should take approximately 30 minutes.

Saturday, February 9, 2008	Sunday, February 10, 2008	Monday, February 11, 2008	Tuesday, February 12, 2008	Wednesday, February 13, 2008
7:00 a.m.	7:00 a.m.	7:00 a.m.	7:00 a.m.	7:00 a.m.
8:00 a.m.	8:00 a.m.	8:00 a.m.	8:00 a.m.	8:00 a.m.
9:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.
10:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.
11:00 a.m.	11:00 a.m.	11:00 a.m.	11:00 a.m.	11:00 a.m.
12:00 p.m.	12:00 p.m.	12:00 p.m.	12:00 p.m.	12:00 p.m.
1:00 p.m.	1:00 p.m.	1:00 p.m.	1:00 p.m.	1:00 p.m.
2:00 p.m.	2:00 p.m.	2:00 p.m.	2:00 p.m.	2:00 p.m.
3:00 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	3:00 p.m.
4:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.
5:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.
6:00 p.m.	6:00 p.m.	6:00 p.m.	6:00 p.m.	6:00 p.m.
7:00 p.m.	7:00 p.m.	7:00 p.m.	7:00 p.m.	7:00 p.m.
8:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.
9:00 p.m.	9:00 p.m.	9:00 p.m.	9:00 p.m.	9:00 p.m.

APPENDIX G: Preferred Contact Form

Preferred Contact Form

Please indicate your preferred contact information by checking one of the boxes below.

- I prefer to complete the questionnaires in paper form via mail.
Please review your mailing address below and indicate any necessary changes.

«Title» «First» «Last»

«Address»

«City», «State» «Zip»

- I prefer to complete the questionnaires electronically.
Please review your email address below and indicate any necessary changes.

«Email»

APPENDIX H: Letter to Trustees Not Attending ACCT National Legislative Summit

January 22, 2008

«Title» «First» «Last»
«Address»
«City», «State» «Zip»

Dear «Title» «Last»:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study that I am conducting for the completion of my doctoral dissertation at Pepperdine University. The first step in the study is an individual, in-person interview to explore your perceptions of the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that are critically important for future community college presidents to possess.

If possible, I would like to conduct this interview at the ACCT National Legislative Summit in Washington, DC in February. The interview should take approximately thirty minutes of your time. Enclosed you will find an Interview Schedule Form. If you are still planning on attending the ACCT National Legislative Summit and would be willing to participate in an interview while in Washington, DC, please circle the times that you would be available and return the form to me in the enclosed envelope. For your reference, I have enclosed a copy of an overview of the Summit schedule.

After I have received interview schedule forms from all trustees who are attending the ACCT National Legislative Summit, I will schedule your interview based on your availability and will send you a letter confirming your interview date and time.

After I complete the interviews, the study will involve two or three questionnaires. You may choose to complete the questionnaires electronically or by mail. Please indicate your preference on the enclosed Preferred Contact Form and return the form to me in the enclosed envelope. The first questionnaire will arrive near the end of February, the second questionnaire in mid-March, and the third questionnaire, if necessary, at the beginning of April.

Once again, thank you for your participation. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at (815) 703-5857 or by email at kathleen.plinske@pepperdine.edu.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Plinske
Doctoral Student, Pepperdine University

Enclosures

APPENDIX I: Interview Protocol

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Questions:

1. What characteristics are critical for future community college presidents to exhibit?
2. What competencies are critical for future community college presidents to demonstrate?
3. What professional experiences are critical for future community college presidents to possess?

APPENDIX J: Letter to Trustees Regarding First Questionnaire

February 18, 2008

Trustee «First» «Last»
«Address»
«City», «State» «Zip»

Dear Trustee «Last»:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my doctoral study that will explore trustees' perceptions of the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences critically important for future community college presidents to possess.

The first survey is enclosed; it should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The survey includes characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that a sample of Illinois trustees have identified as being critically important for future community college presidents.

Please indicate your response by circling the number that corresponds to your perception of the importance of each item, where a score of 1 indicates no importance, and a score of 7 indicates critical importance. *In order for your input to be included in the study, I will need to receive your response by March 5, 2008.*

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with me, Pepperdine University, or any other entity.

Once again, thank you for your participation. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at (815) 703-5857 or by email at kathleen.plinske@pepperdine.edu.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Plinske
Doctoral Candidate, Pepperdine University

Enclosures

APPENDIX K: First Questionnaire Sent to Trustees Via Postal Mail

Presidential Selection Research

Personal Attributes						
Please rate the importance of each of the following personal attributes in terms of their importance for future community college presidents, where 1 indicates no importance, and 7 indicates critical importance.						
No importance						Critical importance
Calm under pressure – ability to juggle multiple challenges						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Community involvement - membership in Rotary Club or Kiwanis						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Dependable – follows through on commitments; arrives on-time or early for appointments and meetings						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Energetic – has a high energy level and is in good health						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Family person – is married						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Friendly - good sense of humor						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Organized – ability to manage time and resources effectively						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Passionate about education - is a champion of community colleges						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Presence – looks the part of a president, is the image of the institution						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Renaissance person – well-rounded and well-versed in multiple areas						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Self-motivated – willing to take on challenges						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Tactful – can provide constructive criticism diplomatically						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Well-balanced – has a balanced personal and professional life; pursues hobbies and diversions						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Competencies

Please rate the importance of each of the following competencies in terms of their importance for future community college presidents, where **1 indicates no importance, and 7 indicates critical importance.**

