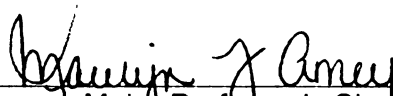This is to certify that the
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Perspectives of Presidents and Program Directors

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The Role of Community Education in Fulfilling the Missions of Community Colleges:
Perspectives of Presidents and Program Directors

By

Wei-ni Wang

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
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for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION IN FULFILLING THE MISSIONS OF
COMMUNITY COLLEGES:
PERSPECTIVES OF PRESIDENTS AND PROGRAM DIRECTORS

By

Wei-ni Wang

Community college have been regarded as a "most effective democratizing agent in

higher education" (Dougherty, 1994, p. 6) because of their grassroots origin of standing

for open admissions, geographic proximity, and financial affordability to the potential

students from the community they served. Previous studies provide evidence that the

scope of community education programs offered by the community college particularly

highlights the institution's unique position to demonstrate its awareness of community

needs and its willingness to collaborate with various groups in meeting those needs. This

empirical study provided data leading to a systematic understanding of how community

education programs in community colleges in one state are delivered in the 21st Century

and how such programs assist their institutions to fulfill the needs of the surrounding

communities.

A phenomenological approach was employed for this qualitative study. Five

community college presidents and five community education program directors were

recruited to participate in this study. Interviews were used and analyzed to obtain

participants' perceptions of community college missions and their experiences of

organizing community education programs to meet community needs.

The findings reaffirmed that community education programs nurture and sustain

community colleges' ties with their surrounding environments, given their flexibility to

provide offerings that are less bound by institutional rules. More importantly, the data suggested that with restrained resources and multiple missions to fulfill, community college leaders could not always treat every mission within their comprehensive community college framework equally, and they had to prioritize the multiple needs of the community and sometimes decline certain requests.

The study showed that sustainability is critical to community education programs since they are contextual. Relevant factors that influenced the sustainability of these programs are distinctive orientation, partnership, socioeconomic status of the community, balancing what the institutions can do and what the community wants, balancing advisory groups' input and the leaders' professional judgment, and balancing service quality and contract requirements. Entrepreneurship was the term that best captured the practice of community education in the community colleges. With the flexibility to take action on community requests, every aspect of the work in community education programs is calculated, weighing cost-effectiveness, assessing true needs of the community, and finding the appropriate resources to respond. The synergy created from the process and through the partnerships with different agencies seemingly adds sufficient affirmation of community colleges' historical reputation as the community's colleges.

The essences of the practice of these programs in community college through the eyes of community college leaders were also constructed, which contributes to the literature in understanding community education. An organizational model was proposed to capture the role of the community college as a key community resource that is adaptive to the changing contexts of its environment.

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandfather.

Yin-hai Wang, who liked to put me in the back of his bike and take me out to see the world when I was only months old.

Grandpa, my interest in community work started in those days on the bike with you around the neighborhood. Hope I made you proud.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

and love over the years. Thanks for making Michigan a home for me, Mama Nancy.

For my friends back in Taiwan, thank you for bugging me on MSN when I was working late at night, and for always asking me when I would be done. I am glad that I can get away from that kind of questions for good.

Last but not the least, I want to thank my grandmother, parents, brother, and family members, for their unconditional support and encouragement. I am so fortunate to be born in this family to enjoy all the love you have given me. Finally, I can say to you, I am going home.

I can not thank you enough, deal all.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

With open-door admissions and lower tuition than that of traditional four-year

institutions, community colleges in the United States are supposedly "centers of

educational opportunity open to all seekers" (American Association of Community

Colleges, n.d.-b), and have gained a historical reputation as the people's college

(Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, 1988). Characterized as centers of

educational opportunity and people's colleges suggests that community colleges have a

strong connection with the communities in which they are located and strong

commitments to their constituents. Yet, how community colleges perceive such

connection with and commitments to their communities remain largely unexamined,

especially in recent decades. Meeting community needs is a cliché that is frequently used

in the discussion of the missions of community colleges. Leaders and administrators

seemingly accept it as fact with little critical reflection upon its meaning to the

institutions. Particularly when increasing "budget crunches" (Evelyn, 2004) start to force

community colleges to turn away some of the students, how these people's colleges keep

their commitment to their traditional education values becomes incredibly uncertain.

After the centennial celebration of the creation of community colleges, a revisit of the

institutional commitment to serve community needs is substantial.

This study examines how community education programs, considered the broadest

programs offered through community colleges, keep the institutions connected with their

local communities. Community education is a program that "focuses on

college-community interaction, utilizes the community as a learning laboratory and

resource, helps to create an environment in which the community educates itself, and evaluates its success by citizen successes that are recognized as significant by the community itself" (McGuire, 1988, p.9). Through the perspectives of the leaders of the college and community education programs, this study examines how community colleges leaders perceive and enact the institutional missions of serving community needs.

No discussion of community college missions should be launched without briefly reviewing the evolution of community colleges. The development of the community college has great roots in the social contexts in which its evolution took place. Ratcliff (1994) conceptualized the chronological development of community colleges based on seven streams of educational innovation that were implemented to respond to social needs: (1) local community boosterism, (2) the rise of the research university, (3) the restructuring and expansion of the public educational system, (4) the professionalization of teacher education, (5) the vocational education movement, (6) the rise of adult, continuing, and community education, and (7) open public access to higher education. The first two streams in this study came from the last half of the nineteenth century and early 1900s with the emphasis of serving as upward extensions of local high school grades; the next three traced to the educational reforms of the progressive era when the needs for occupational and technical education were growing after the Depression; and the final two became prominent after World War II. Ratcliff's (1994) identification indicated that the three core functions of the community college are transfer education (the first two streams), occupational and technical education (the next three streams), and community education (the last two streams).

The conclusion of Ratcliff (1994) concurs with many other studies (Bailey & Averianova, 1998; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Dougherty, 1994; Travis & Travis, 1999; Vaughan, 2000). These studies confirm that community colleges continue to provide transfer and occupational education to people in need while, at the same time, they have expanded their services to the broader population including immigrants, adults, and various community members. Amongst the three core functions or missions of community colleges, however, transfer and vocational functions are traditionally more visible than community education. Issues focusing on academic/transfer and occupational purposes have dominated the research in the field of community colleges (Quigley & Bailey, 2003).

Community education programs deserve more attention. Particularly, community education is a program that "focuses on college-community interaction, utilizes the community as a learning laboratory and resource, helps to create an environment in which the community educates itself, and evaluates its success by citizen successes that are recognized as significant by the community itself" (McGuire, 1988, p.9). Adult education, continuing education, lifelong learning, community services, and community-based education are the common formats of community education discussed in the community college literature (Baker III, 1994; Bogart, 1994; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Fields, 1962; Gleazer Jr., 1974b; McGuire, 1988). It is clear that community education programs enable community colleges to extend well beyond the boundaries of traditional transfer and occupational degree programs, and provide the colleges more flexibility to respond to the needs of their surrounding communities in the long run. However, the studies cited are mainly descriptive and anecdotal. There is a need for

empirical research to further understand how the concept of community education is reflected in practice.

Although still limited, the concept of community education has gained some national attention (Amey, VanDerLinden, & Brown, 2002; Phinney, Schoen, & Hause, 2002). In 2001, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) conducted a national survey to identify the scope of the practice of community programs and services in community colleges. Survey respondents demonstrated a strong level of community college engagement in a wide variety of programs and services designed to reflect the diverse needs of their communities and commitment to improving the quality of life in the communities. Considering the wide range of community programs reported in this national survey, the authors concluded that community colleges play an important role in their communities in encouraging community development and lifelong learning (Phinney, Schoen, & Hause, 2002).

The emphasis of meeting community needs is also highlighted in another national survey conducted by Amey, and VanDerLinden, (2002). When asking community college administrators to rate a series of external issues based on a Likert scale, 88% of the respondents (910) who answered the question rated meeting community needs important or very important. In addition, in an open-ended question, respondents indicated that addressing community needs for not only workforce and economic development but also for building cooperative relationships with local organizations was one of the current primary areas of emphasis within their institutions' mission. Even though issues relating to meeting community needs were not focal in this national survey, their importance and immediacy were quite clear.

The findings from these two national surveys affirm the notion raised by Boone and Vaughan (1993) back in the early 90s: community colleges should play a role in improving the practice of community education to meet community needs. Boone and Vaughan (1993) suggested that community colleges have to reposition themselves as catalyst, leader, convener, or participant, depending on what the community problems and concerns are. Boone and Vaughan proposed a community-based programming model that provided community college leaders a rational process for positioning their institutions in the community contexts, if they were to fulfill their missions of serving as community-based institutions.

Both the history of the community college movement and the studies introduced above suggest that community colleges' offering of community education programs has become an approach to address community needs. From an organizational perspective, a fundamental question is how do community college leaders organize and position their institutions in ways that will allow community colleges to effectively and efficiently achieve their missions in the community dimension?

Problem Statement

Creation of new institutions is an approach to meet new demands of the society (Sarason, 1978). As a distinctive invention taking place in the early twentieth century to respond to the increasing demand of the society for more skilled men and women and for advanced educational opportunities (Deegan, Tillery, & Associates, 1985), community colleges have provided various educational programs and services to people who otherwise would not have had the opportunities to pursue higher education (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). They also have been regarded as a "most effective democratizing agent in

higher education" (Dougherty, 1994, p. 6) because of their grassroots origin of standing for open admissions, geographic proximity, and financial affordability to the potential students from the community they served. In other words, social contexts shape the development of the missions of community colleges and the educational programs and services that they offer also reflect various aspects of the demand from the society. Therefore, the way in which the community college and the society interact is critical.

Amongst the three core missions of community colleges, community education is the broadest. Unlike transfer and occupational/technical education programs that are closely bounded by institutional regulations, community education programs are more flexible to respond quickly to community needs. Previous studies provide evidence that the scope of the community education programs highlights the college's unique position to demonstrate its awareness of community needs and its willingness to collaborate with various groups in meeting those needs (Gleazer Jr., 1974b; Harlacher, 1969; Harlacher & Gollattscheck, 1978; McGuire, 1988).

However, community education is also viewed as the most complicated mission (Baker III, 1994; Bergquist, 1998; Cohen & Brawer, 2003). It offers a large array of programs with various subjects, such as adult ESL classes and summer youth programs. It is also not rare to see community education programs overlap with the community college's vocational education function since economic development is a common need of many community residents. The complex nature of community education may have limited the effectiveness of community colleges due to resource constraints, and it may have abandoned the educational missions that should lead to the development of a democratic society as a result of overly focusing resources on delivering market-driven

programs. Given the breadth and complexity of community education, it begs two questions: how do community colleges leaders organize and position their community education programs in order to better serve community needs? and how do community college leaders build meaningful relationships with other community organizations through community education to address those needs from the community? In short, how are community education programs responsive to their communities?

Purpose of the Study

As cited above, the literature on missions of the community college clearly illustrates that the community college is a multi-functional institution striving to answer demands from the society. Amongst the various programs offered by the community college, community education programs are believed to be the broadest and the most responsive to community needs. However, the literature does not provide a systematic understanding of how community education programs are positioned by the leaders of the programs and the institutions, to address community needs for better serving the constituents, by means of helping local communities dealing with critical issues. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine through which mechanisms community education programs are organized to approach local needs.

Research Question

The questions guiding this study were:

1. How do leaders of both the community education programs and the colleges perceive the community college mission of serving community needs? Any commonality and/or differentiation?

This question is intended to explore the community college leaders' perception of their

institutional mission about serving community needs.

2. How do community education program directors and college leaders identify
   community needs?

This question is intended to determine the strategies community college leaders use to

identify community issues that need to be dealt with through community education

programs.

3. How do community colleges implement their community education programs to serve
   community needs?

This question is intended to discover what kinds of community education programs are

offered to meet community needs as well as how these programs are delivered.

4. What are the challenges that the community college leaders are facing in the process
   of delivering community education programs?

This question recognizes that every community college is unique; therefore, this question

will seek to ferret out contextual challenges and factors that each program is facing, and

strategies to address them.

<div align="center">Significance of the Study</div>

This study expected to make contributions to both the community college literature

and the community development literature. An emerging research area in community

colleges is discussions about the community college missions. Substantial studies have

been done to discuss the evolution of community college missions: transfer education,

occupational education, and community education. Amongst the three missions,

community education is the least studied, although its key function, serving community

needs, is fairly recognized. This study thus helped fill the literature gap. This study also

provided data that was useful for understanding leaders of community education perceive their mission to serve community needs. In addition, this study provided pragmatic information of how community education is responsive to community needs. Lastly, this study led to further discussions upon what factors and variables affect the practice of community education programs.

With respect to community development literature, this study also added a new voice to the field. This study provided rich data on introducing community colleges and their community education programs as a rarely-recognized but existing form of grassroots community organizations that can vitalize and facilitate community development.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature is reviewed to understand the development of community colleges and community education programs. This chapter is divided into four parts. The first talks about the concepts of community. The second part discusses the development of community colleges and their missions. The third introduces the nature of community education programs. Lastly, the fourth part highlights the significance of college-community connections.

Concepts of Community

Theorists have admitted that community is a term that is difficult to define (Hiemstra, 1972; Warburton, 1998). Diane Warburton (1998) claims that the concept of community has two distinctive elements. One is the "relationship between people" and the other is "relationships between people and the place in which they are located" (pp. 17). She also argues community is a dynamic process that can create and recreate commitments shared by people involved. Her notion of community illustrates that a) community is a dynamic relationship that is composed of the interactions between people or between people and locality, and b) shared commitments will be created or recreated through the interactions.

Flora (1992) applies sociological perspectives to discuss the usage of the term community. Flora argues that the notion of community is focused on groups of people. There are three different dimensions of using the term. One refers to a place where a group of people interacts; the second is the social system in which a group of people interact through organizations to meet their needs; and the last describes a common sense of identity that is shared by a group of people. Comparing the definitions discussed by

Warburton (1998) and Flora (1992), the major difference between the two is whether the function of social system or organizations is stressed. Probably being shaped by the sociological perspectives which examine how various social structures influence people's life, Flora (1992) comes to the notion that community is also a social system in which people interact through organizations to meet their needs.

The term community is more strictly defined by Boothroyd and Davis (1993). Combining the elements of locality and shared interests and commitments together, plus a third element, tighter interpersonal relationships, Boothroyd and Davis (1993) define community as a group of acquaintances who organize and plan together over time in order to improve their long-term common betterment. Their concept of community emphasizes member involvement in interactive group processes to achieve common goals. In their discussion on the communalization approach for community economic development, Boothroyd and Davis expand the definition of community from a locality in which economic activities and transactions take place to a "social/emotional quality" (Boothroyd & Davis, 1993, p. 235) that helps people feel connected with each other. Community in this instance has become a quality of human network through which people cooperate for each other's well-being.

The literature reviewed suggests that even though locality, shared interests and identity, and a group of people (memberships) are three elements required for conceptualizing community, there are still differentiations in definition. The level of strictness in defining the term implies the exclusiveness of the community. For example, under the concept of Boothroyd and Davis (1993), an extremely conservative neighborhood is not viewed as a community by a homosexual couple living there because

the couple and the neighbors assumingly do not interact at all. However, this neighborhood is regarded as a community by Warburton (1998), because those living there have the eligibility to use the neighborhood fitness facilities as long as the neighborhood service fees are paid. Membership in the concept of Boothroyd and Davis (1993) is obviously more exclusive than membership in that of Warburton (1998). Besides membership exclusiveness, the definition of community differs in terms of the subject of bounding. Community is either bounded to a geographic area where interpersonal interactions take place, or bounded to social/emotional mode that connects people together.

Implication in the Community College Setting

As far as community colleges are concerned, community mainly refers to locality, the notion that emphasizes geographical and regional boundaries. The definition of community to community college leaders is constructed based on where learning and teaching take place (Harlacher & Gollattscheck, 1978), how far services can reach (Quigley & Bailey, 2003), and to whom they should be accountable due to governmental budgetary and funding sources (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Therefore, the conception of community for community colleges is locality, similar to school districts. Yet, other aspects of community are utilized in administration and practice. To community colleges, community also means a climate to be created for change (Quigley & Bailey, 2003) by providing opportunities for people to become all they are capable of being. From this aspect, community colleges are creating networks and nurturing interactions for those who share common interests in learning. In the context of community colleges, the three major elements of community are all integrated: locality, shared interests and identity,

and a group of people.

Development of Community Colleges and their Missions

Creation of new institutions is one of the most applied approaches to meet new

demands of the society (Sarason, 1978). The establishment of community colleges is a

perfect example in the 20th century. With the rapid industrialization of America and

democratization of public school education in the late nineteenth century, the demand for

more skilled men and women and for advanced educational opportunities were increasing

(Deegan et al., 1985). Therefore, a new form of educational institution – community

colleges - was created in the early 1900s as the response to the public's thirst for higher

education. As a distinctive invention, community colleges have provided educational

programs and services to people who otherwise would not have had the opportunities to

pursue higher education (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). They have been regarded as a "most

effective democratizing agent in higher education" (Dougherty, 1994, pp. 6) because of

the grassroots origin of standing for open admissions, geographic proximity, and

financial affordability to the potential students from the community they served.

No discussion of the community college should be launched without briefly

reviewing the social contexts in which its evolution took place. Harlarcher (1969) found

the development occurred in three stages: the first stage focused on transfer education,

the second stage added occupational programs, and during the third stage, adult education

and community services were provided. The first two stages were well functioning before

1945, and by 1965, the scope of community services was effectively developed

(Harlacher, 1969). Harlarcher's framework highlighted the three major functions of the

community college: transfer education, occupational education, and community

education. More importantly, Harlacher's framework illustrated that the development of community colleges was closely connected to social contexts and community needs.

Different from Harlarcher's model, Ratcliff (1994) conceptualized the chronological development of community colleges based on seven streams of educational innovation: (1) the two-year community-supported colleges as alternatives to ease financial burden of four-year universities and colleges, (2) the two-year junior colleges as an upward extension of the high school in order to complement the rise of the research university that devoted to the advancement of and development of knowledge, (3) the two-year colleges as an integral part of the restructuring and expansion of the public elementary and secondary education system, (4) the two-year colleges as a contributor to college-level teacher education training for local high school graduates, (5) the two-year colleges as a provider of post-high school technical and vocational education, (6) the two-year colleges as an agency that gave primacy to offer adult, continuing, and community education programs to their residing communities, and (7) the two-year colleges as institutions that committed to provide needed students access to higher education through the offering of developmental and college preparatory courses. The first two came from the last half of the nineteenth century and early 1900s with the emphasis of serving as upward extensions of local high school grades, the next three traced to the educational reforms of the progressive era when the needs for occupational and technical education were boosting after Depression, and the final two became prominent after World War II.

Ratcliff's framework more or less parallels that of Harlarcher: both basically came to the conclusion that while continuously providing transfer and occupational education

to people in need, community colleges at the same time have expanded their services to the broader population including immigrants, adults, and various community members. Community colleges have changed from an isolated entity to one seeking full partnership and connection with its community (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). In other words, the community college has shifted from an institution initially with only single function to one with multiple functions in the 1970s. Deegan et al. (1985) termed it the comprehensive community college to reflect the scope of its programs and services. The community college is an important agency that is capable of constantly enacting and responding to the changing social contexts and needs by means of offering educational programs or training opportunities that are needed by the constituents they serve for better interacting with the society.

Most of the literature regarding the historic development of community colleges tends to stop at the stage that advocates community education to serve a larger population (Harlacher, 1969; McGuire, 1988; Ratcliff, 1994), except the report of Deegan et al. Deegan et al. (1985) argued that 1970 to mid 1980s was the period of evolution of the comprehensive community college. During this period of time, community colleges expanded their markets with offerings that were regarded as nontraditional in terms of clientele, delivery of instruction, and locality. Even though the comprehensiveness of community college programs enabled the institutions to design curriculum and services for the diverse students longing for higher education, Deegan et al. (1985) critically pinpointed that it also added confusion to the mission of the colleges. The changing contexts of governance in both state and local levels directly affected funding and budgetary distribution resulting in inevitable tensions between the mission and financing

of community colleges. Programs became market-driven, and many state and college leaders neglected or even removed the community dimension of the community college from the mainstream of college operations. Given the identity crisis, Deegan et al. (1985) proposed that a new trend developed since the mid 1980s, showcasing community colleges' emerging concentration on renewing the mission of the colleges and enhancing both the quality and productivity of their programs and services.

Recent research has reflected the new trend that Deegan et al. proposed. For example, Dougherty (1994) argued that the community college's origins and impacts are conflicting. He criticized that community colleges are positioned to address the democratic demand for promoting equality and access as well as to stratify certain students to pursue a vocational program rather than an unrealistic ambition for a baccalaureate degree because of the nature of the capitalistic economy. Therefore, he called the community college *the contradictory college*. Bailey and Averianova (1998) suggested that looking for the optimal mix of functions in the community college is important. They discussed the broad array of educational, economic, and social functions of community college education, and concluded that the functions would be in conflict if the resources were insufficient or not properly integrated. Using critical perspectives, Rhoads and Valadez (1996) concluded that firstly, community colleges lack a clear sense of identity because of the multiple functions they must assume, and secondly, community colleges have to embrace cultural differences of the students they typically serve. The discussions of Dougherty and others on the complexity of community college missions allude to the challenges encountered by the community college in the face of re-recognizing its missions.

Conclusion

In its brief history starting in the early twentieth century, community colleges in America, whose primary goal is to provide people open access to postsecondary educational opportunities, have undergone a significant shift in purpose. Initially established with the single purpose of offering two years of education acceptable to universities to occupational programs responding to new skills and knowledge required for the rapidly changing workforce, then finally to recently renewed commitment to multiple purposes based on community needs, community colleges by means of providing various programs and services have transformed from an isolated entity to one seeking full partnership and connection with their community. It is this transformation that made community colleges a new model of education that is significantly different from any other form of educational institution: community colleges are now complex institutions that are committed not only to the open-access admission policy but also to a relationship with the community in which they reside. On the other hand, recent research on missions of community colleges has been eagerly sending the notion that the complication of the institutional missions, no matter conflicting or complementary, multiplies the challenges to community college administrators and leaders, especially in the face of constraining financial resources.

The Development of Community Education

Community colleges today have become multi-purposed postsecondary institutions. Among the three core educational programs, a.k.a. transfer education, vocational education, and community education, that community colleges offer to their community members, the development of community education made tremendous contribution to

this transformation.

It was around 1945-50 that the concept of community education was insightfully introduced onto the community college agenda (Harlacher, 1969). Many studies (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, 1988; Gleazer Jr., 1974b; McGuire, 1988) suggest that the report of President Truman's Commission on Higher Education in 1947 likely set the tone for guiding the transformation of the community college: "Whatever form the community college takes, its purpose is educational service to the entire community, and this purpose requires of it a variety of functions and programs" (Levine in Bogart, 1994, p.62). Since then, community colleges have had stronger focus on developing and providing the kinds of education that community members want and need, not on what college administrators and instructors think is good for them (Gleazer Jr., 1974a; Harlacher, 1969; McGuire, 1988).

Furthermore, the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (now the American Association of Community Colleges) issued a statement in 1974 that the mission of AACJC was to, "provide an organization for national leadership of community-based performance oriented postsecondary education" (McGuire, 1988, p.15). Thereafter, American community colleges position themselves as a new model of education, one that is committed to the needs of its community members and the society. Such commitment was reinforced and reaffirmed by the Association in 2000 in its renewed mission statement. It is stated that the Association will "forg[e] community development and renewal by working to ensure access to lifelong learning to benefit individuals, communities and society in general" (American Association of Community Colleges, n.d.-a).

Definition and Format

Particularly, community education is a program that "focuses on college-community interaction, utilizes the community as a learning laboratory and resource, helps to create an environment in which the community educates itself, and evaluates its success by citizen successes that are recognized as significant by the community itself" (McGuire, 1988, p.9). *Adult education* (instruction designed for people beyond the age of compulsory education attendance), *continuing education* (educational programs designed for people who regard learning as a means of developing their competency or resolving personal problems), *lifelong learning* (intermittent education, whether or not undertaken in school settings), *community services* (efforts undertaken in cooperation with other community groups or agencies in order to directly serve personal and community educational needs not met by formal schooling or certificate programs), and *community-based education* (programs designed by the citizens for the good of the community) are the common formats of community education discussed in the community college literature (Baker III, 1994; Bogart, 1994; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Fields, 1962; Gleazer Jr., 1974b; McGuire, 1988). These programs share some common characteristics, including: access to all with a multitude of entry points in time and place, continuous service to the learner throughout life, values and priorities sent on the basis of needs of the people, flexibility to respond quickly to community needs, and performance orientation and criteria (McGuire, 1988).

Scope

The various formats of community education programs indicate that those programs are multifaceted. The scope of the programs highlights the community college's unique

position to demonstrate to the community it serves an awareness of community needs and a willingness to collaborate with various groups in meeting those needs. The community college is a "vital participant in the total renewal process of the community" (Harlacher & Gollattscheck, 1978, p.7). The large array of community education programs provides a unique opportunity to help citizens reinvest themselves in their community. Individuals will begin to assume their responsibility to the larger society through this kind of community involvement. In other words, by means of providing community education programs, community colleges become one of the mediators that strengthen an individual's tie to the community in which one resides.

Practice

Community education programs offered by the community college are usually community-based (Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, 1988; Gleazer Jr., 1974b; McGuire, 1988; Vaughan, 2000), meaning that people from the community initiate the creation of the learning environments and subject matters that the community college offers. Different from other programs that are mainly designed by community college administrators or faculty, community education enables learners to become active participants in negotiating their interests and needs, and in shaping their education. From this perspective, community education presents a hidden spirit of community college education: empowering underserved people to initiate what is good for them in order to solve their personal and community problems. These learning needs are different from the most frequently utilized ones aiming to transfer to four-year higher education institutions and to obtain certain credentials to get into workforce. From this perspective, community colleges play an important social role to foster social change and to

demonstrate democracy.

Community education is believed to be the broadest and most flexible area of community college offerings (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Vaughan, 2000) and has gained national attention (Phinney et al., 2002). In 2001, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) conducted a national survey to identify the scope of the practice of community programs and services in community colleges (Phinney et al., 2002). A total of 1,067 community colleges received the survey and a total of 363 colleges responded to the 29-item survey, which elicited information about community programs and services outside of academic courses or contract training in addition to a question asking the responding colleges what their particularly successful or unique community programs were. Survey responses demonstrated a strong level of community college engagement in a wide variety of programs and services designed to reflect the diverse needs of their communities and commitment to improving the quality of life in the communities. Specifically, more than 82% of responding colleges identified community programs and services as part of their mission statement and 66% sponsored community events; and 68 % facilitated community meetings on local issues. The study also indicated that many of them sought partnerships with local and regional organizations to expand resources to serve their broad constituency; the responding community colleges reported partnerships with local service organizations (35%), healthcare programs (34%), local business (33%), local (31%) and state (18%) governments. Considering the wide range of community programs reported in this national survey, the authors concluded that community colleges play an important role in their communities in encouraging community development and lifelong learning.

However, the authors neither looked at how the college decides, prioritizes, or assesses needs nor how and why it delivers these programs. More research is needed to explore the "how" and "why" to make sense of what has been implemented.

Implication

In sum, literature reviewed shows that community education programs are the broadest programs offered by community colleges. Different from the transfer and occupational programs that are more strictly regulated by institutions, the community-based community education programs have the flexibility to quickly respond to community needs by providing programs that are of most interest to the community. It is evident that the scope and the flexibility of the community education programs have increased the occurrence of the connection of the colleges and the communities.

The characteristics of the community education programs offered by the community college also allude to two approaches that sustain and nurture the connections between their institutions and the surrounding community. One is connections based on meeting educational needs, and the other is connections based on creating public space.

Meeting educational needs.

Community colleges are community-based postsecondary education institutions (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Dougherty, 1994; Gleazer Jr., 1974a; McGuire, 1988). Similar to other educational institutions, the primary function of community colleges is to provide sufficient opportunities to allow teaching and learning to take place. With the notion that community colleges are also community-based, their leaders and administrators must ensure that the educational needs of the community members are in place in their practice. Obviously, community education programs, different from the

transfer and occupational education programs that are always bounded by institutionalized criteria and requirements, have larger flexibility to reflect what the community needs in program offerings. Besides quality, referring to the extent to which the community college is able to include community needs in the community education programs, quantity is also critical. Community education units have to strive to offer a large array of programs and services for community members to choose from.

In conclusion, the better the educational needs are met, the likelier community members are to enroll in the programs; the more programs the community members can choose from, the easier it is for the community colleges to attract students. The community-community college connection is thereby determined and constructed based on the exchange of educational programs provided and the invested time and efforts for those programs.

Creating public spaces.

It seems that the first approach to sustain college-community relationships is basically to build the connection between the community college and individual community members through the community education programs offered. In contrast, the second approach, creating public spaces, encourages more interpersonal interaction through participation in community education programs.

Community education, the nature of which focuses on college-community interaction and helps create an educative environment for the community (McGuire, 1988), is grassroots programs that are positioned to create public spaces (Boyte & Kari, 1996) for community members from all backgrounds to brainstorm what is the best for the community. In their research introducing a framework called *public work* for

reinventing an active practice of citizenship, Boyte and Kari (1996) noted the concept of

public spaces, in which people work with others from a mix of backgrounds to solve

problems that is recognized as important to a broad public by discussions, deliberations,

and debates. It is possible that community education programs are capable of creating

these public spaces for the community, given their grassroots orientation and the scope of

their services. For instance, LeCroy and Tedrow (1993) introduced a format called

community forums that effectively involved community residents in the discussion of

how to solve community problems.

Specifically, the community forum is a methodology that brings various

constituencies together for serious discussion and consensus-building in order to find a

common ground to respond to critical community issues (LeCroy, 1993). LeCroy and

Tedrow (1993) used the community forum organized by Delta College in the Tri Cities

area in Michigan as an example to elaborate how the college helped create a public arena

where residents from all walks of life could gather together to discuss the solution for

their major community issue, unemployment, resulting from an economic downturn of

the primary local provider in the 1980s. Through collaboration of different local

organizations, a community forum, which belonged to neither the transfer education nor

the vocational education, was organized by Delta College to help those residents from the

service area of Delta College (Saginaw, Bay City, and Midland) fight the critical situation.

The community forum successfully attracted many community residents to participate,

through which created an awareness about the issues resulted from the current economic

downturn and identified strategies to not only deal with the unemployment and

career-related issues but also to promote the community's economic development. Given

the second approach emphasizing the creation of public spaces through community education programs, the college-community connections are built based upon interpersonal interactions. The public spaces link the community residents with shared interests, and at same time, renew and vitalize the college-community connections.

Community education programs use two approaches, meeting educational needs and creating public spaces, to connect the college with the community. It is fair to conclude that community education programs are truly "mediating structures" (Berger and Neuhaus, in Zimmerman, 2000, pp.52) providing opportunities for citizens learning new skills, building a sense of control, getting involved in public affairs, improving community life, and feeling empowered.

The Significance of the College-Community Connections

Literature reviewed has comprehensively illuminated a strong positionality of the community college. Adaptive, flexible, and responsive (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Vaughan, 2000), the community college is an important social agency to the communities. Among the programs the community college provides, community education programs are expected to be the catalytic agent that stimulates efforts toward the development of communities that the college serves (Boone & Associates, 1997; LeCroy, 1993; Vaughan, 2000). Community development may be thought of as the college and community working together attacking unsolved educational, economic, political, and social problems (Harlacher, 1969), and a strong college-community connection supported and nurtured by the offering of community education programs allows such interaction to happen.

Communities are the foundations of community colleges. Given the tight

connections with and high dependence on the community, the community college is very likely to be diminished or weeded fast if there is no strong support from the community. To sustain good relationships with the community, community colleges must determine the needs of the publics they serve (Bogart, 1994; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Yarrington, 1974), utilize input from the users of such services (Fields, 1962; Gleazer Jr., 1974b; Harlacher, 1969; Harper, 1982), coordinate efforts with other community agencies (Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, 1988; Gleazer Jr., 1974b; McGuire, 1988; Yarrington, 1974), and be adaptive to new social changes (Bogart, 1994; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Gleazer Jr., 1974a; Harlacher, 1969).

The community college is the hub of a network of institutions utilizing their educational resources and, in turn, becoming a resource for those institutions. Therefore, community colleges have to place greater emphasis on interaction with community (Harlacher, 1969). To improve institutional competence and quality of services, community colleges also need to increasingly recognize the need for cooperation with other community and regional agencies, such as local high schools, other community colleges, universities, etc. (Harper, 1982).

Conclusion of Literature Review

The positionality of the community college and its transfer, vocational, and community education programs are well received from the literature reviewed. However, the research on community education is the least studied. When a notion of sustaining the connection between the college and the community emerged in the research field, the need for more research to explore the administration and role of community education programs is growing.

Literature has done a great job in introducing the commitment of community colleges to meet community needs; however, there is a huge deficit in understanding how the commitment is enacted. The literature is mainly descriptive and anecdotal, and empirical studies are needed to further conceptualize how community education programs leaders make sense of and enact their unit commitments. In addition, most of the literature reviewed is out-dated; comparatively little research is done after 1990.

Literature suggests the community college needs to build a relationship with the local community in which the college departs from its traditional role of service provider for the community. Community colleges have to become cooperators with the community in providing well-rounded services for members. But not enough information is provided to know how to do it. This empirical research is in position to help fill the literature gap. This study not only conceptualized how community education leaders perceive the statement of meeting community needs, but also provided practical information on how to fulfill them.

Conceptual Framework

The research questions of this study were:

1. How do leaders of both the community education programs and the colleges perceive the community college mission of serving community needs? Any commonality and/or differentiation?

2. How do community education program directors and college leaders identify community needs?

3. How do community colleges implement their community education programs to serve community needs?

4. What are the challenges that the community college leaders are facing in the process of delivering community education programs?

A community-based programming model (Boone, 1992; Boone & Associates, 1997) was used in this study as the conceptual framework that guides the research.

Community-based programming is defined as,

> a process involving a series of interconnected *processual tasks* in which the community college functions as a leader and catalyst in affecting collaboration among the people, their leaders, and other community agencies and organizations in identifying and seeking resolution of community issues. (Boone & Associates, 1997, p.3)

The community-based programming model highlights the position of the community college as the catalyst for facilitating and affecting collaboration among people from all sectors of the community system in identifying critical community issues and in developing collective efforts to resolve them. Therefore, community-based programming is issue-driven and collaborative (Boone & Associates, 1997). The community-based programming model involves fifteen clearly defined and orderly processual tasks, including:

1. The community college develops and adopts a definition of community-based programming that encompasses those basic principles and concepts required to fulfill its mission as a community-based institution.

2. The community college engages in a careful study of its community to increase its knowledge of its social-cultural, economic, technological, and political environment.

3. The community college examines and, if needed, reinterprets or modifies its mission, philosophy, goals, organizational structure, and mode of operation to emphasize community-based programming as one of its major programmatic efforts.

4. The community college's president establishes and employs an appropriate mechanism for scanning the college's external environment for purposes of identifying and ranking, in order of importance, issues that are of critical concern to the community and its people.

5. The environmental scanning committee conducts a study of the community under the leadership of the community college president.

6. The community college's president seeks further confirmation and legitimation of the ranked issues from the college's governing board and from other community leaders.

7. The community college studies, analyzes, and maps the public in its service area that is affected by the issue selected for resolution.

8. The community college selects and uses effective processes and techniques for identifying both the formal and the informal leaders within the target public and stakeholder groups.

9. The community college initiates dialogue with leaders of the target public and stakeholders to encourage and assist these leaders in attaining consensus on the importance of the issue and in forming a coalition to address the issue.

10. The community college engages the coalition in further studying and analyzing the issue, refining the definition of the issue, and deciding upon the strategies to be pursued in resolving it.

11. The community college provides leadership for the coalition in translating its decisions into a unified plan of action.

12. The community college aids the coalition in implementing the plan of action by

providing consultation, technical assistance, and opportunities of coalition leaders and other community leaders to report on progress made, discuss obstacles encountered, and explore the use of alternative strategies not included in the initial plan for action.

13. The community college provides leadership for the coalition in assessing the outcomes achieved toward resolving the issue and in determining the cost-effectiveness of the plan of action.

14. The community college arranges for and helps coalition leaders to report to their respective constituencies, agencies, organizations, and other stakeholders on the progress make toward resolving the issue.

15. The coalition uses the results of the plan of action and lessons learned through its implementation to develop and implement new strategies for continued effects toward resolving the issue.

If fully implemented, the outcomes of the community-based programming efforts are (Boone & Associates, 1997):

1. the identification of and movement toward the resolution of issues that are critical to the community and its people;

2. the creation of collaborative partnerships with other community organizations that cultivates the formation of teamwork to improve the betterment of individuals and their community;

3. the high satisfaction with and commitment to the decisions for critical current and emerging community issues collectively made by various parties involved ; and

4. the emergence and development of broadly representative community leaders.

Even though the model focuses on institutional level programming, and this study only looks at the practice of community education units, the community-based programming model is still appropriate for this study given the nature and the scope of the community education programs. Community education divisions are generally the unit that coordinates educational programs that are the most responsive to the needs of the community that cannot be met by regular classes. Therefore, community education units undoubtedly have strong and frequent interaction with their communities, which position them in the context of the issue-driven and collaborative community-based programming model.

The fifteen processual tasks included in the community-based programming model also suggest a reasonable approach to evaluate community college administration and practice. However, the concentration of this study is not on program assessment, but on identifying how community education programs are delivered from the perspectives of the presidents and program directors, with their particular functions as providing educational programs desired by the people in the service areas. Therefore, the community-based programming model was not applied as a checklist in this study. Instead, the model was utilized in this study as a guideline to shape research questions and sub-questions.

In this study, the fifteen processual tasks contained in the community-based programming model were categorized into five areas of activity: understanding the positionality and missions of community colleges, identifying the components and issues influencing the lives of the people living in the service areas of the community college, building coalitions with various stakeholders, developing and implementing action plans,

and assessing the outcomes of action plans. Each activity area covered two to four

processual tasks and represented one or two research questions (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Community-based Programming Model			
AREA 1: Understanding the positionality and missions of community colleges	**TASK 1:** Defining community-based programming	**Question 1:** How do community college leaders perceive the community college mission of serving community needs?	
	TASK 2: Understanding the contexts of the community college		
	TASK 3: Positioning the community college		
AREA 2: Identifying the community issues	**TASK 4:** Organizing a mechanism for environment scanning	**Question 2:** How do community college leaders identify community needs?	
	TASK 5: Studying the community		
	TASK 6: Confirming and legitimating identified issues		
AREA 3: Building coalitions and collaborations with various stakeholders	**TASK 7:** Studying the target public	**Question 3:** How do community colleges implement their community education programs to serve community needs?	
	TASK 8: Identifying different formal and informal leaders among shareholders		
	TASK 9: Building consensus and coalitions for resolution		
	TASK 10: Deciding upon strategies for resolution		
AREA 4: Developing and implementing action plans	**TASK 11:** Facilitating the coalition to develop action plans		
	TASK 12: Implementing action plans		
AREA 5: Assessing the outcomes of action plans	**TASK 13:** Assessing outcomes and cost-effectiveness of action plans	**Question 4:** What are the challenges that the community college leaders are facing in the process of delivering community education programs?	
	TASK 14: Reporting outcomes to the shareholder groups		
	TASK 15: Reflecting upon lesson learned		

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study explored how community education programs, considered the broadest programs offered through community colleges, keep the institutions connected with their local communities. Through the perspectives of the leaders of the college and community education programs, this study examined how community colleges leaders perceive and enact the institutional missions of serving community needs. The research questions guiding this study were:

1. How do leaders of both the community education programs and the colleges perceive the community college mission of serving community needs? Any commonality and/or differentiation?

2. How do community education program directors and college leaders identify community needs?

3. How do community colleges implement their community education programs to serve community needs?

4. What are the challenges that the community college leaders are facing in the process of delivering community education programs?

A qualitative methodology was employed for this study. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), qualitative research focuses on "study[ing] things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 3). Since this study was primarily concerned with the community college leaders' perception of meeting community needs through community education programs, the qualitative methodology was appropriate.