No importance						Critical importance
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Has an understanding of accounting and finance – possesses financial acumen, is able to read a financial statement, is able to understand a budget						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Has an understanding of community college funding – including state and local funds, tuition, grants, federal programs, and fundraising						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Has an understanding of legal issues facing community colleges						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Has an understanding of marketing – how to attract customers						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Has an understanding of multiculturalism – is comfortable working with people from diverse cultures						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Has an understanding of negotiations and contracts						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Has an understanding of technology – possesses technological literacy						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Has an understanding of the challenges and opportunities of the specific college at which he/she is applying; has “done homework” by reviewing minutes of past board meetings						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Has an understanding of the community college system in general						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Has an understanding of the different communities in the College district and their respective needs						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Has an understanding of the mission of community colleges						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Has an understanding of unions and labor laws						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Communication Skills

Please rate the importance of each of the following communication skills in terms of their importance for future community college presidents, where **1 indicates no importance, and 7 indicates critical importance.**

No importance							Critical importance
Articulate – ability to communicate in written and oral form clearly and professionally							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Good listener – makes people feel like what they’re saying is important; is able to read body language effectively							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Media savvy - Comfortable working with the media and familiar with media issues							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Networking – skilled at building partnerships and coalitions							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
People-person – ability to talk with almost anyone, including different employee groups and constituencies							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Politically savvy – understands the importance of building relationships with legislators and is comfortable with lobbying efforts							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Public speaking - comfortable speaking extemporaneously in front of a large group							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Student-focused - ability to relate to a diverse student body and understand their needs							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Leadership Skills

Please rate the importance of each of the following leadership skills in terms of their importance for future community college presidents, where **1 indicates no importance, and 7 indicates critical importance.**

No importance							Critical importance
Ability to build consensus – knows how to listen to all sides and help people collate different ideas and reach a good conclusion							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Confronts challenges – faces issues head on and doesn't pretend they don't exist							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Good moral character – honest, has integrity, is trustworthy							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Innovative – flexible and open to change							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Leads by example – is able to motivate employees and bring out the best in them							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Persuasive – generates buy-in for decisions, particularly by using facts and data							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Risk-taker – is comfortable taking measured risks							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Sense of confidence and humility – leads without always having to be in the limelight							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Structured and logical – can outline the steps necessary to realize a vision; able to delegate effectively							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Team-player – understands the value of a team, able to recruit and assemble an effective team							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Thick-skinned – have a personality that can withstand not always being liked for the decisions he/she makes							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Vision – recognizes where the college is today, articulates where the college should be in the future, and generates buy-in for that vision							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Professional Experiences							
Please rate the importance of each of the following professional experiences in terms of their importance for future community college presidents, where 1 indicates no importance, and 7 indicates critical importance.							
No importance			Critical importance				
Experience at any higher education institution	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Experience at a community college	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Experience in senior management/administration in any field	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Experience as a senior administrator specifically at a community college	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Experience in a senior management position specifically in the business/private sector	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Experience at an organization that is unionized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Employment at institutions with a good reputation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Employment in the state or region	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Experience teaching (at any level; full-time or part-time)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Experience teaching at the community college level (full-time or part-time)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Fundraising experience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Demonstrates professional commitment – has not simply spent a year or two in previous positions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Experience serving on a board	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Experience working in a political environment – experience working with representatives and regulators	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Experience with outcome-based accountability initiatives (i.e. AQIP)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Having been mentored by or having experience working for a well-respected leader	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Is well-respected in the community college professional community – participates in national organizations, has published papers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Educational Background

Please rate the importance of each of the following educational backgrounds in terms of their importance for future community college presidents, where **1 indicates no importance, and 7 indicates critical importance.**

No importance						Critical importance
Bachelor's Degree Required						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Master's Degree Required						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doctorate Required						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Has a liberal arts background						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Other

Are there any characteristics, competencies, or professional experiences that you believe are critically important for future community college presidents to possess that were not included in this survey? If so, please list them below, including as much detail as possible.

Thank you! Please return the survey in the enclosed envelope.

APPENDIX L: Email to Trustees With Link to First Questionnaire Online

From: "Kathleen Plinske"<kathleen.plinske@pepperdine.edu>
Date: February 19, 2008 3:26:44 AM CST
To:
Subject: Presidential Selection Research - Survey Response Required by 3/5/08
Reply-To: kathleen.plinske@pepperdine.edu

Dear Trustee,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my doctoral study regarding the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that are critically important for future community college presidents.

The first survey is available by clicking the link below; it should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Please submit your responses by March 5, 2008 in order for your input to be included in the study.

Thanks so much,
Kathleen Plinske
Doctoral Candidate, Pepperdine University

<http://www.zoomerang.com/survey.zgi?p=U28QUT4Y8YTP>

OPT OUT | [Learn More](#)

If you do not wish to receive further surveys from this sender, click the link below. Zoomerang will permanently remove you from this sender's mailing list.

[I do not want to receive any more surveys and emails from this sender.](#)

APPENDIX M: Online Version of First Questionnaire

Presidential Selection Research

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my doctoral research regarding the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that are critically important for future community college presidents to possess.

On the next few pages, you will see characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that a sample of Illinois trustees have identified as being critically important for future community college presidents. Please indicate your perception of the importance of each item, where a score of 1 indicates no importance, and a score of 7 indicates critical importance.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with me, Pepperdine University, or any other entity.

Thank you,
Kathleen Plinske
Doctoral Candidate, Pepperdine University

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Presidential Selection Research

1 Personal attributes

Please rate the importance of each of the following personal attributes in terms of their importance for future community college presidents, where **1 indicates no importance, and 7 indicates critical importance.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
No importance						Critical importance
Calm under pressure - ability to juggle multiple challenges						
<input type="button" value="1"/>	<input type="button" value="2"/>	<input type="button" value="3"/>	<input type="button" value="4"/>	<input type="button" value="5"/>	<input type="button" value="6"/>	<input type="button" value="7"/>
Community involvement - membership in Rotary Club or Kiwanis						
<input type="button" value="1"/>	<input type="button" value="2"/>	<input type="button" value="3"/>	<input type="button" value="4"/>	<input type="button" value="5"/>	<input type="button" value="6"/>	<input type="button" value="7"/>
Dependable - follows through on commitments; arrives on-time or early for appointments and meetings						
<input type="button" value="1"/>	<input type="button" value="2"/>	<input type="button" value="3"/>	<input type="button" value="4"/>	<input type="button" value="5"/>	<input type="button" value="6"/>	<input type="button" value="7"/>
Energetic - has a high energy level and is in good health						
<input type="button" value="1"/>	<input type="button" value="2"/>	<input type="button" value="3"/>	<input type="button" value="4"/>	<input type="button" value="5"/>	<input type="button" value="6"/>	<input type="button" value="7"/>
Family person - is married						
<input type="button" value="1"/>	<input type="button" value="2"/>	<input type="button" value="3"/>	<input type="button" value="4"/>	<input type="button" value="5"/>	<input type="button" value="6"/>	<input type="button" value="7"/>
Friendly - good sense of humor						
<input type="button" value="1"/>	<input type="button" value="2"/>	<input type="button" value="3"/>	<input type="button" value="4"/>	<input type="button" value="5"/>	<input type="button" value="6"/>	<input type="button" value="7"/>
Organized - ability to manage time and resources effectively						
<input type="button" value="1"/>	<input type="button" value="2"/>	<input type="button" value="3"/>	<input type="button" value="4"/>	<input type="button" value="5"/>	<input type="button" value="6"/>	<input type="button" value="7"/>
Passionate about education - is a champion of community colleges						
<input type="button" value="1"/>	<input type="button" value="2"/>	<input type="button" value="3"/>	<input type="button" value="4"/>	<input type="button" value="5"/>	<input type="button" value="6"/>	<input type="button" value="7"/>
Presence - looks the part of a president, is the image of the institution						
<input type="button" value="1"/>	<input type="button" value="2"/>	<input type="button" value="3"/>	<input type="button" value="4"/>	<input type="button" value="5"/>	<input type="button" value="6"/>	<input type="button" value="7"/>
Renaissance person - well-rounded and well-versed in multiple areas						
<input type="button" value="1"/>	<input type="button" value="2"/>	<input type="button" value="3"/>	<input type="button" value="4"/>	<input type="button" value="5"/>	<input type="button" value="6"/>	<input type="button" value="7"/>
Self-motivated - willing to take on challenges						
<input type="button" value="1"/>	<input type="button" value="2"/>	<input type="button" value="3"/>	<input type="button" value="4"/>	<input type="button" value="5"/>	<input type="button" value="6"/>	<input type="button" value="7"/>
Tactful - can provide constructive criticism diplomatically						
<input type="button" value="1"/>	<input type="button" value="2"/>	<input type="button" value="3"/>	<input type="button" value="4"/>	<input type="button" value="5"/>	<input type="button" value="6"/>	<input type="button" value="7"/>
Well-balanced - has a balanced personal and professional life; pursues hobbies and diversions						
<input type="button" value="1"/>	<input type="button" value="2"/>	<input type="button" value="3"/>	<input type="button" value="4"/>	<input type="button" value="5"/>	<input type="button" value="6"/>	<input type="button" value="7"/>

Presidential Selection Research

2 Competencies

Please rate the importance of each of the following competencies in terms of their importance for future community college presidents, where **1 indicates no importance, and 7 indicates critical importance.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
No importance Critical importance

Has an understanding of accounting and finance – possesses financial acumen, is able to read a financial statement, is able to understand a budget

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Has an understanding of community college funding – including state and local funds, tuition, grants, federal programs, and fundraising

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Has an understanding of legal issues facing community colleges

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Has an understanding of marketing – how to attract customers

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Has an understanding of multiculturalism – is comfortable working with people from diverse cultures

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Has an understanding of negotiations and contracts

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Has an understanding of technology – possesses technological literacy

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Has an understanding of the challenges and opportunities of the specific college at which he/she is applying; has "done homework" by reviewing minutes of past board meetings

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Has an understanding of the community college system in general

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Has an understanding of the different communities in the College district and their respective needs

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Has an understanding of the mission of community colleges

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Has an understanding of unions and labor laws

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Continue

Presidential Selection Research

5 Professional Experiences

Please rate the importance of each of the following professional experiences in terms of their importance for future community college presidents, where **1 indicates no importance, and 7 indicates critical importance**.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	No importance						Critical importance
Experience at any higher education institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experience at a community college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experience in senior management/administration in any field	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experience as a senior administrator specifically at a community college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experience in a senior management position specifically in the business/private sector	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experience at an organization that is unionized	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employment at institutions with a good reputation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employment in the state or region	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experience teaching (at any level; full-time or part-time)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experience teaching at the community college level (full-time or part-time)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fundraising experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Demonstrates professional commitment – has not simply spent a year or two in previous positions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experience serving on a board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experience working in a political environment – experience working with representatives and regulators	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experience with outcome-based accountability initiatives (i.e. AQIP)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having been mentored by or having experience working for a well-respected leader	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is well-respected in the community college professional community – participates in national organizations, has published papers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Presidential Selection Research