The five philosophical methodological assumptions raised by Creswell (1998) are met, also helping to provide support for a qualitative study. First, the ontological assumption addresses that the nature of reality is subjective and multiple and is constructed by the participants in the study; this specific study explored how leaders in different community colleges perceive their institutional mission of meeting community needs. Second, the epistemological assumption concerns that the distance between the researcher and the researched should be minimized; I spent time in field with the participants attempting to become somewhat of an insider. Third, the axiological assumption notes that research is value laden and researchers' personal biases are present; I believed the positive image of community colleges and such values potentially shaped her interpretation. Forth, the rhetorical assumption means the language used in the qualitative study is more descriptive and informal; I reflected what I felt and perceived from the experiences in the field into my writing and was interested in process, meaning, and understanding gained through words. Fifth, the methodological assumption considers a qualitative study emergent and contextual in nature; I valued the research process and applied an inductive approach to analyze data collected, in addition to testing the data deductively with the assistance of the community-based programming framework.

Within the qualitative methodology, a phenomenological approach was employed. Phenomenology as methodology allows researchers to understand the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 1990). In other words, phenomenological inquiries focus on the study of how people describe things/feelings and experience them through their senses, and ask the central question: what is the essence and structure of the lived experiences of this

phenomenon for these people (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 1990). Because the nature of this study was to look at how community college leaders perceive the mission of meeting community needs and how they execute to fulfill the mission, phenomenology was an appropriate approach to understand the essences of the practice of community education programs through the lived experiences of the participating community college leaders.

Sample

The participants for this study drew from a Midwestern state, which has a large number of community colleges and community college enrollments. The sample for this study was both the presidents and senior administrators who held the leadership position in the units of Community Education Program, Community Services, Community Outreach, and the like. Even though the focus of this study was on the practice of community education programs, the inclusion of presidents provided opportunities to examine whether or not the perception of meeting community needs of presidents were aligned with that of program/unit directors. To be more specific, the researcher intended to recruit matching community college leaders, meaning the President and the Director from the same community college, from 3 urban and 2 rural community colleges, and 1 tribal college, out of 30 public community and tribal colleges in the chosen state.

The ideas of Metropolitan Statistical Areas and Micropolitan Statistical Areas defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) were utilized to classify the urbanicity of community colleges for this study. The general concept of a metropolitan or a micropolitan statistical area refers to a core area containing a substantial population nucleus where its adjacent communities have a high degree of social and economic interaction and exchange with the core area (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). Effective June 6,

2003, the current definition of a metropolitan statistical area is a county (or equivalent entity) that has at least one city of 50,000+ population and a micropolitan statistical area is a county (or equivalent entity) that has at least one city of at least 10,000 but less than 50,000 population (Office of Management and Budget, 2003). In this study, a metropolitan and micropolitan statistical area referred to an urban and rural area, respectively.

The OMB's classification of the concept of urbanicity was appropriate for this study because it concerns the community ties that a county has with its adjacent communities, which portrays the relationship between a community college and its surrounding communities. Based on the Year 2001 state population density data, the urbanicity breakdown of all the public community colleges in the state was: 15 colleges located in the metropolitan areas, 5 in the micropolitan areas, and 8 were neither, meaning that they were extremely rural. All the non-metropolitan community colleges were considered rural community colleges in this study. In summary, 3 metropolitan colleges, 2 rural community colleges, plus 1 tribal community college were intended be selected as sample institutions.

An inquiry was run to determine which community colleges would be selected from each urbanicity group, based on the years their presidents and program directors had been in the current leadership positions. In a phenomenological study, it is essential that all participants have lived experience being studied (Patton, 1990); therefore, community colleges that had both presidents and directors of community education programs serving in the same institutions for at least three years at the time when the study was being conducted, were selected. This "criterion sampling" (Miles & Huberman, in Creswell,

1998) strategy ensured that all the potential participants had experiences with and

knowledge of the studied phenomenon, the practice of community colleges for meeting

community needs. The information regarding potential participants' tenure in their

current position was initially verified by mostly their administrative assistants or

themselves. Once the community colleges were identified, an electronic message was

sent to invite the presidents and directors of community education programs to participate

in this study. Those community colleges where both the presidents and directors agreed to

participate became the final candidates for participation. The last stage of sampling

determined which community colleges would be chosen for participation depending on

their geographical locations, enrollments, and demographical distribution of the service

areas, in order to comprise a diverse group. The intention of including one tribal college

in this study was surrendered because no qualified tribal colleges were available at the

time. As a result, only Presidents and Directors of Community Education Programs from

3 urban and 2 rural community colleges were selected.

<center>Data Collection</center>

The strategies for data collection included semi-structured interviews, site visits, and

review of documents provided by the participants.

The open-ended, semi-structured interviews were used as the first method of data

collection because they allowed some structure to the interview protocol while at the

same time providing both researcher and the researched with flexibility to allow new

thoughts to emerge during the interview session (Merriam, 1998). The interview protocol

(Appendix A) was divided into four parts to answer each research question: first, how do

leaders of both the community education programs and the colleges perceive the

<center>38</center>

community college mission of serving community needs? Second, how do community education program directors and college leaders identify community needs? Third, how do community colleges implement their community education programs to serve community needs? Fourth, what are the challenges that the community college leaders are facing in the process of delivering community education programs? The interviews were conducted face-to-face and one-on-one. Each interview lasted about ninety minutes to two hours, and was tape-recorded with the interviewee's permission (Appendix B), in order to ensure data accuracy. Each participant was interviewed once in a place that was of most convenience to him/her and it was not necessary to conduct a follow-up interview for clarification. A total of 10 informants (2 from each participating community college) were included in this study. In a phenomenological study, with a two-hour in-depth interview, 10 subjects or so in a study comprise a reasonable size (Creswell, 1998).

The second method incorporated in this study was site visits. Site visits provided opportunities to directly observe the practice of the community education units. Patton (1990) described that a phenomenological approach can refer to either or both a focus on what people experience and how they interpret what is experienced, or a methodological consideration to actually go to the field experiencing the phenomenon being researched. This research involved both perspectives, and employing site visits contributed to the enhancement of my understanding of the contexts being investigated through her own experiences being on site. During the visits, relevant documents and archives, such as program booklets, service brochures, and flyers, were reviewed in order to understand what programs and services have been done in the past (the third method). These documents and archives were also the proxy to guide the researcher in understanding how

community colleges and their community education programs presented their image to the public. Both site visits and review of document/archives indeed provided contextual information to supplement interviews (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2000). In short, the primary data source was interview, and site visits and documents were supplemental.

<div align="center">Data Analysis</div>

Interviews, site visits, and documents all serve as important data sources for a qualitative study (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 1990). Data analysis for all three forms of data was conducted differently in this study.

Interviews, the primary data source for this study, were analyzed based on the process of phenomenological analysis (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 1990): epoche, data horizontalization, textural description, structural description, and essence constructing. Prior to the first interview till the end of data analysis, I wrote the epoche to list the prejudices and assumptions regarding the practice of community education program, so that I was aware of my own voice and minimize the possibility to interfere my understanding to the data. Data horizontalization is used to find elements and perspectives about how individuals are experiencing the phenomenon being studied from the data. And then the statements are grouped into meaning units with description of the texture of the "what happened" experience; this is the textural description step. Structure description seeks all meanings and divergent perspectives, and a description of how the phenomenon experienced is constructed. After transcribing all interviews, I read the transcripts and highlighted significant statements (data horizontalization); after reading all the transcripts, I listed all the statements highlighted in one table, and then grouped them into meaning units under tentative headings. Therefore, the table became a chart

with all the grouped statements (textual description). I printed out a new copy of the transcriptions and went through the steps again, in order to identify major discrepancies. Only minimal discrepancies needed to be justified. Then I wrote the site descriptions guided by the meaning units that were identified from the previous steps, and site synopses focusing on the divergent perspectives that were found in the site descriptions (structural description). The products of the last three steps are presented in Chapter 4. The last step is to construct the essence the phenomena being studied. Essence is the core meaning mutually understood through a phenomenon experienced. In this case, the practice of community education in community colleges was the common experience, and the essences of which were constructed based on the foundation of the site descriptions and synopses, and discussion of answers to the four research questions. The essences are presented in Chapter 5.

Data collected from site visits and documents were not intended to be analyzed through the standard procedures. Instead, they served as informants contributing to my personal experience of the phenomenon. These data were also mediators that provided me with supplemental information to better understand the contexts being studied.

Role of Researcher, the "I"

I have strong personal commitment to the work of community education, so that she was aware that she might be biased by overly emphasizing the importance of community education and overly criticizing its efforts to meet community needs. Given my personal knowledge and commitment, epoche was employed to prevent my data discussion and interpretation from being interfered by my personal assumptions. The epoch entries were also kept separately from the interview transcript to avoid misinterpretation.

Gerneralizability and Validity

Creswell (1997) recommended that qualitative researchers engage in at least two of eight procedures to ensure the trustworthiness, validity, and transferability of their study. Among the eight procedures introduced in Creswell's work, triangulation, clarifying research bias, and rich thick description were applied in this study.

In triangulation, multiple and different sources of data are used to provide substantiating evidence. In this study, multiple sources of data were collected and analyzed. In addition, transcripts of the president and community education program director from each institution also served as a data source to verify factual and contextual information of the site. Clarification of research bias was primarily processed through writing the epoche. Thick description of the participants and setting under study enables readers to determine whether the findings can be transferred. In this study, five participating community colleges were described in detail of the contexts and nature of their work and experiences. Therefore, efforts were made to optimize the quality of this study.

Limitations

A limitation of this study is that it was conducted in a single state. Even though the state had a sufficient number of community colleges and enrollments, the state was not representative of all community colleges in the United States. A second limitation of the study was the timing for data collection. The practice of community education programs might not be precisely perceived because of the time factor and seasonal differences. Third limitation was that the duration of each site visit was not equal. Because of the geographical locations, I stayed at the campuses one to two days, depending on the

distances from where I lived to the sites. Therefore, I had more time with two sites over the others, which may build more understanding of the contexts and backgrounds of those two colleges.

The last limitation was that criterion sampling caused a dilemma when the sample pool was small. Since this study focused on community college leaders who held their leadership positions at respective institutions for at least three years, and only when both presidents and program directors agreed to participate, the total number of qualified institutions was fewer than expected. As result, there was no room to justify sample distribution. There were many leaders showing their interests in this study, but because they were fairly new to the current positions, their voices were not being heard due to the criterion restriction. Another point related to criterion sampling was that the participants' experiences might be biased. Since they were all long-serving divisional or institutional leaders, they might have developed a special bond and connection with their work. Therefore, there was a possibility that they might have been overly in favor of what their programs had achieved.

CHAPTER FOUR: SITE DESCRIPTION

This chapter includes three sections. It starts with a brief overview of how the conceptual framework was used to guide the development of research questions. Then, a detailed description of each site participating in this study was introduced. The last section, made up by the synopses of each site, is within-site analysis focusing on presenting how presidents' perceptions differ from those of their program director counterparts.

Overview of the Conceptual Framework

A community-based programming model (Boone, 1992; Boone & Associates, 1997) was employed as the conceptual framework that guided the research. The community-based programming model, composed of fifteen processual tasks, highlights the position of the community college as the catalyst for facilitating and affecting collaboration among people from all sectors of the community system in identifying critical community issues and in developing collective efforts to resolve them. Given the nature and scope of community education are to provide large arrays of programs desired by the people in the service areas, the community-based programming model was appropriate for identifying how such programs are delivered from the perspectives of the presidents and program directors.

The community-based programming model was utilized as a basis for shaping research questions and sub-questions. The fifteen processual tasks were categorized into five areas of activity: understanding the positionality and missions of community colleges, identifying the components and issues influencing the lives of the people living in the service areas of the community college, building coalitions with various stakeholders,

developing and implementing action plans, and assessing the outcomes of action plans. Each activity area covered two to four processual tasks and represented one or two research questions (see Figure 1), and each research question was discussed based on meaning units identified from the interviews (see Figure 2). The order of Area 3 and 4 was reversed in Figure 2 to facilitate the flow of discussion.

Site Descriptions

Five community colleges in a Midwest state were selected as the participating institutions of the study because both the president and the community education program director of each college agreed to participate and had served in their current position at least three years. A total of 10 interviews were conducted. Since the contexts of community colleges are different from one to another, the results were first presented site by site in this chapter. A cross-site analysis is included in Chapter 5 when discussing emerged themes. The meaning units overarching the important statements identified from the interview transcription were applied to guide the composition of each site description. Site descriptions begin by introducing background information of each community college, its residing community, and the interviewees, followed by textualization of interviewees' (either the president, or the director, or both) interpretation of a) perceptions of college mission of meeting community needs, b) identification of community needs, c) concept of community education, d) community education program in the college, and e) issues in practice and leadership improvement. Thus, this section of the chapter is a series of five site descriptions. All names of the geographical and administrative regions, participating institutions, and interviewees are pseudonyms to protect confidentiality.

Figure 2: Meaning Clusters of Each Research Question

Research Question	Activity Area	Meaning Clusters
Question 1: How do community college leaders perceive the community college mission of serving community needs?	AREA 1: Understanding the positionality and missions of community colleges	Uniqueness of the college Relationship between community and the college
Question 2: How do community college leaders identify community needs and their relationship with community education programs?	AREA 2: Identifying the community issues	Means to identify community needs
Question 3: How do community colleges implement their community education programs to serve community needs?	AREA 4: Developing and implementing action plans	Concept of community education Distinctiveness of the community education programs Community's reaction to the community education programs Positionality of the program in college mission Structure of the unit Programming Resource needed Changes in the future
	AREA 3: Building coalitions and collaborations with various stakeholders	Competitors Collaborators
Question 4: What are the challenges that the community college leaders are facing in the process of delivering community education programs?	AREA 5: Assessing the outcomes of action plans	Critical issues Leadership Improvement

Site and Informants

As its name implies, Timberland College is located in an isolated and rural town on the state border surrounded by national forests. The College was established in the early thirties as a branch of a local school system and in the mid sixties, was restructured as a separate community college district. Timberland College is one of the oldest community colleges in the state, as well as the primary source of higher education opportunity for many of the people living in the northwest part of the state and the northern part of its neighboring state; the distances from Timberland College to the closest four-year university and two-year college are 150 miles and 173 miles, respectively.

Given its history and location, many students who are unable to go to college or unable to afford to go to college after high school attend Timberland College first for two years and then look for their next step. Traditionally, Timberland College attracts a large number of recent high school graduates: in 2004, approximately 60% of the students are in the baccalaureate transfer programs and 38% are in the vocational programs. Other programs, such as community service or community education, are less central to the college mission. Additionally, 70% of the students get some level of financial aid, reflecting the frail local economy.

Timberland College is not a research-based higher education institution, so College faculty and staff assertively focus on their students, recognizing what the goals of the students are and how to help them succeed. Many of their students need a lot of encouragement and support, particularly those returning and older. Therefore, remedial education has become a more important part of the college mission, in addition to transfer

and vocational education that have been already in place for so long.

Timberland County, the place where the College is situated, does not have a vigorous economy. The one-time prominent lumbering and light manufacturing are weakening, but seasonal tourism is yet prosperous. In addition, the County has very low tax bases: 75% of the property in the county is national forests that are tax exempt. A weak economy hinders many people from staying in the area, jeopardizing local economic development efforts. Recent census data show that almost 50% of people living in Timberland County are older than 60 years of age, and there are a lot of residents that are dependent upon Social Security.

Two leaders participated in this study were President Kevin Turner and Dean Chris Thompson. Dr. Kevin Turner took the presidency at Timberland College in the early nineties. He started his career in the community college setting as a full-time faculty member for 12 years, and then became a department chair and dean. He was later hired by another community college as a vice president, and then joined Timberland College serving as the president. President Turner described his overall experiences of working at and for the College as challenging but exciting. He found his career fulfilling and felt fortunate to witness that the mission of community colleges in the areas of economic development and vocational training and re-training is being recognized by the society and the government. After more than four decades working in the community college context, Dr. Kevin Turner finished his tenure in Timberland in June, 2005.

Mr. Chris Thompson has worked at the College for nearly 20 years. The past eight years, he has served as the Dean of Instruction, whose primary work responsibilities cover anything related to the instructional programs and services provided by the college.

Community education programs and services also fall under the umbrella of Mr. Thompson's work. He admitted that people at his college tended to wear a lot of hats because of the small size of the institution. He also expressed his joy of working for Timberland College and serving in a position where he could have much of impact on students. He thought it a privilege to work at the institution in terms of its community services and how Timberland County sees the College as a primary provider of postsecondary education. Similar to President Turner's overall experiences, Mr. Thompson thought Timberland College was a wonderful place to work. Over the years, he has comprised an impressive resume, working in different capacities at the College: community industry relationships, continuing education, and institutional advancement, curriculum development, and the deanship in instruction. Mr. Thompson himself is an alum of Timberland College.

Positionality of the College and Relationship to Its Community

President Turner was proud of the fact that Timberland College is an opportunity college to many people in its service area who would not otherwise have access to higher education. He commented that the location and size of the area also made the College unique:

> This college started… so the sons and daughters of people that were working [in the lumbering industry] who couldn't go to the college because they didn't have the money or they're place-bound, could have a way to start college and go to college… [B]ecause we are small [and] we are flexible, we could respond quickly to the need [of Timberland County].

In line with the President's comment, Dean Thompson added student-centeredness as a factor contributing to the uniqueness of the College. He said, "I truly believe that our entire staff sees students as a fact of the reason of our being here… there's no more

important person in the education at Timberland than the students. If we didn't have the students, we won't be here."

President Turner and Mr. Thompson both agreed that the College and its surrounding communities were interdependent. "The college is well-integrated into the community, and we offer ongoing good relationships with other agencies in the community," said President Turner. He continued, "we received a [state-level award] in 2001 for being the collaborative entity of the year."

Timberland College's commitment to local economic development seems to solidify the relationship between the College and its service area. The President of the College specifically identified the college as "the leader of economic development of this area." For example, equipped with free office space, Timberland County Economic Development Office is located on Timberland College campus and the staff works closely with the Office of the Dean of Instruction. These two entities collaboratively provide many contract training and continuing education programs to the local community. "[The work we do] is really important to our success, to the community that we serve," the President said.

Mr. Thompson described the college-community relationship by emphasizing the critical role Timberland College plays in the community:

> [W]e are for a number of folks, the only higher ed opportunity that they
> can access… [they] may be not traditional students or place-bound by
> family and job, we are the opportunity that they have. We are an extremely
> economically depressed area. So for cost reasons, we are also the
> opportunity of choice for a number of folks in [this region]. So we are, in
> terms of educational opportunities, an extremely important part of the
> community… [F]rom an economic, truly economic standpoint, we are one
> of the major employers in [Timberland County]. So from that perspective,
> we are a very critical piece of the local economy.

depend upon state funding anymore. "We need to have more private source funding," President Turner responded,

> You can get enough a lot by donations, and technical help and advice from the industries. If they want programs, they will help you. They would provide you equipment as what they did for the utility technician program. They provided us expertise; our advisory committee they gave the engineers and their staff time off to meet with us to tell us what we needed in the program, what we should contain.

Mr. Thompson added, "so really for us to do a better job, we need resources for investment in people, primarily to do the job. I'd love not to wear so many hats, ah… I know we can do a better job if we have more people." Although they started with a search for additional funding for the College, both the President and the Dean extended their answers to non-monetary resources, such as technical help and adequate personnel.

Mr. Thompson particularly pinpointed that sufficient resources, monetary or non-monetary, would benefit the practice of community education programs. "We are active, but we could be more proactive [if we have had money to hire qualified staff]. If we could do those sorts of things, we could do a better job with providing community programs if you will." His projection indicated that sustainability of community education programs is dependent upon the availability of resources being used for the planning and execution of such programs, which categorized by the President as the tertiary mission of Timberland College.