6 Educational Background

Please rate the importance of each of the following educational backgrounds in terms of their importance for future community college presidents, where **1 indicates no importance, and 7 indicates critical importance.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
No importance						Critical importance
Bachelor's Degree Required						
<input type="button" value="1"/>	<input type="button" value="2"/>	<input type="button" value="3"/>	<input type="button" value="4"/>	<input type="button" value="5"/>	<input type="button" value="6"/>	<input type="button" value="7"/>
Master's Degree Required						
<input type="button" value="1"/>	<input type="button" value="2"/>	<input type="button" value="3"/>	<input type="button" value="4"/>	<input type="button" value="5"/>	<input type="button" value="6"/>	<input type="button" value="7"/>
Doctorate Required						
<input type="button" value="1"/>	<input type="button" value="2"/>	<input type="button" value="3"/>	<input type="button" value="4"/>	<input type="button" value="5"/>	<input type="button" value="6"/>	<input type="button" value="7"/>
Has a liberal arts background						
<input type="button" value="1"/>	<input type="button" value="2"/>	<input type="button" value="3"/>	<input type="button" value="4"/>	<input type="button" value="5"/>	<input type="button" value="6"/>	<input type="button" value="7"/>

[Continue](#)

Presidential Selection Research

7 Other

Are there any characteristics, competencies, or professional experiences that you believe are critically important for future community college presidents to possess that were not included in this survey? If so, please list them below, including as much detail as possible.

[Continue](#)

Thank you for completing the survey. Results of the survey will be calculated by March 7, 2008, and based on the responses, a follow-up questionnaire may be emailed to you at that time. If you have any questions regarding the study, please don't hesitate to contact me at kathleen.plinske@pepperdine.edu or at (815) 703-5857.

Thank you,
Kathleen Plinske
Doctoral Candidate, Pepperdine University



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APPENDIX N: Follow-up Letter to Trustees Regarding First Questionnaire

March 1, 2008

Trustee «First» «Last»
«Address»
«City», «State» «Zip»

Dear Trustee «Last»:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my doctoral study that will explore trustees' perceptions of the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences critically important for future community college presidents to possess.

On February 18, I initially sent to you the first survey of the study. If you have already responded to the initial mailing, thank you for your participation and please discard this reminder. If you have not yet responded, please complete the enclosed survey and send it to me in the enclosed envelope. The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete, and includes characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that a sample of Illinois trustees have identified as being critically important for future community college presidents.

Please indicate your response by circling the number that corresponds to your perception of the importance of each item, where a score of 1 indicates no importance, and a score of 7 indicates critical importance. ***In order for your input to be included in the study, I will need to receive your response by March 5, 2008.***

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with me, Pepperdine University, or any other entity.

Once again, thank you for your participation. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at (815) 703-5857 or by email at kathleen.plinske@pepperdine.edu.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Plinske
Doctoral Candidate, Pepperdine University

Enclosures

APPENDIX O: Follow-up Email to Trustees Regarding First Questionnaire

From: Kathleen Plinske <kathleen.plinske@pepperdine.edu>

Date: February 26, 2008 7:39:25 PM CST

To:

Subject: Presidential Selection Research - Survey Response Required by 3/5/08

Dear Trustee <<LAST>>,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my doctoral study regarding the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that are critically important for future community college presidents. The first survey is available by clicking the link at the bottom of this message; it should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Please submit your responses by March 5, 2008 in order for your input to be included in the study.

I sent an initial email regarding this survey last week, but heard from some trustees that they did not receive the initial email invitation. If you received the invitation to complete the survey last week, please accept this email as a friendly reminder to complete the survey by March 5. If you did not receive an email from me last week, please complete the survey by clicking the link below, and please also reply to this email to inform me that you did not receive the first email.

Thanks so much,
Kathleen Plinske
Doctoral Candidate, Pepperdine University

<http://www.zoomerang.com/survey.zgi?p=WEB227GC2K6LH4>

APPENDIX P: Letter to Trustees Regarding Second Questionnaire

March 8, 2008

«Title» «First» «Last»
«Address»
«City», «State» «Zip»

Dear Trustee «Last»:

Thank you for your participation thus far in my doctoral study that will explore trustees' perceptions of the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences critically important for future community college presidents to possess.

Responses to the first survey have been analyzed, and of the 66 characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences included in the survey, consensus was reached on the degree of importance of 49 items. The 17 items on which consensus was not reached are listed on the enclosed follow-up survey. Furthermore, during the first round, three new items were suggested by trustees; those items are found below as well.

Please consider the median scores for the items listed on this follow-up survey and re-assess your importance rating for each item. Please indicate your perception of the importance of each item, where a score of 1 indicates no importance, and a score of 7 indicates critical importance. *In order for your input to be included in the study, I will need to receive your response by March 24, 2008.*

Upon submission of this survey, your participation in the study will be complete. I plan to analyze all of the data collected in the study by April 7, 2008 and will send you a copy of the final results. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at (815) 703-5857 or by email at kathleen.plinske@pepperdine.edu.