Critical Issues

Moving forward to future, Dean Thompson is confident that Timberland College

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the land pays no property taxes during the years when it is growing timber. It takes 30-40 years to grow a standard timber, so for 30 years, there is no property tax on that land. Low tax income hinders the financial growth of the County, as well as impacts the amount of money that the county is capable of appropriating to Timberland College. In Year 2005, about 50% of funding the College received came from the state, about 30% came from tuition, and roughly 20% came from local millage. With the state financial difficulties, Timberland College has continuously experiencing cuts from state funding over the past four years.

will always have an extremely strong community base and that the leaders of the College

will continue to do many things that they can to help the community. Therefore, to Dean

Thompson, the community education function of Timberland will be practiced as it is at

present, but the scale may be reduced if resources and budget get worse and scarce. As

for President Turner, he is hoping his successor could bring in more grants and

endorsements help the college survive the state cuts, so that sufficient budget could be

allocated to strengthen the offerings of community education.

Leadership improvement is another issue that is critical to community college

leaders. Mr. Thompson acknowledged that his pursuit of a doctorate degree in higher

education had helped him improve his leadership as the Dean of Instruction. He realized

that everybody processes information differently, so slowing down to make sure that

every staff member understood what the issues were was something that Mr. Thompson

had been working on. He also had learned to set time aside to read the literature and to

look at the research; he particularly thought that he, among other professionals, needed to

improve the accessibility, readability, and availability of the research that scholars do for

practitioners.

Given the approaching retirement of President Turner, Mr. Thompson shared his

expectation of the new president of Timberland College. He anticipated seeing some

change when the new president took over the position, but he was very sure that there

would not be any sudden drastic change. "I think Timberland has done a lot good things,"

the Dean of Instruction explained, "We've been able to use the resources extremely well.

We've moved to a much more stakeholder-focused, open communication type of system,

so I think there will be a lot of consistency." He was confident that the incoming

president's rich sense of community and personal beliefs in the purpose of the community college were complimentary with the mission of Timberland College, which was vastly solidified during Turner's tenure as the college president.

<div align="center">Site 2: Midway Community College</div>

Site and informants

Midway Community College, located about 2 miles off a major interstate freeway, is one of the leading higher education institutions in the east region of the State. The College serves multiple counties: the distance from respective counties to Midway Community College is approximately the same and the nearby freeway is significantly accessible and convenient to many of the residents from the service areas. Given the traffic proximity, the enrollment has been expanding since its establishment in the early 1960s, and the College has become a primary corporate training agency in the region. Campus buildings are also scattered about the multi-county service areas.

Midway Community College is much larger than an average size community college across the country: in 2005, about 16,000 students enroll in degree classes and 40,000 people receive training through non-degree programs. Non-degree programs at Midway are basically short-term job training, which are either short certificate programs that are one semester in length, or professional development seminars that last for one or two days about any topic, including exam preparations and continuing education for professionals.

The College provides a lot of things other than just degree or non-degree seeking educational programs. It also owns public television stations and a public radio station, in addition to various periodically-run programs that are available to community residents.

Global festivals, golf outings, career fairs, K-12 science and math Olympiad are frequently seen in the widely-distributed community calendars of events.

Midway Community College is located in the heart of a multiple-county area, with a total population of approximately 400,000. Among the residents of the Counties (pseudonym of what people call this multiple-county area), a little over 50% of them are between 25-64 years of age, while 25% are under 18 and 15% are over 65. The makeup of residents' age distribution presents a solid base of labor.

The Counties as a whole has gained worldwide attention for its economic activities. The area is home to leading companies manufacturing mobile electronics, automobile parts, and chemical and plastic products. Health care represents another sector of local economic vitality, not only equipping the most advanced medical technologies and acute care facilities but also generating job opportunities for medical and health care professionals. While manufacturing and health care sectors are the primary industries in the region, the Counties continues to maintain its agricultural heritage, which also contributes significantly to the area's economy.

President Marshall and Director Moore were the leaders participating in this study. Dr. Ryan Marshall initially joined Midway Community College as the chief operations officer nearly twenty years ago, and later was appointed as the president of the college by the Board of Trustees. In other words, he had abundant opportunities to shadow his predecessor before formally assuming the presidential position. Dr. Marshall served as the president of Midway Community College for twelve years and retired from this position in 2005. Being the college president, he was responsible for the total operations of the college, and served on various boards in communities and service clubs of the

multi-county area. He gave tribute to his faculty and staff for doing a great job of running the institution, making his overall work experience at Midway Community College rewarding. The president admitted that the job was definitely a challenge, but it was the one that he enjoyed a lot.

Ms. Angela Moore has worked at the College as the Programming Coordinator for the Continuing and Workforce Development Center for four years. Her primary job responsibilities are to do an enormous amount of research to find great ideas that meet the regional demands of professional advancements, and to recruit qualified instructors for the audience. Ms. Moore thought her previous training in journalism is helpful in mastering her research ability, leading to her capability of competently accomplishing her work at Midway Community College. She was honest about her enjoyment of her employment at the College, because she felt its faculty and staff really care about and are willing to help the students.

Positionality of the college and relationship to its community

Although serving a multi-county region with a decent population, Midway Community College is located in a very rural area. "Because we really felt that if we were located in any of those counties it would just franchise the others," President Marshall explained, "so [the founders of the college] wanted a neutral location so people from [all the counties] would have access to it and not feel like it was owned by any one particular country." The reason of how the physical location of the college was chosen indicates the tradition of the institution in maintaining accessibility to its overall serving population.

President Marshall emphasized that one of the institutional goals was to make sure that the college is serving the educational needs of the local community. "We do an excellent job of connecting with our community... We are trying to make sure that we are accessible to everyone in the community," the president commented. He went on giving specific examples of how the college connects to its service areas:

> We have to find ways in order to continue to maintain close connections with our communities. We have a lot of faculty and staff that serve on community boards and community organizations; they are active in local service clubs and they go out and talk to the community about the college. We have advisory committees for all of our occupational programs; people that are in the industries are on advisory committees... We also invite K-12 students out here for special events; just about every, academic division on campus has some sort of an event or competition during the course of the year... Our career center puts on a career day where we invite 200-300 employers, and we then invite high school students to talk to those employers... about potential careers in those fields.

In addition to inviting the community members onto campus frequently, President Marshall noted that the College has established close relationships with key community people. Leaders in numerous communities, chambers of commerce, economic development groups, and major industries are invited on campus, and the college staff, including the president himself, also makes special efforts to participate in their events. All events indicate that the College is committed to creating lots of opportunities for interchange.

In accordance with President Marshall, Ms. Moore affirmed that Midway Community College identified with the community very well. "The communities all support Midway through tax base," she continued, "I think this community has been very loyal to the college. We recently passed a millage by over 2/3 to the college's operating budget. [The community is] very supportive, very supportive by the enrollment, very

supportive by passing millages. I find that you know, they've been, the community been very... approving, of what we are doing here."

Both the president and the programming coordinator of the Continuing and Workforce Development Center of Midway Community College provided foremost instances of the efforts the college is making to ensure community residents' accessibility to the college. Particularly, Ms. Moore, the programming coordinator, touched upon how the communities react to the college by illustrating the recent passage of a historical high millage.

Identifying Community Needs

President Marshall stressed the goal of the college is to serve the educational needs of the local community. "We try to provide workers for the current and future workforce; and if we want to know what those needs are," he said, "we know them by interacting with the local community. So what we try to do is to make sure the lines of the communication between the college and the local community are wide open." He added that people from the communities often call him or the employees of the college to address their needs.

Seconded to the critical importance of keeping the communication channels open, Ms. Moore shared her ways of identifying community needs:

> I don't identify what they really need. I talk to some of my contacts in the community, and they give me a heads-up on what people need in the community. I also uh, look at the want ads in the local newspapers to see what employers are looking for. I also call my connection, I have a lot of friends in the community, to find out what's... what hot jobs are. And, I will get approached also by people come to me. When you work in a job long enough, you develop friends within the areas that will come to you and say, *why don't we develop this.*

Ms. Moore shared an example of how people from various places approached her

about a pressing community need:

> Like our nursing assistance program, we just started that this fall... There was a
> lot of comment from people calling us, from various places in the community,
> from nursing homes calling us, from professors who knew people in their city
> [saying] why don't we develop programs. So we finally got it together. It has been
> very exciting.

Comments received from President Marshall and Ms. Moore suggested personal

networks and connections are means to identify the learning needs of the community and

such interaction and exchanges are constantly ongoing. Yet, the president further noted

that the College applied a systematic approach to react to the ideas raised from the

community:

> You have to define your marketing niche and then... and then you develop your
> product based on your niche... [W]e have an excellent research office... and they
> can do some market research for us... When any time we are offering a new
> program, we always do some market research before we develop that particular
> program.

Concept of Community Education

Since this study was focused on their experiences in practicing community

education, it was important to understand what this concept meant to the president and

the dean. They were asked to draw a graph to present their concepts of community

education.

President Marshall discussed his concept of community education by starting with

mentioning the core competencies of Midway Community College: academic credit

classes, non-credit (corporate services and community education), and broadcasting and

special events (Figure 5). As illustrated in his drawing, academic credit classes are the

foremost, followed by non-credit classes and special events, respectively. He was asked

to specify what community education is to him, President Marshall answered,

"Primarily... primarily non-credit classes... specialized kind of things, ah...either

workforce training, or ah... some other special enrichment kind of things... for the

community." He later added,

> [It is] a way to stay connected with the community, to respond fairly to community needs. Ah, so the turnaround time between the request from the community for the response and the way we respond to that, the timeframe is very short. To respond to the needs in the community, we're... ah the community college has the resources to fit into those niche markers, and where we can provide a service at such a low cost, to the... to the college. So it's lots of things.

Broadcasting   **Special Events**

Non-Credit – Corp Serv, Comm ED

Academic Credit Classes

College Core Competencies
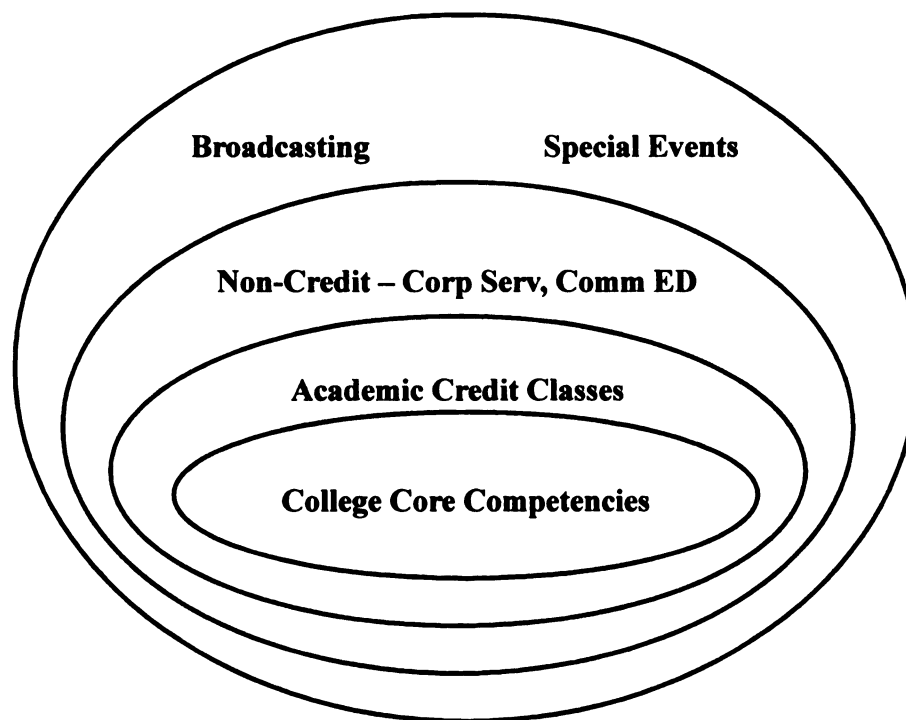
Figure 5: President Marshall's Concept of Community Education

Interaction between providers and recipients was presented in Angela Moore's

drawing, showcasing her concept of community education (Figure 6). She explained,

> [The big circle] is our self-contained area, where people would live. And these (*circles with a P*) are the providers of community education. These are the recipients (*circles with an R*) of the programs anywhere within this area, and they would utilize different providers to get their community education. Midway Community College is not the only provider of non-credit community education.

Ms. Moore also emphasized that her unit had to be unique in order to compete with other providers in the service area. She said that her concept was rooted in her personal experiences of how it worked, and she hoped that Midway Community College was one of the biggest providers in the area.

Midland Community College; Angela works for Midland

P: provider of community ed
R: recipient/student
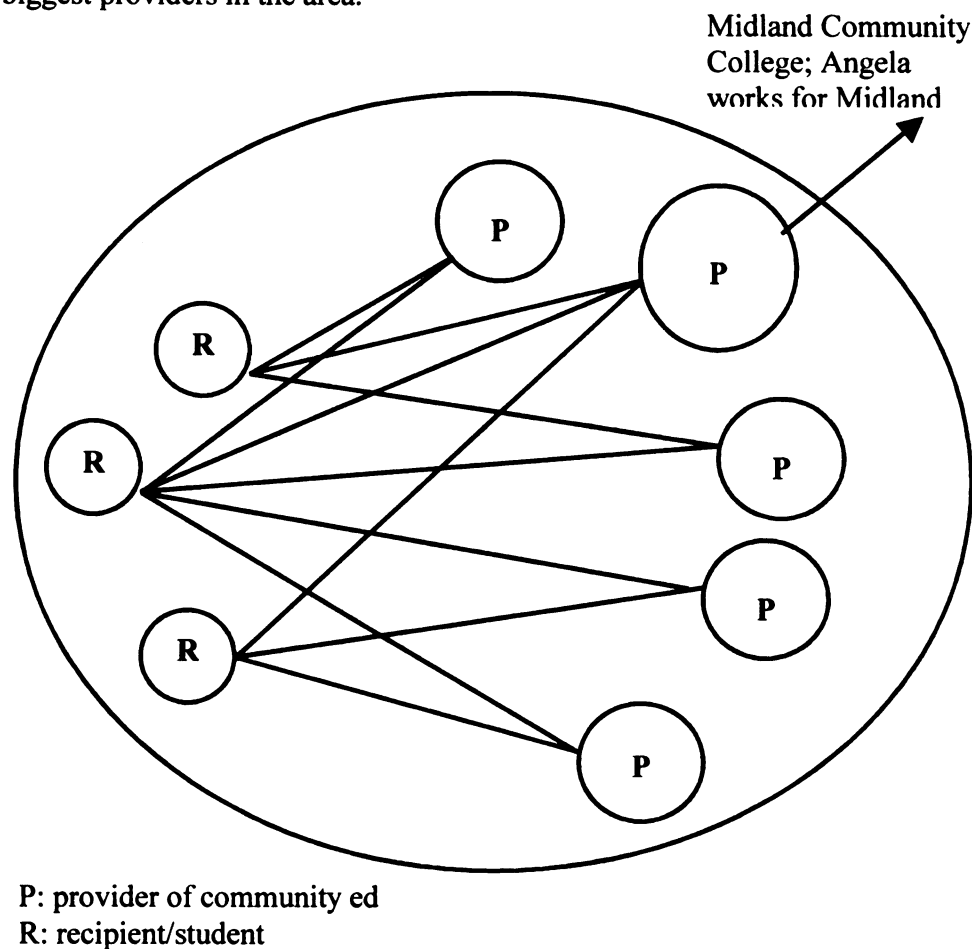
Figure 6: Ms. Moore's Concept of Community Education

Both President Marshall and Ms. Moore answered their graphs would be the same if drawing another one five years from now. What would be different, according to President Marshall, was the expansion of such program, since a very stable population in the Counties is aging and College leaders are going to reach out to older adults' learning needs. Ms. Moore was also hoping that the Continuing and Workforce Development

Center could be expanding, not only drawing more people in but also sustaining their connections with the Center.

Community Education Programs in the College

Distinctiveness of the programs.

Community education programs are offered through the Continuing and Workforce Development Center at Midway Community College, focusing on short-term non-credit courses designed for professional development and training. Both President Ryan Marshall and Director Angela Moore emphasized the strong workforce orientation of their programs. For example, President Marshall described, "we pretty much confine ourselves to workforce training in areas like the health area, and also the areas of skills training, you know, managing, supervising people, basic computer skills, those kind of things."

During the interviews, President Marshall, as well as Director Moore, mentioned a focus change in the late 1990s in Midway's community education. "We don't offer the level of community education courses that we used to," the president continued. "It was pretty scattered, and it was just more of [not audible] things. And we needed to be [careful] about how we utilized our resources." In the past, Midway Community College provided various personal enrichment and recreation classes, such as basket weaving, crafts, or even canine training, but because of cost issues, Midway stopped offering redundant courses in the 90s and in 2001 tried to reorganize the offerings. President Marshall shared the contexts of why such changes occurred from his experiences:

> [The] direction of the program was changed because basically, there was a lot of
> money going out than it's coming in. And, and I didn't really have a clear
> direction or focus. It was pretty scattered... We can't afford to do those kind of
> things any longer. We just don't have that kind of resources that allows us to do

that... for the long-term health of the institution it was the right thing to do at the time.

Ms. Moore thought competition from other community providers in terms of program redundancy was part of the reason why Midway's community education programs did not function well:

> We were all offering the same thing, and Midway was charging more because it cost us more... [The College] wasn't generating any money. They weren't making any money so they couldn't operate with just the subsidy. So financially, the college was losing on that, it was... you know was losing $200,000. Financially it's just too much of a drain... [to] operate within a self-sufficient model.

Under Moore's leadership, the current Continuing and Workforce Development Center is more active instead of reactive, focusing on short-term job training to serve community needs.

According to Ms. Moore's assessment, community residents did miss some of the programs that the College used to offer after the institution re-oriented its community education programs. "They were really good quality programs, so the people missed that. But I think they basically like the new training programs that we are offering and they tend to look at here and now."

President Marshall commented on not only how the community reacts to the direction change but also on the current programs in general: "We didn't have any major issues and [they] continue to operate very successfully, or continue to support the institution. And [the community] seems to be very approving of all the things we are doing." The president used the 2004 millage election, based on which Midway Community College received a millage renewal by the highest margin in institutional history, as his indication of the community's continuous support for what the Collage is providing to area residents.

An important element of the mission of Midway Community College is to provide innovative programs to the community. Ms. Moore identified the Continuing and Workforce Development Center as the unit focusing on innovation at Midway Community College because it is responsive. "I like to think we are more proactive," she said. "It's a sense of accomplishment that I think we can offer the students [what] the academic side doesn't necessarily have yet... We are coming into a program that people never thought that we could offer... especially serving the under-prepared." She saw that her unit plays an important part in achieving the college mission of continuously making innovative programs available to meet diverse educational and personal needs of its students.

Unit structure and programming process.

The Continuing and Workforce Development Center in Midway Community College College is jointly owned by the Division of Career Education and by the Division of Business/Industry Services (a non-academic division). In other words, Ms. Moore reports to two different units, one in the academic side and one in the non-academic corporate side. "It is very odd... yeah, it can be tough to work for both [divisions], because they have very different corporate cultures. So there have been conflicts. We are just getting used to the ways they deal with situations and how they do their things," confessed Angela.

The operation of the Center is modeled on a framework called the LEARN format. "It is a resource or professional development model used by people in continuing ed across the country," Ms. Moore explained. The LEARN model sets a system of overlapping areas, which are programming, marketing and operations at the Center, with

the flexibility to add external collaborating agencies to it (e.g., the dashed-circle with the

designation of corporate illustrated in Ms. Moore's drawing, see Figure 7). She added,

> [It] has been working very well. Because before we took on this model, I wasn't
> just the programming manager, I was doing marketing and operations, for let's
> say the health program, and then there was another person doing all of those for
> business… it was a different model. This is much more effective.

With only three staff, including herself, in the Center, Ms. Moore confirmed that the

LEARN model worked well, allowing flexibility to arrange and shift human resources

depending on the different magnitudes of tasks.
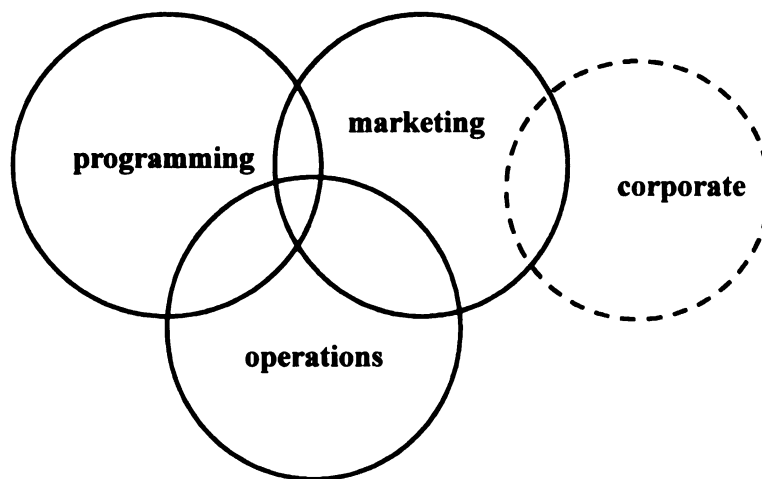
Figure 7: Ms. Moore's LEARN Model

By using an example of a small engine repair program, Ms. Moore walked me

through her programming process once a community need has been identified. The

process involves five steps: 1) conduct a needs study within the community to see if area

employers would be interested in this specific program; 2) review and assess the results

of the study; 3) if favorable, look for resources and facilities that are necessary to the

subject matter from the Division of Career Education; 4) recruit appropriate instructors

from either the Division of Career Education or the corporate services and finalize

content plans and syllabi; and 5) make up marketing plans, including soliciting publicity

brochures throughout the community. The programming process usually takes 6-9

months.

"Marketing management" was a term that Ms. Moore used to stress the enormous

efforts her colleagues and she made during the overall programming process, indicating a

mindset of entrepreneurship was locked in her. For instance, she mentioned that getting

their programs certified or accredited by the State is a way to ensure quality and in turn,

providing certified programs is a marketing strategy that attract more people to enroll.

It is the reality to both President Marshall and Ms. Moore that they cannot offer

everything that the community people request. President Marshall was very firm on

making it clear to the community that Midway Community College could not be all

things to all people. Building on the marketing niche idea introduced earlier, he

emphasized that products must change if the niche changes. So it is inevitable that the

services provided by the college sometimes disappoint certain residents. He explained his

opinions on such situations,

> Certainly we need to be aware of [community needs], but we all certainly have to
> make sure that those kind of needs can be self-supporting, and the community
> needs to understand that. I mean they understand that, ah, we are a publicly
> supported institution that charges tuition and it is supported by tax dollars, and
> they want us to be good shepherds of those dollars, those funds. And, and if we
> are, you know, offering things that we can't support ourselves, then they are
> gonna say, well wait a minute you know, you have to think about that before you
> offer classes.

Clearly, President Marshall thought cost-effectiveness is the principle, based on which

Midway Community College stays accountable for the community, at least budget-wise.

Ms. Moore was frank with me that saying no to the community was tough for her,

because she wanted to help everyone with his/her needs. She said, "what we can do in that case is we refer to our competitors. If we can't offer [the needed service] within their timeframe, then we tell them, [go to ABC center]. Please go there, because we can't meet your needs [now]." To Ms. Moore, referring people to another provider when she has to decline certain requests is also a way to help them with their needs

Relationship with other agencies.

During the discussion on the distinctiveness of the community education programs offered through the Continuing and Workforce Development Center at Midway Community College, President Marshall and Ms. Moore hinted that competition with other local community education providers resulted in service and program redundancy, which to a certain extent forced leaders of Midway to make direction changes. Throughout the conversations, they did not specify what other providers were. However, Ms. Moore's drawing of her concept of community education indicated that there are various providers in the area so that her unit is trying to be active meeting different needs in short job-training areas in order to stand out. She said her unit did not negotiate with other providers. "We moved away from the arts & crafts, and leisure, and to leave that with these people offering those programs, and keep ours [distinctive]." In other words, Ms. Moore does not negotiate with other providers to determine who offers what, and spontaneously withdraws redundant courses from her program.

In addition to competitors, Midway Community College has also established some collaborative relationships with other organizations. Ms. Moore mentioned one of the internal collaboration her unit is involved in: the Continuing and Workforce Development Center works with different divisions in the college, including both academic and

non-academic programs. One of the examples she shared was the alliance the Center keeps with the health division on the academic side of Midway Community College, given a lot of programs provided by the Center are health-related. Ms. Moore thought this kind of collaboration is necessary to her unit. "We need to have support politically within the college, in order to function. So we've been doing a lot of internal PR, to make ourselves known... So people know they can identify us and they can also work with us." In other words, Ms. Moore made her Center recognizable to other internal units or external agents and ready to provide support to them when they come to the Center.

Resources needed.

There is only three staff, including Ms. Moore herself, responsible for managing and developing courses offered through the Center to an average of 700-1,000 enrollments every year. Therefore, it did not surprise me when she said, "we are under-staffed, absolutely under-staffed." She declared that they are all dedicated to their work and the dedication is the driving force to overcome the understaffing situation. To resolve such stress, the Center utilizes several student workers to help with basic administrative tasks.

Except for the labor shortage, Ms. Moore has been content with the support she receives from Midway Community College. She said,

> I can't think of anything; the college has been so supportive of what we do, and letting us be creative, that I can't complain. I really can't complain. They let me come up with any crazy idea, and if I wanna run it, they let me run it. They had just been very very supportive.

Site 3: Bridge College

Site and Informants

Established in early 1920s, Bridge College was designed as a city junior college for making higher education available to people living in the east central part of the State at a

Mr. Thompson described what the College did for the local community:

> [O]ur programs tend to be based on community needs; we have programs that directly serve local business and industry. So we are a source of workforce supply for the folks... The occupational programs we have directly serve our local industry and businesses. So, yes, from [this] perspective... I say we're catalyst of local economic development efforts.

For example, the college is the primary provider of registered nurses and nurse's aids in the whole region.

President Turner told me the college-community relationship was validated by people from the service area by means of periodic community surveys: "[We] found that the community strongly supports the college, and what we do is very important to the region. They seem to understand our mission, and they value the institution, for the services that it provides. So the college also enjoys the reputation... and it has been so for many years."

Identifying Community Needs

There were many ways by which President Turner and Dean Thompson identified community needs. The Dean shared,

> One is through the economic development connection... Their office is right next door, and it's been that way purposefully so that we can have a very close contact with the economic development staff... Our programs make an extensive use of advisory committees, and our advisory committees are committees that are generally made up of folks that are in that specific industry or business...About every 3 years, we hold a meeting with community. We will bring folks from the community, and we essentially ask them how well are we doing, what is it that you need us to do... Once every 5 years, we do a comprehensive statistically appropriate telephone survey... We encourage our staff to be involved in communities... [a]nd all of those types of community services, if you will, are means by which we can gather inputs and look at... what's community looking at, what are their needs... So it's a pretty broad program by which we solicit community inputs.

President Turner seconded the Dean's comment saying advisory committees and

community meetings were important strategies to identify needs of local people. He

emphasized, "we have members in business and industry in the advisory committees of

all of our vocational programs. And that's the major way that we stay in touch with our

local community needs." "We had to prioritize," President answered when asked what he

had to do if there were multiple requests made by the community. "We use our mission as

a guide. We say, *what's more important to... to us? is it consistent to our mission?* ... To

protect the educational programs is our... and what's our mission, and whatever we do

we measure against that." He added,

> [If] you don't have the money, you must make choices... If we can pull this
> program out and still basically maintain our mission, we can do it. But, it's not
> exact science, [it] depends on the judgment to the end. You have to weight what's
> the greatest needs at the time, and the decisions you have to make sometimes are,
> none of them are good decisions, but you have to make one that is the least
> damaging to the institution.

Concept of Community Education

Since this study was focused on community education, it was important to

understand what this meant to the president and the dean. They were asked to graphically

present their concept of community education.

President Turner presented his concept of community education as a

concentric-circle concept (Figure 3). According to President Turner, the college was

placed in the core, and credit program and community education programs were

presented in the second and third circle, referring to the first priority and second priority

respectively. After introducing me his concentric circle, the president further verbally

defined community education programs as "non-credit life enrichment, personal

enrichment kinds of courses." He named several programs offered at Timberland to

capture what he meant by enrichment kinds of courses:

the public is invited to these things and they tend to attend, pretty good attendance in a lot [we offer] non-credit courses, physical education type of courses, aerobics courses, or our swimming programs... We have a swimming pool here that is operated in conjunction with a community group and we offer a lot of swimming courses but they are personal enrichment or health & wellness non-credit kind of things. We bring in speakers periodically to provide campus enrichment, for our students as well as the public.

C.E.
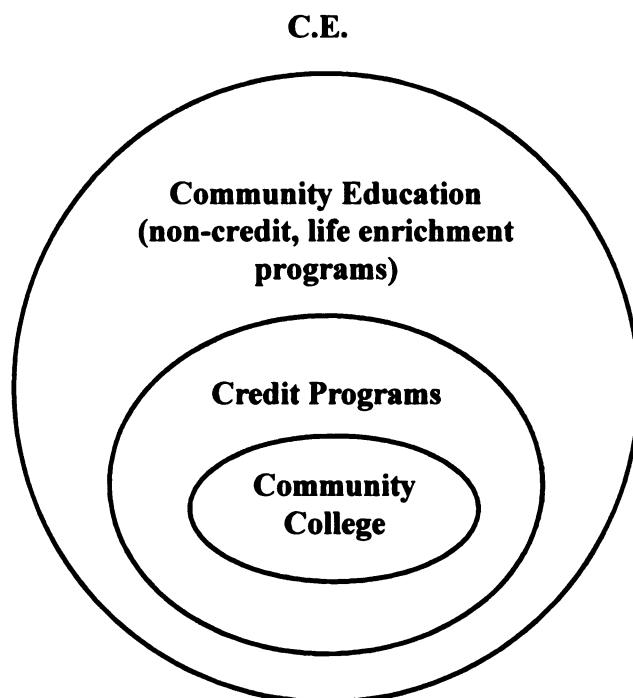
Figure 3: President Turner's Concept of Community Education[1]

When asked to draw his concept of community education, Mr. Thompson immediately put community education in the center. Linked by double arrows, he further added workforce development, community services, participation in the community, and personal enrichment as four main areas that he sees in community education program (Figure 4).

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[1] Unless specifically noted, the graphics showing participants' concepts were reproduced based on their originals.

participation
in community

↑
↓

community
services   ←→   **Community
Education**   ←→   personal
enrichment

↑
↓

**workforce development
(job training + retraining)**

economic development
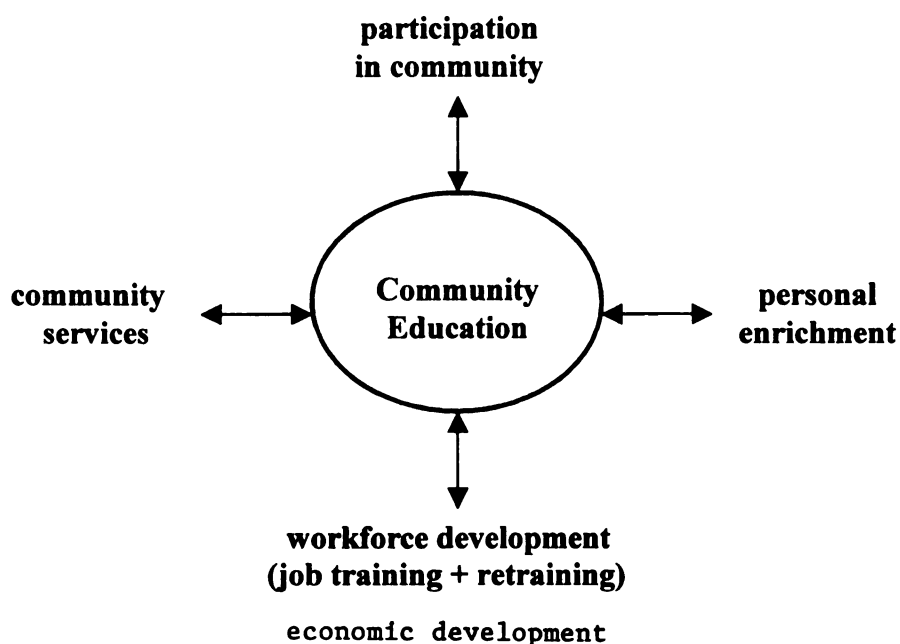
Figure 4: Dean Thompson's Concept of Community Education

Mr. Thompson explained,

> Let's say the center is what we call, a general term community education, and the arrows go back and forth, because really not just one-way. We need to hear from the community and participants in the community and with others. We need to provide service and programs for them as well.

He contended that his concept of community education reflected their work and services of Timberland College. Mr. Thompson then went on giving specifics of each area. By workforce development, he referred to job training and retraining, and economic development. In terms of community services, he commented upon some levels of services Timberland College provided to the community. For example, Mr. Thompson shared:

> We make our facilities available to community organizations that meet on campus, and our campus facilities in the evening are often used extensively. That enables community groups to sit down in the environment that can produce the sharing and working with one another. We will at times provide facilitators for them to help them with the issues... I will be expecting five years... the high schools, may look at

[Timberland] as being a source for some more advanced high school courses. And I will term that as community programs where it would be academic courses.

Participation in community, according to Mr. Thompson, pertained to the College being out in the community in a variety of ways, such as staff members' involvement in community volunteering works. He emphasized that it might not be the so-called courses or programs, but was means to "[learn] what the community thinks, [what] the community needs are," and through the participations he added, "[the community can] learn what we are able to provide." As far as personal enrichment is concerned, Mr. Thompson mentioned language, art, and fitness classes as some of the examples.

Conceptually, President Turner and Mr. Thompson both confirmed their graphs of community education remain the same if drawing five years from now. The changes would occur, according to them, in to what extent such programs are being offered. "I think change or changes may come into play," said Dean Thompson, "largely, it's gonna be to do with demographics, and in terms of resources that are available to the college." President Turner also predicted that the college leaders would pay more attention to community education when the community and institutional resource bases are stronger. "It is pretty meager, because we don't have the money to put in to do it right," said the president.

Community Education Programs in the College

Distinctiveness of the programs.

Chris Thompson, the Dean of Instruction whose work responsibilities also include non-credit programs, identified in his drawing four areas of community education that Timberland College participated in. However, due to the size and resource constraints of

the College, he emphasized that these community education programs needed to have academic value to their students, not just to the community at large. For instance, some staff members learned from their community volunteering work the need to build self-esteem with the young people in Timberland Country (community need); they brought the message back to the College and strengthened some of Timberland's counseling programs to include this issue (academic value). Similar accommodation had also been made to include suicide prevention (community need) in freshmen orientation programs and other courses (academic value). Mr. Thompson particularly made it clear that Timberland College seldom offered a personal enrichment class that had nothing more than community personal enrichment: "It's offered because students are taking it for academic purposes and as they are doing that, we can also make it available to the community." Therefore, students may take one class for truly enrichment or for an academic purpose. "We developed [a course in meteorology], and we had about half were taking it for personal enrichment; some folks are retired, and we had a fellow from the airport who was taking it for workforce development. And we had half of the students who were taking it as an elective science course." Mr. Thompson described the mixture that could easily be found in most of the classes at Timberland College.

According to Mr. Thompson, institutional size was a huge issue at Timberland College. Since the College dealt with a small population that was more spread out and more rural, they did not have the resources and budget to offer a more general personal enrichment program. He pointed out that the magnitude of Timberland College's community education program was much smaller than one offered by Metropolitan Community College (an institution located in the capital city of the state, where is more

than 10 hours away):

> If we are a larger community college in a metropolitan area, we will only run this class if we have 15 students. [But] we are not, we don't have the opportunity to do that… We may offer that class if we have 8-10 [students], because it is a true need to the community or it is important for us. So even though the numbers are much lower, we need to offer that course.

Yet, the size factor sometimes could turn a negative situation to a positive one. Mr. Thompson and his staff had more flexibility at Timberland College to work directly with students to help them develop an alternative if there were some reasons they could not run a class.

Mr. Thompson shared a great deal from his first hand experiences of operating community education programs, while President Turner highlighted characteristics of the general management of such programs at Timberland College. "The State gave us no money for community education, we have to manage to be self-supporting… at least break it even, " the college president said. He went on mentioning that low enrollments resulted in elimination of programs: "It is very hard in the area without the population to run [community education programs] very much. The community education program needs a number, and to make it succeed, you have to pick very carefully what those things are." Mr. Thompson believed that there was an interest here, but Timberland College just did not have the resources to offer a lot community education programs.

President Turner admitted that there were few negative voices from the community when Timberland College removed the non-academic programs. "Sometimes people that want certain things are unhappy, they are disappointed, but they tend to understand it, because everybody is aware of the impact of the state cuts on our area." He continued, "It's not just on the college. Local schools feel bad. County revenue sharing has been

almost eliminated, and so they are all facing the economic constraint as we are." Turner's words infer that fragile local economic reality equally impacted every education sector in the community and such reality was well acknowledged by the community residents. Therefore, even with unhappiness and disappointment, community residents respected what the college leaders had to do to protect the institution.

Despite his confession of limited offerings of community education programs in Timberland College, President Turner admitted that "[community education] is a viable, a valuable part of the community college mission." He also agreed that such programs contributed to the formation of a comprehensive community college and were in the college mission statement. Apparently, President Turner considered community education an essential component of not only the mission of Timberland College but also of the concept of comprehensive community colleges.

Unit structure and programming process.

In Timberland College, the community education program is not a free-standing unit. Instead, the Dean of Instruction, Mr. Thompson, was responsible for its coordination and operation. Due to the smaller size of the College, administrators tended to wear a lot of hats, reflecting the condition of staff shortages in some critical areas, including the community education program. President Turner described such difficulty with frustration, "We really don't have the money. You have to run a college out of a very limited resources base. So we don't have a lot of staff here... So you have to adjust according to the situation that you are in ... [to] fulfills the needs of our students that come for our services."

According to the Dean of Instruction, the programming of community education as

well as many of the credit programs at Timberland College relied a great deal on the contacts of the community. Focus groups composed of individuals from the sustained network tended to interact with the community regularly to identify needs for the College, such as the employment training for local industries. Once the need was identified, the Dean's office consulted with a variety of advisory committees to essentially get a sense of how the college could in their specific areas of expertise become more involved in helping the community with its needs. Based on comments received from advisory committees, Mr. Thompson and his staff then assessed whether or not they had existing programs that met what was demanded. If yes, these existing programs would be restructured in terms of format and medium to respond to those pressing needs. "If that's something that's new," Mr. Thompson said, "then because of the resources, what we would do at that point [is] we look at when do we have the resources to develop that, in a credible and reasonable time frame." He continued, "if we do, great, we'll do that. If we don't, then we will identify resources for them… [W]e will help them find the ways to provide those needs, so it's conceivable and it's happened where we've identified through our network." Even though they sometimes could not do actual hands-on teaching, Mr. Thompson of Timberland College said they would try their best to find alternates as their way of responding to the community needs. Mr. Thompson contended that their work showed the value of community service, and believed through such programming process, the College provided valuable community education opportunity to its service area.

Mr. Thompson noted that he needed to be very careful that what the College provided actually met the need. "[W]hat we look to identify very early on is how extensive the need is," he emphasized,

If the need is coming from one community or one business, and they are not a tremendous amount of people, and that's something that we don't have anything on, then we are probably not the best place to provide that. It may be best to help them find the external sources. We need to look at numbers, and whether or not it makes sense to do.

He further shared that he always asked four essential questions in order to determine if one program was a go:

[O]ne is what we have been asked is consistent to our mission; secondly, does it advance students' interests, and the students you can define probably as being community stakeholders and the like; three is, if we are ethical; and four, do we have the resources to do it. And generally if it's consistent with our mission, advance students' interests and community needs, and it's ethical and we have the resources, then it's a no brainer, we will do that. If we don't have the resources and it meets the other three, we probably ought to take a good look at the whole to get the resources to do it. And, if any of the other three is a no, then the process stops. Because you really can't put... we are not at point that we can do things outside of the mission. We need to remain focused on our stakeholders. And obviously if it's illegal or unethical, we ought not be doing it.

However, not every request received from the community could be fulfilled by the Timberland College leaders, even though they would like to be everything the community wanted them to be. Mr. Thompson confessed, "the reality is that, ah in today's world of limited resources, that we can't be everything to everyone." Reflected from his experiences as the Dean of Instruction for nearly a decade, Mr. Thompson admitted that lack of expertise in certain areas prevented them from providing the services for which the community asked. When being asked of his responses to the community under such circumstances, he answered,

We will run upfront and tell them [the truth]. They appreciate that, because they obviously will not be very pleased if we provide a service where we are not capable of doing it... We [will say], we may not [be] the ones to provide that for you but we will work with you to find that.