Once again, thank you for your willingness to participate in this study. I look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Plinske
Doctoral Candidate
Pepperdine University

Enclosures

APPENDIX Q: Second Questionnaire Sent to Trustees via Postal Mail

Presidential Selection Research – Follow-up Survey

Responses to the first survey have been analyzed by calculating the median rating (middle score) and interquartile range (degree of consensus) for every item. Based on the responses, trustees reached consensus on the importance of 49 items. Those items are listed on the attached document.

There are 17 items on which trustees did not reach consensus during the first round. Those items are found below with their median scores listed in blue. Furthermore, during the first round, three new items were suggested by trustees; those items are found below as well.

Please consider the median scores for the items below and re-assess your importance rating for each item. Please indicate your perception of the importance of each item, where a score of 1 indicates no importance, and a score of 7 indicates critical importance.

Personal Attributes						
Please rate the importance of each of the following personal attributes in terms of their importance for future community college presidents, where 1 indicates no importance, and 7 indicates critical importance.						
No importance						Critical importance
Charismatic – is well-liked and respected (New item)						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Energetic – has a high energy level and is in good health (Median Rating = 6)						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Family person – is married (Median Rating = 3)						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Self-aware – has a sense of who he/she is as a person (New item)						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Professional Experiences						
Please rate the importance of each of the following professional experiences in terms of their importance for future community college presidents, where 1 indicates no importance, and 7 indicates critical importance.						
No importance						Critical importance
Experience in senior management/administration in any field (Median Rating = 6)						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Experience in a senior management position specifically in the business/private sector (Median Rating = 4)						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Experience at an organization that is unionized (Median Rating = 4.5)						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Employment at institutions with a good reputation (Median Rating = 5)						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Employment in the state or region (Median Rating = 4)						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Experience teaching (at any level; full-time or part-time) (Median Rating = 5)						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Demonstrates professional commitment – has not simply spent a year or two in previous positions (Median Rating = 6)						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Experience serving on a board (Median Rating = 5)						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Experience working in a political environment – experience working with representatives and regulators (Median Rating = 5)						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Is well-respected in the community college professional community – participates in national organizations, has published papers (Median Rating = 5)						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Competencies							
Please rate the importance of each of the following competencies in terms of their importance for future community college presidents, where 1 indicates no importance, and 7 indicates critical importance.							
No importance				Critical importance			
Has an understanding of multiculturalism – is comfortable working with people from diverse cultures (Median Rating = 6)							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Has an understanding of negotiations and contracts (Median Rating = 6)							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Has an understanding of the challenges and opportunities of the specific college at which he/she is applying; has “done homework” by reviewing minutes of past board meetings (Median Rating = 6)							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Has the ability to establish trust (New item)							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Educational Background							
Please rate the importance of each of the following educational backgrounds in terms of their importance for future community college presidents, where 1 indicates no importance, and 7 indicates critical importance.							
No importance				Critical importance			
Doctorate Required (Median Rating = 6)							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Has a liberal arts background (Median Rating = 5)							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Thank you! Please return the survey in the enclosed envelope.

APPENDIX R: Results From the First Questionnaire

Presidential Selection Research - Results from First Survey

Thirty-six trustees submitted responses to the first survey in the study. Each item is listed below with its corresponding median rating (middle score) and interquartile range (degree of consensus). Items shaded in gray are items for which consensus was not achieved during the first round (an interquartile range greater than 1.4).

Personal Attributes			
		Median	IQR
	Passionate about education - is a champion of community colleges	7	0
	Dependable – follows through on commitments; arrives on-time or early for appointments and meetings	7	1
	Calm under pressure – ability to juggle multiple challenges	6	1
	Community involvement - membership in Rotary Club or Kiwanis	6	1
	Organized – ability to manage time and resources effectively	6	1
	Presence – looks the part of a president, is the image of the institution	6	1
	Renaissance person – well-rounded and well-versed in multiple areas	6	1
	Self-motivated – willing to take on challenges	6	1
	Tactful – can provide constructive criticism diplomatically	6	1
	Well-balanced – has a balanced personal and professional life; pursues hobbies and diversions	6	1
	Friendly - good sense of humor	5.5	1
*	Energetic – has a high energy level and is in good health	6	2
*	Family person – is married	3	2
Competencies			
		Median	IQR
	Has an understanding of accounting and finance – possesses financial acumen, is able to read a financial statement, is able to understand a budget	6.5	1
	Has an understanding of community college funding – including state and local funds, tuition, grants, federal programs, and fundraising	6.5	1
	Has an understanding of the different communities in the College district and their respective needs	6	0
	Has an understanding of legal issues facing community colleges	6	1
	Has an understanding of marketing – how to attract customers	6	1
	Has an understanding of technology – possesses technological literacy	6	1
	Has an understanding of the community college system in general	6	1
	Has an understanding of the mission of community colleges	6	1
	Has an understanding of unions and labor laws	5	1