Mr. Thompson felt it is best to let the community know whether the College was able or unable to help them, and where they could to help find the resources for the community.

President Turner described the reactions of the community: "[If] you are not providing a service that [the community people] value then they let you know about it. There can be some unhappiness." Echoing Mr. Thompson's answer, the President communicated with the public and kept them well informed of things going on at the College through frequently published news releases.

Relationship with other agencies.

President Turner seemed to feel Timberland College had no competitors for services. Restricted by the sizes of the College and its service area, he emphasized that Timberland College worked together with other community agencies to make much use out of the money and resources they could get. He realized that he could not run their programs in competition with other community organizations:

> We work together. They share labs, equipment, faculty with us. We split cost and faculty members' salary. We are an entity rather than [competitors]. And it helps us to get more millage out of the state or federal dollars that we get here... We try not to pose competition with [other agencies]. We don't try to duplicate each other's programs if we could avoid it.

Throughout the whole conversation with President Turner, he did not use the word "competitor" to refer to any of the higher education institutions and community agencies in the neighborhood.

Mr. Thompson, on the other hand, identified that their competitors were primarily higher education institutions, both four-year and two-year, in the neighboring state. "We watch our tuition rates for other districts of other states very closely, because we will be competing and we do compete with some [technical colleges in the neighboring state], that are operated under a different system," he said. The Dean of Instruction, however, concurred with President Turner that Timberland College worked with those institutions

in a sense that all institutions informally looked at how the region as a whole could better

serve as an educational community. "Do we do so by duplicating?" according to Mr.

Thompson, "No, and do we do so by supporting each other's programs? Yes."

As for collaborators, President Turner and Mr. Thompson explicitly stated that the

region as a whole collaborates with each other to fulfill the needs of the community. They

recited some of the agencies with whom Timberland College collaborates: county

economic development center for corporate training, a state-wide career planning agency

for occupational related services, public schools in the area for vocational education and

various property relationships, local employers for career education, and governmental

agencies for contracted educational services. President Turner said, "We have a lot of

interactions with [those organizations], and we keep close ties with them... We [partner]

with all kinds of [entities] in the area." Mr. Thompson added, "We make extensive use of

partnerships. In fact, frankly without partnerships, we don't have the resources to do

everything."

Another way that Timberland College collaborates with other community

organizations is through grants programs. "Because we serve a poor area," explained the

college president, "we don't have rich resources. We simply work together to make much

use out of the money we can get, either federal or state money to do the training and help

the community any way that we can." Due to current fiscal crunches, President Turner

foresees that the college will rely on more private source funding through grants money

based on collaborative works with other agencies.

From an administrative perspective, Mr. Thompson credited this to internal

partnership:

Again, a virtue of our small size, we have everyone know everyone and, ah if people need help, we are able to go and ask another office for help... If we are doing something for business and industry for example, we work jointly [with different departments] to develop an appropriate curriculum... So you have that cross... ah representation, people working from a variety of areas to come to an appropriate program.

The internal partnership forms by the different groups being involved and becoming aware of what different perceptions and ideas are, in order to establish shared values and to ensure quality services.

Both the college president and the dean emphasized their efforts to prevent producing duplicate services and programs. The Dean mentioned, "[when] someone suggests a new program, if it's offered somewhere else in this region, and given that, it doesn't make sense to duplicate that program." He elaborated how his college collaborates with others when potential duplications are possible:

[Because of our small] size, we are not able to do... ah like basket weaving, or some of those courses. We rely on others to do that... [if we can't meet the requests,] we facilitate [people to seek help from other places through our network, so] we provide the value of community service, and I think it [is a] valuable community education opportunity for those folks, even though we didn't do a... the actual hands-on teaching ourselves.

Dean Thompson said they are like the broker facilitating people from the community find the assistance needed. He continued, "So, rather than us to go through the efforts to develop that, we are better off working with the external communities."

Resources needed.

Funding was the most pressing resource that both President Turner and Mr. Thompson addressed to ease the administration of the college, particularly given the frail local economy[1]. They were well aware of the fact that the College could not heavily

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[1] The local economy of Timberland County is directly resulted from the low tax base of the area: 75% of the land is tax exempt due to the status of federal and state forests, in addition to that approximately 20% of

minimal cost without leaving home. Over eight decades of evolution and growth, Bridge

has become a countywide college, which offers services to 25 school districts in Brighton

County, including university transfer, technical and lifelong learning programs. After

eighty years of success and development, Bridge College transformed from a city junior

college to a comprehensive community college providing offerings to residents through 7

satellite locations scattering around its 6 neighboring townships, in addition to its main

campus in Big City. In 2004, more than 15,000 unduplicated annual credit and non-credit

students enrolled in Bridge College.

The current composition of the student demographics at Bridge College includes

adults, young adults, displaced workers, and employers seeking to become globally

competitive. Specifically, high school graduates through those in their early 20s are the

major age groups that Bridge's credit programs are reaching; the basic set of students in

non-credit programs, ranges from average age 24-60 who are look for opportunities to

improve their skills and to fulfill personal learning needs. The enrollment has risen nearly

30% in the past 5 years, and is the first choice of students of every high school in Brighton

County according to a recent community survey conducted by the College.

Brighton County, the administrative region where Bridge College is located, is

facing imminent major economic and financial difficulties because the downsizing of a

few major manufacturing companies housed here. The one-time thriving and

self-contained economy is disappearing, leading to an increasing unemployment rate in

the area. Just the biggest municipal city in Brighton County alone, Big City has lost

80,000 residents over the past 30 years, many of which migrated to places where job

opportunities are available. The majority of suburban residents in Brighton County

currently live in communities struggling with social change, fiscal stress or significant

population growth with low or modest resources. However, Brighton County has many

strengths to build on, including a wealth of regional educational institutions from K-12 to

higher education, a continuously growing healthcare industry, convenient access to major

interstate highways, and a cadre of citizens committed to the region's revitalization.

President Baker and Director Bayer both participated in this study. Dr. Mark Baker

assumed the president position at Bridge College in 2000. As the chief executive officer

of the college, President Baker oversees the administration and operation of the College

and reports directly to the board of trustees. Before joining Bridge College, he was a

president at another community college in another state and his prior work experiences

included being an industrial salesman, a high school career education instructor, the

general manager at a local shopping mall, and the dean of business education and the vice

president of community and economic development at a community college. The variety

of jobs President Baker has had provides him with rich experiences of working with the

community, and helps him to be better prepared to be a community college president.

President Baker thought community colleges were critical to the community and local

economic development, and realized that he works for every employee in the college, for

the board, and for the community. He showed a great deal of appreciation to his

colleagues and employees, emphasizing that it was truly because of people who

understand what their role is and they follow through with their responsibilities, that he

enjoyed working at Bridge College very much.

Ms. Jill Bayer is the Director and Coordinator for Community Education

Programs at Bridge College, with the primary responsibility to bring together non-credit

courses for the community and lifelong learners, and to offer programs that could bring someone's skills up or offer them a new direction for their life. She started out 15 years ago as a non-credit computer instructor at Midway Community College, and then became its non-credit community education program coordinator 11 years ago. After 5 years in the position, Ms. Bayer left the college for personal reasons for a few years. She rejoined the team and resumed the coordinator position 3 years ago because she enjoyed the privilege of helping community residents through her work. She liked walking around to her classes at night and talking to the students at the coffee machine on break, just being there and listening to them, hearing what they were saying. She used the word awesome to share her such personal experience of working at Bridge College in this specific position and felt she got back more than she gave. Through her work, she believed that she was giving back to the community and what the college did had such an impact on community residents, not just their professional life but also personal life.

Positionality of the College and Relationship to Its Community

President Baker was proud of the fact that his colleagues and staff were really stepping up getting ready for the all the tasks to fulfill institutional needs. He believed that the service quality that his college presented to the community enabled Bridge College to receive a first millage increase in nearly 40 years. He also shared results from a recent countywide survey on how people from the service areas thought about the college: over 90% of people who responded agreed the programs and services at Bridge were needed in the community and nearly 70% of respondents stated that someone, including him/herself, from his/her immediate family had taken at least one class at the College. The survey affirmed that Bridge College is well-received by people from the

service areas.

President Baker said his vision of community-college relationships at Bridge

College was shaped from his past work experiences,

> We are in the mist in the community...[When I was the] VP of community and
> economic development, I had to be out and to the community asking what they
> needed and providing them not only the direct responses that I had but services
> throughout the whole college. And I had to lead people, the right people, and that
> we solved problems, and we provided services and... educational programs and
> trainings that would meet their needs.

He thought education programs were not the only link connecting Baker College to its

service areas, but the various innovative responses that the college could provide to the

residents solidified the connection of the college with the surrounding communities. He

agreed that the positive image that the college has established over the years increased the

visibility of the college to the community: "You establish the relationship, then you are

constantly getting feedback, and that's what we are about."

The President emphasized the tight relationship that Bridge College has with its

service areas, while Ms. Bayer shared her observations of the changes occurring in the

relationship through her interaction with the community. "I see an increasing

enrollment," she said. "I think the feedback that I'm getting from the community, and the

perception of what we do, is different than what most people in the community are used

to." What she was referring to is the phenomena that more and more still active and

energetic retired residents from Brighton County are looking for a more diverse array of

program choices to fill their time. Therefore, she and her staff at the community

education unit have to break their assumptions about the characteristics of elder people

and to figure out innovative ways to reach out to them in order to maintain the established

positive image of the college to them and sustain the tight relationships.

Identifying Community Needs

To President Baker, identifying community needs is done by everybody in the college and every division plays a part: "Everybody from each point within the college, sees what's in himself and gets involved. Not everybody sees that they need to be actively involved; a lot of people do." He thought that such kind of willingness should be encouraged and that it is the leader's job to support staff's efforts to participate in knowing what is demanded by the community.

The coordinator of community education programs said her unit was very vocal in identifying community needs. Ms. Bayer said,

> We have different advisory boards. I personally go out to senior citizen centers, to the Chamber of Commerce. We are very active in trade fairs, and... if we know some of the government agencies that they will have a trade fair, we go and we listen... We read the paper, we watch TV, we listen to community leaders... [Y]ou get out to the community centers, and talk to who you are trying to reach.

She further gave an example of how using multiple means helped her to be more accurate in interpreting what was truly needed by the community:

> [To revive local economy a political party said] we need high tech and the cities are creating high paying jobs. Well thinking of the high paying jobs and high tech, what are you going to do in [Big City and Brighton County]? [The people] are not, they are gonna leave [the State]. So they need to find out, what we can do as a community, to bring the economy [here], so that we can provide services and skills so that the people stay... So you know both sides of the spectrums, but if we give them the training but don't provide them local based economy to work in, then I think we are doing the services to the students [but] not doing the services to the community, so we are training to leave. And we need to train them to stay. That's the only thing that's gonna turn the economy around, especially here.

Listening to different voices helped her to design an intervention plan for solving the dilemma, which is to provide a skill-set introducing an entrepreneurial atmosphere to the community so that students would want to start a big business here, and watch it grow, without leaving Big City. To her, lack of job opportunities was not primarily resulted

from lack high tech knowledge, it was because people did not know how to become self-employed with the resources they have already had.

Concept of Community Education

When asked about drawing his concept of community education, President Baker immediately put Bridge College in the center of his drawing, and then added the programs and services that the college offers outside of the full circle. He filled out all the major programs and services offered by the college simultaneously while introducing me what they were. At last, he finished his image with a third circle, which he named community partnerships, covering agencies that the college partners with and the community that the college reaches out to (Figure 8). President Baker confirmed that the second circle represents the immediate units through which the college provides programs, and the last circle highlights external forces with which the college has different levels of interaction. He explained,

> These are all services, we offer them. We offer them through here (pointing to the center). Some we have direct control over, some we don't have direct control over. We don't have the control over our accreditation, we don't have control over government regulations. Sometimes we have control over the partnerships, sometimes we don't. Students, we interact with. So these are the... these are the practice and services (second circle) that meet all of these (last circle), depending on what they are.

His concept of community education was basically grounded in the various relationships that Bridge College has established with units inside the institution and with agencies outside of the institution. Even if the image was drawing five years later, President Baker admitted that his concept would always remain the same, with the college staying in the center of it. Apparently, he conceptualized his understanding of community education through the lenses of identification of what and to whom the college provides programs

PROGRAMS & SERVICES   COMMUNITY   PARTNERSHIPS

EXPECTATION & NEEDS

COLLEGE BAD FINANCING

COMMUNITY MARKETING

PROG PARTNERSHIP

COLLEGE STUDIES SERVICES

ECONOMIC FORCES

STUDENTS

SOC SERV LIBRARY

CREDIT COURSE TRANSFER

COLLEGE

GOV REGULATIONS & AGENCIES

NON PROFIT

TEC COURSES

WORK FORCE

CONT EDU

BUS COMMENTS

HIGHER ED REGU & ACCREDITION AGENCIES
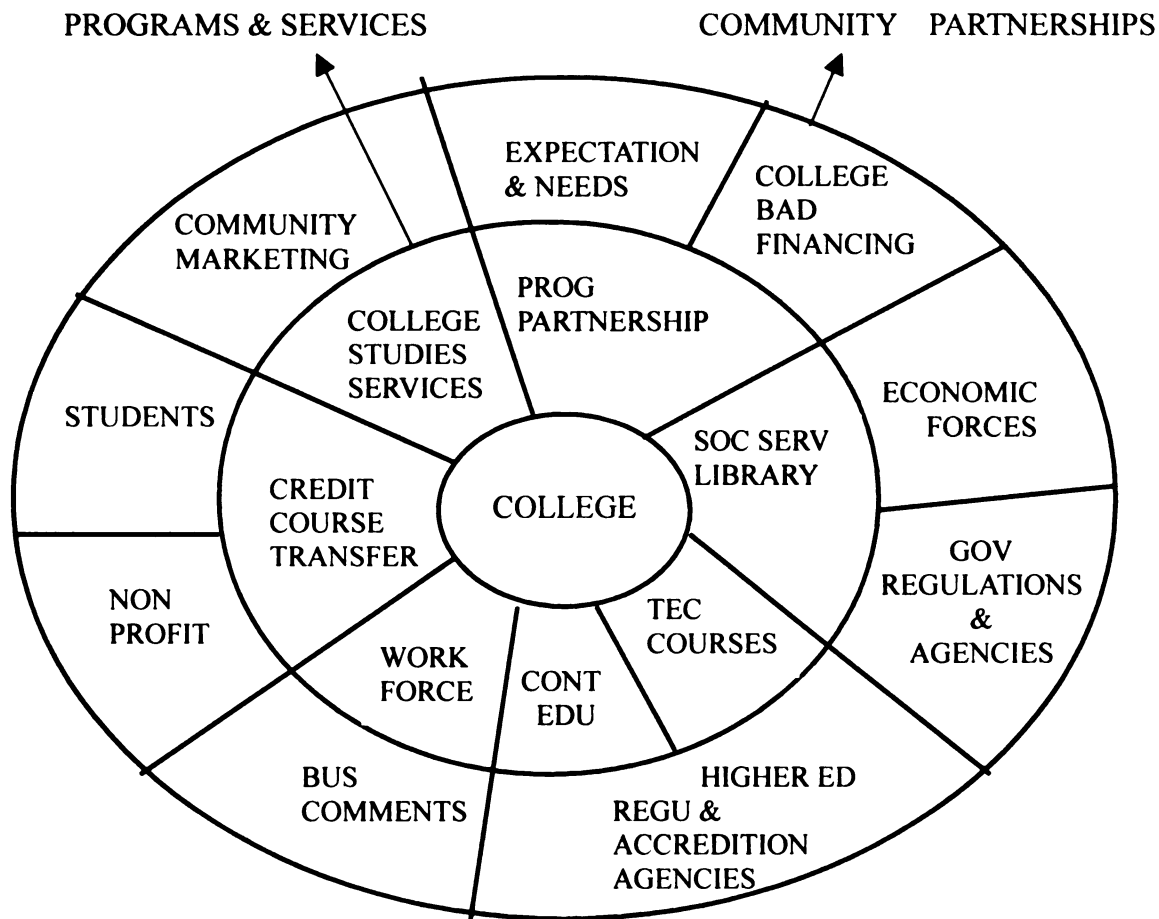
Figure 8: President Baker's Concept of Community Education[1]

and services.

Ms. Bayer, portrayed her concept of community education in her drawing of the

earth being embraced and held by big and warm hands (Figure 9). She said,

> [T]he world is the community, and we are holding up and reaching out to the
> community. [My thought of the concept of community education is] it goes
> beyond the border of discipline. [I]t goes beyond the borders; with a lot of classes
> online, you can reach worldwide. So... so the community can be a symbol as a
> group of citizens or can be... the city counsel... I think, what I mean, reaching out
> to the community, is to reaching out to anybody that needs us. I can't be

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[1] Explanation of some abbreviations: CONT EDU – continuing education; TEC COURSES – state-wide intercollegiate technical courses; SOC SERV – societal services; PROG PARTNERSHIPS – program partnerships; BUS COMMENTS – comments from the business community; HIGH ED REGU – higher education regulations; and COLLEGE BAD FINANCING – college's current bad financing situations.

everything for everybody, but there's a group of people out there, that I feel need us.
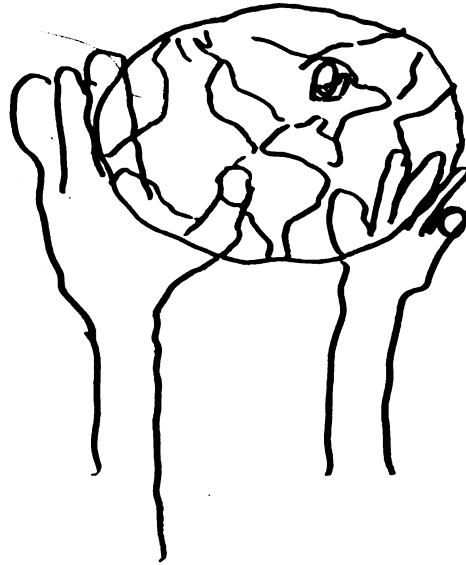
Figure 9: Ms. Bayer's Concept of Community Education[1]

Her picture uncovered her concept of community education as way of being, through which the college and its staff can reach to anybody in need without restrictions of disciplines. Ms. Bayer said her concept came from what she did. She felt her work is to make life better for one person at a time, and she believed that it is their reaching out to the community that creates opportunities for people in need to make a change and move on.

Ms. Bayer commented that people's understanding of community education has changed over the years, from an idea of keeping public schools open to the community at after-school hours to a means for providing skill-based training to the public. However, to her, it does not matter how the idea has evolved; she is confident that community education programs will always be needed because such programs can fill the gap in the

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[1] I traced Ms. Bayer's original with a maker to ensure the image was clear for microfilming. The original was a pencil drawing.

community. The same as President Baker, Ms. Bayer's concept of community education remains as it is if drawing the picture five years from now, but she would add more bridges between places to increase people's accessibility to her institution and her programs, and vise versa.

Community Education Programs in the College

President Baker emphasized that every part and every service in Bridge College meets a community need. "[The] community education division in college," said the president, "plays a very specific role in providing very specific products and services that is well meet different needs and perceptions, segments, stakeholders, of the community." The Director of the Community Education Programs added more details to where her unit stands in relation to the college mission:

> We offer students... [who] don't want the two-year degrees the skill sets. We fit in... re-educating, when somebody wants a new job, a new career. That's where we are set. We set in the short-term knowledge base [to help people] go on. That's our role. We fulfill that role.

Director Bayer indicated that community education programs of Bridge College are designed to fill the gaps in areas where academic (transfer and vocational education) programs have limited coverage. Borrowed from her bridge metaphor, the community education programs are the bridge that links every aspect of college missions together.

Unit structure and programming process.

Director Bayer of the community education programs at Bridge College reports to the Executive Dean of Continuing Education, and the Dean reports to the president of the College. Ms. Bayer thought this reporting line is a good arrangement since it is important for President Baker to know that her unit exists and functions well. She said,

> It changed within the last few years. Before that, we reported to the vice president

of student services. We didn't really fit. I think one of the reasons [we were] reporting to the VP was that he had at one time been the dean of continuing ed, and so, it's more or less, or he knew how to run us. So we just stayed there, among many other things he needed to do. Then my dean came in, he's only been here a year and a half, it was suggested that he report to the president, and it's working out very well.

She mentioned that the structural change has eased her uncertainty regarding how senior administrators perceive the function and value of her unit. "Before, you never knew exactly where you fit the executive cabinet agenda." She continued,

We're now, we know we have a line on the agenda every month with the executive cabinet, and that makes a big difference… We have a very open president, he will listen to any ideas that we have, and he sees the value that we bring non-credit courses to the college… I think that, because we report to him, he knows what we are doing… To have an ally and that's the president of the college, is awesome.

President Baker thought it was natural at that time that he had the Executive Dean of Continuing Education and his subordinate, the Director of Community Education Programs, directly report to his office. He explained,

Because [the VP had] a lot of different divisions reporting to him, and my background being a continuing education and workforce education [coordinator]… and knowing [the executive dean] having worked [in this area] before, it was just natural ah… that the [executive dean] reports directly to me. We worked that out and have become comfortable with [the structural change].

Although his prior work experience played an important role in the decision-making process, President Baker admitted that even without it, changes would been made anyway. "You have to be sensitive to everything we do," said the college president, "helping the college be perceived by the community for [the] services we are providing." Apparently, President Baker realized that every community college will have a different organizational and reporting structure, and every structure is subject to change in order to bring out the best of quality services to the areas that the college serves.

Ms. Bayer told me how she typically put together a community education program at Bridge College by using a recent example. The State lately announced that a licensed dental hygienist could now monitor and administer nitrous oxide without a dentist in the office. As soon as the announcement reached the public, Ms. Bayer was approached by many people. She said,

> [To develop a new program], first thing it has to be a need, and it has to be a need for more than one class. When [the new announcement] was brought to me, [people] said, "oh we need this class, we have done hygiene courses." And I said, "It sounds like we do, but what are the numbers we are talking? Are we talking, there's ten people out there that needs this class? Or are there 500 people that need this class?" Because the set-ups cost of getting the hygienic nitrous oxide machines was quite substantial, we [had] to run some numbers. I needed to be able to say, "what's the budget on the investment?"

What she has discussed so far is to determine the need and identify the costs of setting up the infrastructures. Ms. Bayer went on, "then [we did] research and [found] out if anybody else [was] doing it, because it doesn't do you good to put together a program that's a hundred dollars if down the road there is someone else doing it." Then she and her staff priced out the reputation and credentials of the instructors, and what state regulations are of vocational- and skill-related courses, to determine the class fee. She continued,

> [In programming], you typically price fixed and your non-fixed variables and you put it all together, and shake it up, and... throw it up, and... say, Okay, we are gonna do this. And, you make a bottom line... and the bottom line, on most of my classes are 5 students. And so that means, I don't really start making money till I had that sixth student, but if I have 5 students, I can run it and break it even, and to me, I can do that... [Y]ou have to run it like a business.

According to Ms. Bayer, marketing tools were being considered simultaneously during the programming process. In the case of the hygienic nitrous oxide program, experiences and reputation of instructors and the high rate of students' obtaining state-recognized

certifications after program completion were marketing strategies that Bridge College's community education division employed to attract people to enroll.

If the college could not offer what was being asked of from the community, President Baker bore the burden of telling people in the service areas that the college could not be everything to everyone. He thought it is important that college leaders constantly re-evaluate institutional mission to better respond to community needs. However, he admitted his frustration, "unfortunately now, we are pushed into re-evaluating the products and services we offer, because financially we are being cut… cut…cut… And so we have to really evaluate what products and services we offer."

Reflecting from his extensive experiences of working in the community college setting, President Baker frankly shared with me the community's reaction to program termination, "Unfortunately for a community college, we [must] offer certain programs. If you're tapped to remove those programs, stop offering [them], the community can come in and make a lot of noise." When that happens, President Baker thought college administrators could only count on the board to examine and support, and to understand why the college leaders are doing certain things. He emphasized that community college leaders and administrators need to let people from their service areas know that there are limits in their programs and services.

Relationship with other agencies.

In Ms. Bayer's responses to her programming process, she mentioned that her unit would do research to identify if similar educational programs have been offered somewhere else. Although she did not articulate the relationship between her unit and other providers, her comments still alluded to the potential competition among them in

terms of offering distinctive programs and attracting students. Throughout the conversation with Ms. Bayer, she did not talk about who Bridge College's competitors are, but revealed her intention to avoid program redundancy. Similarly, President Baker used neither "competition" nor "competitor" to describe other organizations in the community. Instead, he used "peer" to refer to only other higher education institutions in the region.

Contrary to competitors, President Baker excitedly introduced me to some of their many collaborators in the community. One of the examples is that Bridge College, along with a number of health care providers, hospitals, and colleges and universities in the state, partnered together to form a regional health coalition providing individuals from lower-income backgrounds learning opportunities to obtain entry-level jobs in health care. The college is also involved in a community development project that is a total of 25+ community organizations working together to strengthen one of the lowest socioeconomic areas in Big City. The president thought collaborating with different organizations to help with community issues is a direct way to respond to community needs. He concluded, "[E]very aspect of the college, whether it's credit, non-credit, whether it's student services or..., we are always reaching out and working with different parts of the community."

Supplemental to the external collaborative relationships that President Baker mentioned, Ms. Bayer stressed the particular efforts she made to establish collaborative relationships with the academic programs at Bridge College. She said,

> Like our anesthesia class, we combined with [our health care department]. I went and talked to the dean of the department, and told her what we were looking at, and [asked], "is this something we can collaborate with?"

Therefore, she sometimes recruits instructors from the academic programs to teach the non-credit community education classes.

Resources needed.

Continuously struck by budget cuts from the state government the past few years, President Baker reiterated that more private funding is necessary for Bridge College in order to enable the college to maintain focus on fulfilling institutional missions. Because the Division of Community Education is zero-base-budgeted, Director Bayer does not think extra funding is one of the most important resources that her self-sustaining unit needs. She, however, was appreciative that she could receive substantial spiritual support from President Baker and her boss, from which she felt her work was being valued and affirmed.

Critical Issues

President Baker agreed that leadership may change depending on the needs of the future and the community. Therefore, if the leader was not capable of responding to community needs promptly, either the person in the office has to change his leadership style or the leader has to be replaced with someone more competent. In an era full of changes and challenges, he believed "[a community college] requires more of a visionary individual who would say this is where are we going." He said, "The president now of a community college particularly, must be one that understands how to respond to all [stakeholders from] the community, internal and external." President Baker credited the openness of Bridge College's Board of Trustees that allows him to concentrate on making sure that the College is fulfilling the expectations of the community. He thought his strength as an effective leader of the college came through the board's trusting in him.

In terms of how to improve her leadership in order to more effectively and efficiently lead her unit, Ms. Bayer thought she has to stay on top of things going on in the community. "[W]hen you stop learning, you stop growing," said the Director of the Community Education Programs. So she regularly reads, looks at the national trend in economic development, and looks into state policies, to keep herself informed.

Site 4: Great Lake Community College

Site and Informants

Great Lake Community College is located in a rural town, where water resources are abundant. The College is one of the oldest community colleges established in the State, and has been a place that supports learning to all in the region. After over 50 years of development, Great Lake Community College has grown into a multi-campus community college scattering around the town.

In terms of the size, Great Lake Community College touches about 20,000 different learners every year through academic degree programs, continuing education, organizational training, and cultural activities. A large university center complex resides on campus, facilitating the delivery of programs and courses beyond the associate degree level to citizens in the region. The Great Lake Community College University Center has enabled residents to complete degrees without leaving the area. In addition, there is a training and research component of the college that works directly with business and industry; they serve about 3,500 per year. The Continuing and Extended Education Program deals with 8,500 enrollments annually. Great Lake Community College also has a museum and an observatory, which are open to the public year-round. According to a recent community survey of the 6-county service area, over 80 percent of the population

has had some type of contact with the college.

Great Lake Community College created a language to categorize who its learners are: learner group one is the traditional student who is getting a standard credential, whether it is an associate's degree or a certificate; learner group two is the individual who is interested in learning for the sake of learning and the credential is not important; and the last group are organizational learners, meaning an organization seeks help from the college as a whole. These three learner groups make up the rich and diverse clientele of the college.

Great Lake Community College resides in Lake City, which is the fastest growth area in the State. The population of Lake City is changing; especially in the last ten years, a significant number of people have migrated to the area. Many of those new residents are white-collar, well-educated retirees. As for the composition of race/ethnicity of the residents based on 2000 Census Data, 96% are Caucasians, followed by 0.9% of American Indians and Alaskan Natives. It is obviously an extremely homogeneous community in terms of racial distributions.

Community residents talk about the college being their college, almost relating themselves to it with a private college mentality. They show a solid ownership, and that helps Great Lake Community College to work more closely with the community to meet local educational demands.

The college president and the director of the Continuing and Extended Education Program of Great Lake Community College were two of the participants in this study. Dr. John Gates has been serving as the president of Great Lake Community College since 2000. He identified himself as not a normal community college president because prior to

his current position, he had work experiences in private business and industry and in the contexts of four-year higher education institutions. During his years working at a research university, he was a full-time faculty at first and then started taking administrative and leadership roles in most parts of the university. He found his past work experiences were quite helpful to him in fulfilling his duties as a community college president, and shaped his view on education. He views educational sectors as an industry, a more difficult business nowadays since there are more competing stakeholders that have legitimate corners on resources. Guided by his personal views, President Gates leads Great Lake Community College with the belief that the leaders and administrators have to change the ways in which they do things in order to get the college as a whole ready for challenges caused by the changing society. He values the role of community colleges to the society, and thinks his work experiences with Great Lake Community College have been rewarding. Most important of all, he knows that the college is the kind of organization that he wants to be involved in.

Ms. Sandy Goodman has worked for Great Lake Community College for ten years and the last seven years has been in the position as the Director of Continuing and Extended Education Program. Her office is the community and professional development side of the institution, which primarily provides non-credit courses to the community. As the program director, Ms. Goodman is responsible for overseeing the administration and development of her program in a broader form, in order to stay on top of what her programs need to be in the community and for the community. The nature of her work involves a lot of program development, which means putting together programs, recruiting students and instructors, and managing the operation. Her overall experiences

of working at Great Lake Community College is pleasant; she always feel fresh and new because so much of what she has been involved in at work is trying to look for new things and being creative. With huge passion, she appreciates her work, the people that she works with, and the administrators of the college.

Positionality of the College and Relationship to Its Community

Although located in a rural area, Great Lake Community College possesses various resources and is identified as the regional leader in cultural and personal enrichment. "I've told people," said President Gates, "we're a university masquerading in community college clothes, because of the breadth of the things that we do." Different from many rural community colleges, Great Lake Community College has a very rich set of traditions in terms of participating in government, and partnerships with organizations and people in town and throughout the State, which is an indicator that this is a community college with great competencies.

Ms. Goodman seconded President Gates' comments and added that *find it here* has become a leading commitment that the college holds for the community. She thought that Great Lake Community College as a whole showed a great deal of stewardship in providing vigorous lifelong learning opportunities to community residents. Throughout the conversations with President Gates and Ms. Goodman, it was impressive to observe that they both repeatedly used two words, learning and transformation, indicating that some institutional jargons and consensuses have been successfully created leading to a shared vision of the core missions of the College.

Based on a recent community survey, President Gates said about 83% of the population have had some type of contact with Great Lake Community College. He

continued, "I have people in the community say, one of the things that they notice is that they believe we are much more connected to the community than we have been in some parts of our history." He believed that the Great Lake Community College has a history of maintaining a close relationship and interaction with its service areas and continues to strengthen such ties by creating more opportunities for people from the community to get involved, such as recruiting volunteers to work at a college-run local museum. With great pride, President Gates said, "people find their own way to connect to the college."

Apparently shaped by her work experiences as the Director of Continuing and Extended Education Program, Ms. Sandy Goodman indicated the college-community relationships lied in the quality and freshness of programs that the college offers to the community. To keep staying in connection with her clientele, she admitted, "[my office is] trying to do 20% new programs, because that's what you play with." The frequent alternations and changes, on the basis of constant feedback received from students, enables her office to be more responsive to different learning needs and to act fast to dessert disappointing instructors and courses.

Although using different lenses, both President Gates and Ms. Goodman highlighted the fact that the key to sustaining the connection between the college and its community is to create multiple and abundant ways for people to get involved in college-related events. The survey results revealed how well their efforts have paid off.

Identifying Community Needs

"We're actually increasing our skill sets to be able to do it in better ways," President Gates said of how his institution identifies community needs. He placed advisory groups as the direct link that is in place and with whom the faculty and staff meet to improve

program performance. In addition, President Gates held regular community breakfast meetings asking residents about what is missing in the offerings and services of the College. Other approaches for information gathering included conducting various surveys, serving on multiple community committees and boards, and having informal focus group conversations with community members. President Gates concluded that the process is "data-oriented and information-oriented" and the college as a whole has to have "more organizational capacities to go collect and utilize the information to make decisions" that have joint collective benefit for both Great Lake Community College and the region.

Ms. Goodman answered from the standpoint that the community has to feed the institution its needs, enabling the institution to re-shape itself to respond to the needs. She further emphasized that the institution must position itself to be flexible and willing to react to what is being asked. "By the constant listening, by the constant re-shaping, [and] by the constant learning," she added are the guiding principles that her office used to identify and stay on top of what's being needed in its service areas.

Concept of Community Education

President Gates came straight to the point saying that he could put everything he and his employees do into a category of community education or community learning, when he was asked to graphically present his concept of community education. He explained his vision by drawing a matrix,

> I think people within the community have different needs you know. What I've shown people here is this kind of model, where I talked about different learner groups, where learner group one is traditional/credential, and learner group two is individuals where the credential is optional, and learner group three where is organization [that seeks short-term educational programs from the College]. And then for us as an institution… we have certain corridors, if you want to call them corridors of excellence. They are corridors of excellence of focus (Figure 10).

Corridors of excellence/focus

	WATER	Health Care	IT		
I Trad/Credential	Lake Academy				
II Individual, credential optional	Continuing and Extended Education				
III Organization					
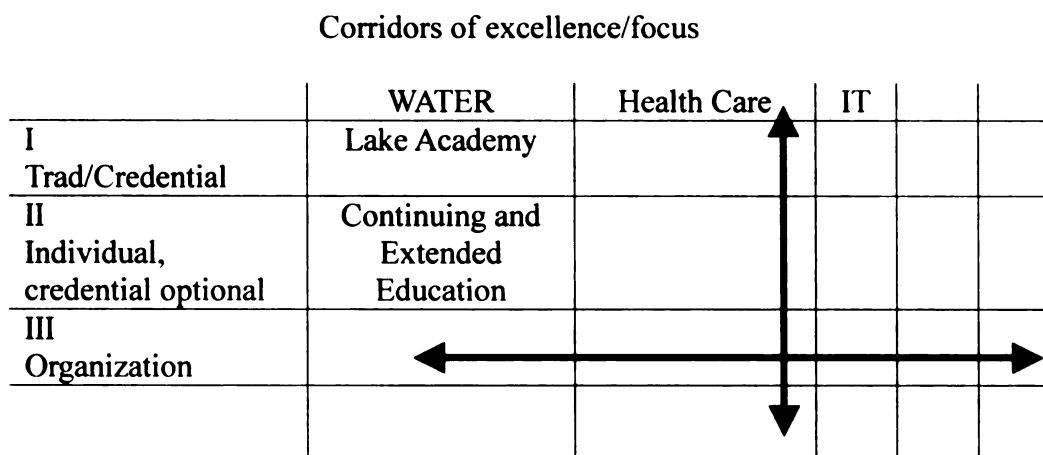
Figure 10: President Gate's Concept of Community Education

He went on using water-related issues, a critical topic to the community that is

surrounded by abundant water resources, as the subject matter to elaborate how the model

works. "The biggest thing that we do with water is that we have the Lake Academy...

that is a traditional program and the goal is you get this credential... Beyond that we do,

we may have a couple of [continuing and extended education] classes, maybe some

special interests, then that would be about it." He continued,

> For a resource that is so critical to this region... we had to ask ourselves... "well all right, so what else should the college be doing in this area?" And more than just what we should be doing rather than building just new programs to go into these boxes... you have to create vertical and horizontal integration *(the arrows in the figure)*. And so we've been able to craft these: water is one, health care is one, and there are others, [but] we don't put everything into our corridors.

With this model, President Gates envisions the college works as a whole,

> [T]he question has become how to share resources across the college so that you're not replicating inefficiencies. And more important than the replication of inefficiencies is, you're better serving the learner, because you are asking what is that our learner need... and more importantly, what can the people who work in this part of the college learn from somebody over here... And so this model, while [it] looks like a matrix form of a loosely-coupled organization, is more for learning purposes, to get people to think about the place differently, and think about the fact that the learning that takes place here has value... Another thing that I think education has to crack is, ah... let's say that you generate a lot of time

over here in [continuing and extended education] or community learning, than you decide some point, geez, I really want a traditional credential, the common answer in the past has been, "that's nice, start over". But this is not real learning. I don't believe that. I don't believe that's a one-to-one translation. But if in fact what we are doing is facilitating learning, it's gotta be some value of what these people did either at an organizational level or this individual non-credit level, to come back into the credit credential.

President Gates' concept of community education uncovered his efforts to establish a learning community within Great Lake Community College that values the creation of multidimensional learning opportunities to meet diverse learning needs and the transferability across the three learner groups.

Instead of presenting a concept of community education in forms of figures or images, Director Goodman verbalized hers:

As an administrator and someone who is strongly believing in the mission of the institution, I would put Great Lake Community College at the center of [it]... I am picturing almost a waterspout kind of thing... [W]e're situated by water we have around here, [so] I'll use a metaphor of water.

She continued to explain the metaphor of water, implying waters as the community and the college is the bay,

So many creeks, streams, rivers, water sheds, that feed into the bay. And, then the bay gives back, all... all the time. It flows into this place that there's always movements of water, and it's all sustaining. It could do without the rivers and the waters [inaudible], but it feeds. [A]nd what I picture the community, as all these uh, it all feeds into this [bay]. And as... as it flows in, the whole institution is really just gathering, to take it back out... You are attempting to organize in some way, and give it back. So that it can do it again, that it nurtures... community nurtures it, we help to shape it, split back out.

With the continuous water-bay interaction, the reciprocal relationships sustain. She concluded her metaphor,

I think that would be a metaphor, it wouldn't matter if that's credit or non-credit. I mean those things that matter because the whole point of our institution, and any institution that does education, it simply wants to help to shape it, to help to organize it, to help to put it together so that you can get something to take it back out. [Water]

doesn't feed itself; it would die, if it doesn't split it back out.

Joking that she needed clay instead, Ms. Goodman still vividly shared her illustration of community education as the continuous relationship between water and the bay. In her concept, the communities (creeks, rivers, all kinds of water) come together and feed and grow the bay (Great Lake Community College), and the bay in turn splits all waters back out. Ms. Goodman thought the metaphor shows acceptance, responsiveness, accessibility, and energy, which were important elements of her concept of community education.

Community Education Programs in the College

Distinctiveness of the programs.

Director Goodman of the Continuing and Extended Education Programs explained the role of her unit: "Our role, is prescribed by the institution, to carry the non-credit [courses]. [W]e kinda define by community and continuing ed, non-credit." In terms of the offerings, Director Goodman employed a guideline of keeping 20% of the community education program offerings new per term (5 schedules a year) in order to provide up-to-date services to the community. Even though they might not be entirely new courses, they definitely will be something that has been reworked, redesigned, and reorganized to meet the demands in the 21st century. A record of 11,000 students participated in classes offered through the Continuing and Extended Education Program in 2004, with most enrolling in computer training and professional development topics.