*	Has an understanding of multiculturalism – is comfortable working with people from diverse cultures	6	1.75
*	Has an understanding of negotiations and contracts	6	1.75
*	Has an understanding of the challenges and opportunities of the specific college at which he/she is applying; has “done homework” by reviewing minutes of past board meetings	6	1.75
Communication Skills			
		Median	IQR
	Articulate – ability to communicate in written and oral form clearly and professionally	7	0
	Good listener – makes people feel like what they’re saying is important; is able to read body language effectively	7	1
	Media savvy - Comfortable working with the media and familiar with media issues	6	0
	Networking – skilled at building partnerships and coalitions	6	1
	People-person – ability to talk with almost anyone, including different employee groups and constituencies	6	1
	Politically savvy – understands the importance of building relationships with legislators and is comfortable with lobbying efforts	6	1
	Public speaking - comfortable speaking extemporaneously in front of a large group	6	1
	Student-focused - ability to relate to a diverse student body and understand their needs	6	1
Leadership Skills			
		Median	IQR
	Good moral character – honest, has integrity, is trustworthy	7	0
	Team-player – understands the value of a team, able to recruit and assemble an effective team	7	1
	Vision – recognizes where the college is today, articulates where the college should be in the future, and generates buy-in for that vision	7	1
	Leads by example – is able to motivate employees and bring out the best in them	6.5	1
	Innovative – flexible and open to change	6	0
	Persuasive – generates buy-in for decisions, particularly by using facts and data	6	0
	Risk-taker – is comfortable taking measured risks	6	0
	Sense of confidence and humility – leads without always having to be in the limelight	6	0
	Team-player – understands the value of a team, able to recruit and assemble an effective team	6	0.75
	Ability to build consensus – knows how to listen to all sides and help people collate different ideas and reach a good conclusion	6	1
	Confronts challenges – faces issues head on and doesn’t pretend they don’t exist	6	1
	Structured and logical – can outline the steps necessary to realize a vision; able to delegate effectively	6	1

Professional Experiences			
		Median	IQR
	Experience at a community college	5.5	1
	Experience as a senior administrator specifically at a community college	5.5	1
	Experience with outcome-based accountability initiatives (i.e. AQIP)	5.5	1
	Having been mentored by or having experience working for a well-respected leader	5	0.75
	Experience at any higher education institution	5	1
	Experience teaching at the community college level (full-time or part-time)	5	1
	Fundraising experience	5	1
*	Experience in senior management/administration in any field	6	2
*	Demonstrates professional commitment – has not simply spent a year or two in previous positions	6	2
*	Is well-respected in the community college professional community – participates in national organizations, has published papers	5	1.75
*	Employment at institutions with a good reputation	5	2
*	Experience teaching (at any level; full-time or part-time)	5	2
*	Experience working in a political environment – experience working with representatives and regulators	5	2
*	Experience serving on a board	5	2.75
*	Experience at an organization that is unionized	4.5	2
*	Employment in the state or region	4	2
*	Experience in a senior management position specifically in the business/private sector	4	2.75
Educational Background			
		Median	IQR
	Bachelor's Degree Required	7	0
	Master's Degree Required	7	0
*	Doctorate Required	6	2
*	Has a liberal arts background	5	2.75

APPENDIX S: Email to Trustees Regarding Second Questionnaire

From: "Kathleen Plinske" <kathleen.plinske@pepperdine.edu>

Date: March 8, 2008 11:00:30 AM CST

To:

Subject: Presidential Selection Research - Follow-up Survey Response Requested by 3/22/08

Reply-To: kathleen.plinske@pepperdine.edu

Dear Trustee,

Thank you for your participation thus far in my doctoral study regarding the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that are critically important for future community college presidents.

Responses to the first survey have been analyzed, and of the 66 characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences included in the survey, consensus was reached on the degree of importance of 49 items. The 17 items on which consensus was not reached are included in the follow-up survey available by clicking the link at the bottom of the page. Furthermore, during the first round, three new items were suggested by trustees; those items are found on the follow-up survey as well.

Please consider the median scores for each item listed on this follow-up survey and re-assess your importance rating for each item. Please indicate your perception of the importance of each item, where a score of 1 indicates no importance, and a score of 7 indicates critical importance. In order for your input to be included in the study, I will need to receive your response by March 24, 2008.

Upon submission of this survey, your participation in the study will be complete. I plan to analyze all of the data collected in the study by April 7, 2008 and will send you a copy of the final results. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at (815) 703-5857 or by email at kathleen.plinske@pepperdine.edu.

Once again, thank you for your willingness to participate in this study. I look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Plinske
Doctoral Candidate, Pepperdine University

<http://www.zoomerang.com/survey.zgi?p=U28VBPESGNXXN>

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APPENDIX T: Online Version of Second Questionnaire

Presidential Selection Research

Responses to the first survey have been analyzed by calculating the median rating (middle score) and interquartile range (degree of consensus) for every item. Based on the responses, trustees reached consensus on the importance of 49 items. Those items will be available for your review at the end of the survey.

There are 17 items on which trustees did not reach consensus during the first round. Those items are found on the following pages with their median scores listed in blue. Furthermore, during the first round, three new items were suggested by trustees; those items are found on the following pages as well.

Please consider the median scores for the items that follow and re-assess your importance rating for each item. Please indicate your perception of the importance of each item, where a score of 1 indicates no importance, and a score of 7 indicates critical importance.

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Presidential Selection Research

2 Professional Experiences

Please rate the importance of each of the following professional experiences in terms of their importance for future community college presidents, where **1 indicates no importance, and 7 indicates critical importance.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
No importance Critical importance

Experience in senior management/administration in any field

(Median Rating = 6)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Experience in a senior management position specifically in the business/private sector

(Median Rating = 4)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Experience at an organization that is unionized

(Median Rating = 4.5)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Employment at institutions with a good reputation

(Median Rating = 5)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Employment in the state or region

(Median Rating = 4)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Experience teaching (at any level; full-time or part-time)

(Median Rating = 5)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Demonstrates professional commitment – has not simply spent a year or two in previous positions

(Median Rating = 6)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Experience serving on a board

(Median Rating = 5)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Experience working in a political environment – experience working with representatives and regulators

(Median Rating = 5)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Is well-respected in the community college professional community – participates in national organizations, has published papers

(Median Rating = 5)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Thank you for completing the survey. Results of the survey will be calculated by April 7, 2008. If you have any questions regarding the study, please don't hesitate to contact me at
kathleen.plinske@pepperdine.edu
or at (815) 703-5857.

Thank you,
Kathleen Plinske
Doctoral Candidate, Pepperdine University

You can review the median ratings of the items for which consensus was achieved after the first survey by visiting
<http://students.pepperdine.edu/kaplinsk/survey1.pdf>



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APPENDIX U: Follow-up Letter Regarding Second Questionnaire

March 18, 2008

Trustee <<FIRST>> <<LAST>>
<<ADDRESS>>
<<CITY>>, <<STATE>> <<ZIP>>

Dear Trustee <<LAST>>:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my doctoral study that will explore trustees' perceptions of the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences critically important for future community college presidents to possess.

On March 1, I initially sent to you the second survey of the study. If you have already responded to the initial mailing, thank you for your participation and please discard this reminder. If you have not yet responded, please complete the enclosed survey by considering the median scores for the items and re-assessing your importance rating. Please indicate your perception of the importance of each item, where a score of 1 indicates no importance, and a score of 7 indicates critical importance. ***In order for your input to be included in the study, I will need to receive your response by March 24, 2008.***

Upon submission of this survey, your participation in the study will be complete. I plan to analyze all of the data collected in the study by April 7, 2008 and will send you a copy of the final results. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at (815) 703-5857 or by email at kathleen.plinske@pepperdine.edu.

Once again, thank you for your willingness to participate in this study. I look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Plinske
Doctoral Candidate, Pepperdine University

Enclosures

APPENDIX V: Follow-up Email Regarding Second Questionnaire

From: Kathleen Plinske <kathleen.plinske@pepperdine.edu>
Date: March 19, 2008 7:00:37 AM CDT
To:
Subject: Presidential Selection Research: Reminder - Final Survey Response Required by 3/24/08

Dear Trustee <<LAST>>>,

Thank you for your participation thus far in my doctoral study regarding the characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences that are critically important for future community college presidents.

Responses to the first survey have been analyzed, and of the 66 characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences included in the first survey, consensus was reached on the degree of importance of 49 items. The 17 items on which consensus was not reached are included in the follow-up survey available by clicking the link at the bottom of the page. Furthermore, during the first round, three new items were suggested by trustees; those items are found on the follow-up survey as well.

Please consider the median scores for each item listed on this follow-up survey and re-assess your importance rating for each item. Please indicate your perception of the importance of each item, where a score of 1 indicates no importance, and a score of 7 indicates critical importance. In order for your input to be included in the study, I will need to receive your response by March 24, 2008.

Upon submission of this survey, your participation in the study will be complete. I plan to analyze all of the data collected in the study by April 7, 2008 and will send you a copy of the final results. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at (815) 703-5857 or by email at kathleen.plinske@pepperdine.edu.

Once again, thank you for your willingness to participate in this study. I look forward to receiving your response.

Thanks so much,
Kathleen Plinske
Doctoral Candidate, Pepperdine University

<http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/?p=WEB227JNXWLC8L>

APPENDIX W: Double-Coding - Independent Coder's Results

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES	
Calm under pressure – ability to juggle multiple challenges	
Community involvement - membership in Rotary Club or Kiwanis	1, 9
Dependable – follows through on commitments; arrives on-time or early for appointments and meetings	
Energetic – has a high energy level and is in good health	
Family person – is married	
Friendly - good sense of humor	
Organized – ability to manage time and resources effectively	
Passionate about education - is a champion of community colleges	10
Presence – looks the part of a president, is the image of the institution	12
Renaissance person – well-rounded and well-versed in multiple areas	4
Self-motivated – willing to take on challenges	
Tactful – can provide constructive criticism diplomatically	
Well-balanced – has a balanced personal and professional life; pursues hobbies and diversions	

COMPETENCIES	
Has an understanding of:	
accounting and finance – possesses financial acumen, is able to read a financial statement, is able to understand a budget	9
community college funding – including state and local funds, tuition, grants, federal programs, and fundraising	
legal issues facing community colleges	
marketing – how to attract customers	
multiculturalism – is comfortable working with people from diverse cultures	1
negotiations and contracts	
technology – possesses technological literacy	
the challenges and opportunities of the specific college at which he/she is applying; has “done homework” by reviewing minutes of past board meetings	
the community college system in general	
the different communities in the College district and their respective needs	
the mission of community colleges	
unions and labor laws	6, 8

COMMUNICATION SKILLS	
Articulate – ability to communicate in written and oral form clearly and professionally	12, 14
Good listener – makes people feel like what they're saying is important; is able to read body language effectively	

Media savvy - Comfortable working with the media and familiar with media issues	
Networking – skilled at building partnerships and coalitions	
People-person – ability to talk with almost anyone, including different employee groups and constituencies	3,7,8,9,12
Politically savvy – understands the importance of building relationships with legislators and is comfortable with lobbying efforts	
Public speaking - comfortable speaking extemporaneously in front of a large group	
Student-focused - ability to relate to a diverse student body and understand their needs	

LEADERSHIP SKILLS	
Ability to build consensus – knows how to listen to all sides and help people collate different ideas and reach a good conclusion	7
Confronts challenges – faces issues head on and doesn't pretend they don't exist	
Good moral character – honest, has integrity, is trustworthy	7
Innovative – flexible and open to change	
Leads by example – is able to motivate employees and bring out the best in them	
Persuasive – generates buy-in for decisions, particularly by using facts and data	7
Risk-taker – is comfortable taking measured risks	1
Sense of confidence and humility – leads without always having to be in the limelight	8,9
Structured and logical – can outline the steps necessary to realize a vision; able to delegate effectively	
Team-player – understands the value of a team, able to recruit and assemble an effective team	13
Thick-skinned – have a personality that can withstand not always being liked for the decisions he/she makes	
Vision – recognizes where the college is today, articulates where the college should be in the future, and generates buy-in for that vision	9

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES	
Experience at any higher education institution	
Experience at a community college	6,11
Experience in senior management/administration in any field	4,10
Experience as a senior administrator specifically at a community college	
Experience in a senior management position specifically in the business/private sector	4
Experience at an organization that is unionized	
Employment at institutions with good reputation	

Experience in Illinois or in the Great Lakes Region	
Experience teaching (at any level; full-time or part-time)	10
Experience teaching at the community college level (full-time or part-time)	
Fundraising experience	13
Demonstrates professional commitment – has not simply spent a year or two in previous positions	
Experience serving on a board	
Experience working in a political environment – experience working with representatives and regulators	
Experience with outcome-based accountability initiatives (i.e. AQIP)	
Having been mentored by or having experience working for a well-respected leader	
Is well-respected in community college professional community – participates in national organizations, has published papers	

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND	
Bachelor's Degree Required	
Master's Degree Required	
Doctorate Required	
Has a liberal arts background	

APPENDIX X: Double-Coding – Researcher’s Results

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES	
Calm under pressure – ability to juggle multiple challenges	
Community involvement - membership in Rotary Club or Kiwanis	1,9
Dependable – follows through on commitments; arrives on-time or early for appointments and meetings	
Energetic – has a high energy level and is in good health	
Family person – is married	
Friendly - good sense of humor	
Organized – ability to manage time and resources effectively	
Passionate about education - is a champion of community colleges	10
Presence – looks the part of a president, is the image of the institution	12
Renaissance person – well-rounded and well-versed in multiple areas	4
Self-motivated – willing to take on challenges	
Tactful – can provide constructive criticism diplomatically	
Well-balanced – has a balanced personal and professional life; pursues hobbies and diversions	

COMPETENCIES	
Has an understanding of:	
accounting and finance – possesses financial acumen, is able to read a financial statement, is able to understand a budget	9
community college funding – including state and local funds, tuition, grants, federal programs, and fundraising	
legal issues facing community colleges	
marketing – how to attract customers	
multiculturalism – is comfortable working with people from diverse cultures	1
negotiations and contracts	
technology – possesses technological literacy	
the challenges and opportunities of the specific college at which he/she is applying; has “done homework” by reviewing minutes of past board meetings	
the community college system in general	
the different communities in the College district and their respective needs	
the mission of community colleges	11
unions and labor laws	6, 8

COMMUNICATION SKILLS	
Articulate – ability to communicate in written and oral form clearly and professionally	14
Good listener – makes people feel like what they’re saying is important; is able to read body language effectively	

Media savvy - Comfortable working with the media and familiar with media issues	
Networking – skilled at building partnerships and coalitions	9
People-person – ability to talk with almost anyone, including different employee groups and constituencies	7,8,12
Politically savvy – understands the importance of building relationships with legislators and is comfortable with lobbying efforts	
Public speaking - comfortable speaking extemporaneously in front of a large group	
Student-focused - ability to relate to a diverse student body and understand their needs	

LEADERSHIP SKILLS	
Ability to build consensus – knows how to listen to all sides and help people collate different ideas and reach a good conclusion	
Confronts challenges – faces issues head on and doesn't pretend they don't exist	
Good moral character – honest, has integrity, is trustworthy	7
Innovative – flexible and open to change	
Leads by example – is able to motivate employees and bring out the best in them	9
Persuasive – generates buy-in for decisions, particularly by using facts and data	7
Risk-taker – is comfortable taking measured risks	1
Sense of confidence and humility – leads without always having to be in the limelight	9
Structured and logical – can outline the steps necessary to realize a vision; able to delegate effectively	
Team-player – understands the value of a team, able to recruit and assemble an effective team	13
Thick-skinned – have a personality that can withstand not always being liked for the decisions he/she makes	
Vision – recognizes where the college is today, articulates where the college should be in the future, and generates buy-in for that vision	7,9

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES	
Experience at any higher education institution	
Experience at a community college	6,11
Experience in senior management/administration in any field	4,10
Experience as a senior administrator specifically at a community college	
Experience in a senior management position specifically in the business/private sector	4
Experience at an organization that is unionized	
Employment at institutions with good reputation	

Experience in Illinois or in the Great Lakes Region	
Experience teaching (at any level; full-time or part-time)	10
Experience teaching at the community college level (full-time or part-time)	
Fundraising experience	13
Demonstrates professional commitment – has not simply spent a year or two in previous positions	
Experience serving on a board	
Experience working in a political environment – experience working with representatives and regulators	
Experience with outcome-based accountability initiatives (i.e. AQIP)	
Having been mentored by or having experience working for a well-respected leader	
Is well-respected in community college professional community – participates in national organizations, has published papers	

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND	
Bachelor's Degree Required	
Master's Degree Required	
Doctorate Required	
Has a liberal arts background	