President Gates clearly pointed out that each unit at Great Lake Community College has to do a self-evaluation every two years on how and how well the operation and offerings of each unit fit with the mission of the college. Ms. Goodman's comprehensive answers to how her unit fits with the mission of Great Lake Community College

unintentionally indicated that the President's policies have been well executed. She

answered the positionality of the Continuing and Extended Education Programs in the

college mission by starting with the emphasis on the fact that how her unit performs is

not always the same as other academic programs. She continued,

> We are allowed some distance in terms of how we perform. We aren't allowed
> distance in our mission. Our mission is very tied to the center core, that is
> providing education that is responsive, that is proactive, so that [the college]
> meets the needs of the community, whatever those may be. And we take pride in
> doing that and as long as the institution is here... We [the college as a whole,] use
> the same... the "find it here." I feel it in my core, as much as any administrator in
> academic departments here.

Being a director overseeing the performance of her unit, Ms. Goodman saw herself

as the gatekeeper for ensuring her programs are in alignment with the college mission and

are delivered with a professional image. She thought to be successful in community

education is to pay attention to the core of institutional mission and to be a competent

college representative to the service areas.

Unit structure.

In Great Lake Community College, the Director of Continuing and Extended

Education Programs reports to the Vice President of Lifelong and Professional

Development. Director Goodman said the VP is a supervisor who constantly keeps her

informed of institutional policy changes and new directions of institutional development.

She feels fortunate to work under the VP and in a free and comfortable environment.

Ms. Goodman claimed that her unit is well-structured: "We are particularly a unit

that functions almost as a self-contained unit." She added,

> Different from many institutions, we do our own registration, we do our
> production. I mean we may outsource our production, but we create our timelines,
> we control the pricing, we control even the number of the schedules we chose to
> stay on terms [instead of the college's semester format].

According to Ms. Goodman, this format is the structure of community education

programs that would survive because it allows freedom and strong elements of

entrepreneurship to the program leaders and administrators.

Relationship with other agencies.

Both President Gates and Ms. Goodman realized that Great Lake Community

College is not the only place people could go for educational opportunities, especially for

continuing education and non-credit community education programs. Therefore, they

showed a great concern of constantly trying to identify what other regional education

providers are doing. President Gates especially cared if someone else is in a better shape

to offer certain programs. "If there is, then we need to get rid of [the duplicated program]

if that's more reasonable for someone else to do it." With the shrinking budget from the

state government, President Gates has to rely on other competitors to take over some

responsibilities for certain educational programs, so that Great Lake Community College

can save the resources to maintain the uniqueness of the college, in terms of offerings.

President Gates professed that Great Lake Community College has established a

strong orientation towards developing partnerships with various groups in the region. He

said,

> I think you will better serve this organization if you can build the relations all the
> time… So we try to do that. I think that's been a pretty consistent value of this
> college, long before I got here, is to believe that we really are the community's
> college.

To President Gates, building collaborative relationships with the community helped the

college keep a closer tie with its service areas.

Ms. Goodman mentioned that internally, her unit collaborates with academic

programs. She said, "The community education program, this community education program, I think most of them are really colleges within a college... [W]e have the partners... I mean we try to make sure in every schedule, every department has contact." For example, if someone is interested in writing, the person can take a writing class trough the Continuing and Extended Education Programs and also seek additional assistance and resources through Department of English. Ms. Goodman also recruits instructors from the academic programs to teach in her non-credit community education classes, "because [this] part of connections with the academic world, [we] build the relationships with departments, so that the departments have begun to see and feel connected with continuing and extended education." As a result, the distance between credit and non-credit programs has been reduced.

Resources needed.

Ms. Goodman was asked to share what resources were needed to get her programs running. She said, "A lot depends on what the program is." Especially for courses focusing on professional development issues, she thought her unit was not equipped with in-house expertise to maintain equipment and facilities. She felt human resources were what she needed the most. "I would like to have a larger staff, and... I appreciate, and probably should've asked for, training," she said. A larger competent staff would release an enormous amount of pressure from her, given the fact that the unit runs five schedules a year.

President Gates thought Great Lake Community College functioned as he and his senior administrators had planned, so he could not think if there was something that he could do to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of his leadership. As for Director

Goodman, keeping learning was the motto that she constantly reminded herself of to be a leader who is capable of leading a unit that is supposed to react to the changing community and society. She added, "I [need to make] sure that I keep learning. And the institution needs to support that and provide that."

Site 5: Novelty Community College

Site and Informants

Novelty Community College, located 25 miles away from a metropolitan city, was established almost six decades ago to provide learning opportunities to residents living in the suburban areas of the city. After years of development and evolution, Novelty Community College has become one of the three largest community colleges in the state. Programs and activities offered by Novelty are delivered at many locations throughout Novelty County. With well-developed road and highway networks, it is convenient for residents to access to each location.

Novelty Community College is keen on offering various programs to prepare people for life and work in the 21st century, including transfer education, career preparation, community education and services, and economic development. In addition, partnering with 10+ higher education institutions, selected bachelor's and master's degree programs are provided through Novelty's University Center. The diverse coverage of learning opportunities and quality education always draw impressive enrollments. In Year 2004, a total of 45,000 students enrolled in Novelty, with approximately 24,000 in non-credit programs.

Novelty County, where the College resides, is only miles north of the largest metropolitan region in the state. The County is ranked third in population while being the

seventh smallest in square miles among the state's 80 counties. According to the 2000 census data, 90% of Novelty County's residents are Caucasians; African Americans and Asians compose 3% and 2%, respectively, of the total population, and the remaining are Native Americans and people from other ethnic groups. In terms of age distribution, in the past 10 years, numbers of people over 65 and between 45-64 have grown 1% and 2%, respectively, while people who are in the age groups of 25-44 and 18-23 have dropped 1% and 2%. In 2000, people between 25-64 years of age made up 54% of the total population, representing a solid base of labor.

The demographics of the community have really changed over the years. Fifty years ago, Novelty County was extremely dominated by Caucasians with young families, at the average age of 30s. Suggested by the 2000 census data, a good proportion (13%) of senior citizens has evolved, and small ethnic groups have gradually replaced the homogeneous white cultures. As a result, these noticeable demographic changes are transforming Novelty County and reflect in many aspects of residents' lives, including increasing appreciation of multiculturalism in educational settings and various cultural venues occurring year round through different community organizations.

As for the local economy, automotive manufacturing is still Novelty County's leading industry, employing roughly one third of the workforce. The automobile industry is seemingly going downhill in the U.S. in general, and similar patterns are seen in Novelty County, where the employment in automobile companies is slightly declining. Service sectors contribute another one third of the County's workforce, and it is projected that the numbers of employment in the service industry will continue to grow, particularly in health care arenas.

Dr. Andy Newton is one of the longest serving community college presidents in the community college history. As the chief executive officer of Novelty Community College, he oversees all of the happenings of the college. Due to the large size of the college, he is less involved in operation aspects of the college than presidents could be at a smaller institution. Most of the time at work he deals a lot with planning, visioning, relationship building, securing funding, and governance issues. With great confidence in his senior administrative staff, President Newton relies on them to handle day-to-day functional issues. Particularly, he saw his role to a great extent was the connection between the college and some of the leaders in the community. Reflecting upon his 25 years in the presidency at Novelty Community College, Dr. Newton said it was anything but boring. He confessed that it was some desire from within capturing a part of his heart to do good and to serve the community that enabled him to stay in this position and profession. Over the years, President Newton has yet gone to a commencement ceremony where he did not get a bit choked up when seeing students succeed, because in many cases, students that came to Novelty Community College were the ones that were not supposed to be able to accomplish what they have gained. Dr. Andy Newton's previous educational training was in business management in the private sector. Prior to being the college president, he taught and served as a business officer of Novelty Community College.

Dr. Tim Nobles, one of the long serving senior administrators, is the Dean of Continuing and Community Education in Novelty Community College. His job responsibility is to oversee the operation of non-academic-degree-credit continuing education and to interact with other people on campus and at the community centers. He found his overall experience in this position exciting and amazing because of the great

amount of flexibility to creatively reach out to serve the needs of a variety of people in many different ways. Dean Nobles started his tenure at Novelty Community College 12 years ago; before joining in this team, he worked for a large correctional facility for almost three decades, and taught criminal justice at both four-year and two-year higher education institutions.

Positionality of the College and Relationship to Its Community

President Andy Newton was proud of the culture that he and his staff have created at Novelty Community College: a culture that college leaders and administrators talk to the community regularly trying to understand community needs. He said, "[I]t's just a way of behaving. Novelty is really… really unique in what we do. I think our people are much more alert to our opportunities.... I think that over time… it becomes integrated into the culture." He also acknowledged that the College strives to engage capable partners to advance Novelty Community College's programs and as a result, a value-added synergy has evolved through such collaboration. "We just received an award [from a national professional community college association] of," President Newton announced, "being one of the top ten collaboration savvy colleges in the country."

Dean Nobles touched upon the term that the people at Novelty Community College often use to reflect the efforts that have been made to develop a lifelong relationship with all learners. "Continuum of learning," said the director of the term, "The concept is that, whether you know [from] pre-kindergarten, and through a whole life-cycle, learning always goes on and there [are] always learning opportunities that are available to [everyone]." In light of the idea, the College has placed particular emphasis on facilitating students' transition seamlessly from one learning experience to another.

Although education, enrichment, and economic development are three core missions written in the mission statement of Novelty Community College, its president, Dr. Newton, thought it was the unwritten idea of promoting quality of life that should be identified as the ultimate goal of community college education. He said,

> [T]he college is an instrument of social improvement. I mean in some way... this college is supposed to make the quality of life better. And so, I would say that I would rather talk more about the quality of life mission, than each of the categories mission.

He admitted that Novelty Community College exists to provide education, enrichment, and economic development opportunities to community residents. He thought that improving the quality of life for varying populations sustains the ties between the college and its community over time.

Dean Nobles also discerned the stewardship that the College should possess. He said,

> Because the people are gonna change, it's the organization, the administration, the bureaucracy, the faculty, everything about us has to change to meet the needs of the people. Because we are a people's organization.

Their comments seem to allude to the reality that the longevity of a community college is in the hands of people from its service areas, meaning if the college does not offer quality programs and services that have a value to the community, the college will go bankrupt. President Newton's and Dean Nobles' words suggested that Novelty Community College is more dependent upon its community than vice versa.

Identifying Community Needs

In terms of methods of identifying community needs, President Newton came straight to the point saying, "we have a comprehensive environment scanning and needs assessment system here... for looking at how things are changing and trying to identify

what we need to do." According to Newton, Novelty Community College created a strategic guidance process through which its staff will have an evolving plan depending on external and internal factors. As opposed to strategic planning process which typically occurs in multiple year cycles, the strategic guidance model is continuous. He used an analogy of aviation:

> If you think of an airline, it's going to fly from Boston to LA, before the plane departs, they file an itinerary, which clearly says your destination is LA and we are going to fly at this speed at the altitude and when to get there. And that's good; everybody needs to know where their destination is, or you're just wandering aimlessly. But once the plane takes off, they will continue to monitor the internal factors that is the performance of the aircraft, and the environments through which they are flying, and they will make corrections continuously to adjust for what they experiences teach them en route to the destination. That's what we try to do here. Our vision is the destination, but the strategic guidance process as a continuously monitor how things are changing in the environment, and how well we are doing internally, and we will make these corrections continuously to get to where we are going.

He continued,

> In our case, unlike the airline, every once a while we decide to change the destination, because we've learned enough along the way, that we say, that's not the best outcome for us… Sometimes we choose to land in San Francisco and not LA, because we just learned that that's a better place to be. We use this continuous process for updating, evolving, improving… We're just so good at making those corrections that we put our resources to better use, we… I achieve much better outcomes…We call it a strategic guidance process rather than a strategic plan.

Although President Newton did not provide direct answer to through which methods he and his staff identified community needs, his words illustrated the rationale in which they internally monitor the performance of Novelty Community College and make continuous corrections when necessary in order to react to external factors. In contract, Dean Nobles explicitly answered how he identified learning needs of the community: "It is really based upon finding new trends, doing some research in term of careers, new careers." Despite the short and simple comment, Dean Nobles' answer indicated a strong

data-oriented approach that he tended to use, which is in lines with the rationale in

President Newton's strategic guidance process.

Concept of Community Education

President Newton visualized his concept of community education as a bus with

unlimited seats. He explained his thought while drawing his magic vehicle (Figure 11):

> This is a bus. Okay... we would say that what we have here is a very unusual bus, because it has a seat on there for everyone who needs a seat. Okay... that's a bus, and this *(the large rectangle)* that's the geographic boundaries of our community. So... that's a bus that drives continuously throughout our community and it has a seat on the bus for everyone that needs a seat... uh... has a final destination would be toward... learning outcomes straight ahead *(the sign)*. So this my concept.
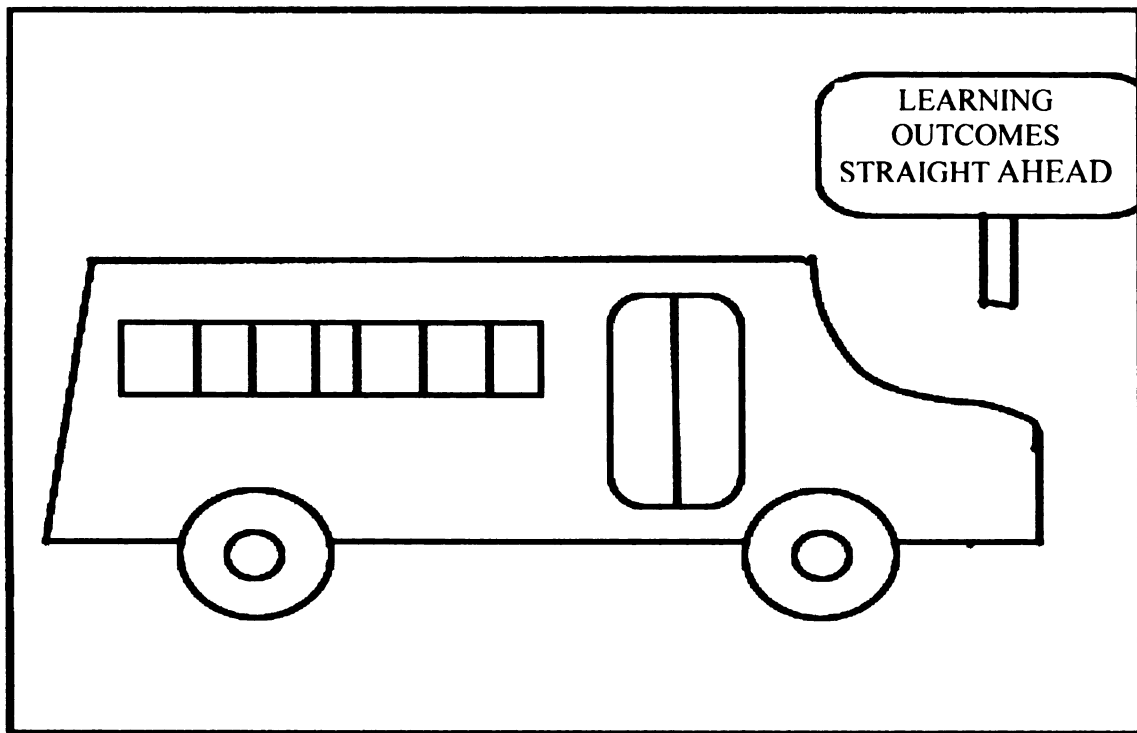
Figure 11: President Newton's Concept of Community Education

He elaborated his thought,

> [Community education] it is a vehicle that is designed to accept everyone that has a need and is able to deliver with a high quality fashion to whatever learning outcome they desire. Very flexible, very responsive. Sometimes, it's a very short

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trip, sometimes it's a little longer trip, but hopefully the vehicle is well-recognized within the community.

His unlimited-seat bus metaphor indicated that to President Newton, community education is a safe vehicle that is affordable and accessible to everyone in the community who needs to head to a learning destination.

President Newton felt his concept reflects his commitment as a community college president to improve quality of life to his service areas. He noted that community education has to be seen as being complementary to other educational offerings, saying "It tells in many ways, uh... it builds in spaces where the other offerings don't fulfill, you know." President Newton continued,

> I guess another metaphor is... uh, you look at the big circles (Figure 12), kind of the molecular fashion. If these are the big circles of traditional learning, one of the things that you will find, I think, is that the community education has to fill in the spaces. [The circles are] degree programs and other things you would do, they are fine, but there are a lot of spaces they don't touch, and I think the community education program to a great extent has to fill [in] those spaces as well. I think we do a very good job of that here.
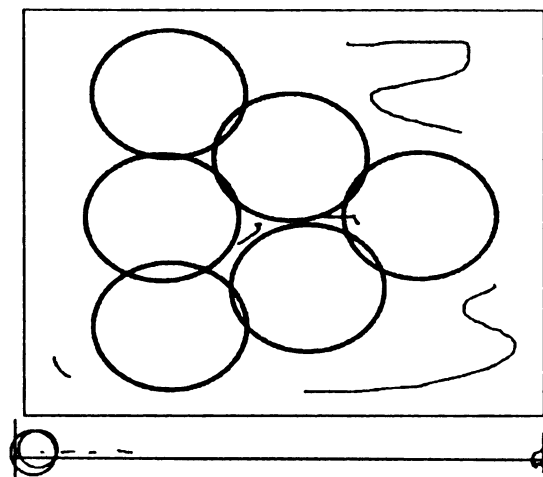
Figure 12: President Newton's Positionality of Community Education

President Newton reminded, "It's the question of 'where are the voids?' You have to look at how [the needs can be met by] the institution." According to Newton, it is important to

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take into account all variables cross the board *(the linear bar underneath the circles)* and then provide a coordinated response. When asked how the concept would change in five years, President Newton replied that his concept of community education would remain the same: the idea of transporting people to where they need to go in the most effectively way possible. However, he predicted that the transportation tool might be different.

Dean Nobles excitedly told me that his concept of community education is the model of lifelong learning that he recently crafted and has presented to President Newton. The model, referred to as continuum of learning or mode of lifelong learning interchangeably by these two senior college leaders, attempts to break down disciplinary and divisional boundaries to help students transit and transmit their learning experiences from one to another seamlessly in order to meet their respective processual learning needs. Dean Nobles used achieving the goal of being a K-12 teacher as an example to familiarize me with his concept (Figure 13):

> [Let's say] somebody who wants to be an elementary school teacher...okay. The normal way is start in kindergarten, and go through these steps to get a real Ph.D. in education, right... [S]ame in career, you started in entry level jobs and then you get promoted; you take classes and whatever and steps to move on. That's kind of the old American mentality. So what I've done lately with some [colleagues], is to look at things a little bit differently. This is my graph *(Figure 13)*. Let's say for instance here, the goal is to become a school teacher that probably [works in a] charter school, that's the goal here. But because we are all different, we all might enter a different point of time *(the arrows)*... [So] what we do is to build continuing education, in any one of those areas *(various degree, program, and course options surrounding the circle)*... [W]hat I'm trying to portray graphically, is looking at education as a continuum of lifelong learning...[since] learning always goes on and it's always learning opportunities that are available to [people in need]. People who wanna become a teacher, they can enter at any point, and then they can come back, too.

Teacher and Paraprofessional Education Academy
Academic & Career Opportunities
Academy of School Administration
School Boards – Senior Administrators – Aspiring Administrations
Support Services: Business, Facilities Management, Financial Services,
Food; Governmental Affairs, Human Resources, Legal, Maintenance, Marketing,
Public Relations, Risk Management and Safety, etc.

Continuing Professional
Education & License
Re-certification

Education Specialist
Doctor of Education
Doctor of
Philosophy

M.Ed/ MAT in Elementary,
Middle or Secondary
Education

**Public, Private,
Parochial, Charter
Elementary, Middle,
Secondary or
Intermediate Schools
Teacher**

Future Teacher Clubs,
Summer Career
Academy, Dual
Enrollment

WorkKeys,
Paraprofessional
Theory & Practice
Career Development
Facilitator

B. A./ B. S. Elementary, Middle or
Secondary Education

Substitute Teacher

A.A. in Pre-Education Elementary
A.A. S. in Paraprofessional Education
or Early Childhood Studies

The Learning Goal: Being a K-12 Teacher

Figure 13: Dean Nobles' Concept of Community Education

Dean Nobles thought what made the model of continuum of learning

remarkable was that it broke the boundaries between programs. He commented that in

Novelty Community College, as well as in many peer institutions, non-credit continuing

and community education division and credit academic divisions did not have much

interaction with each other. Nobles thought by employing the new model, learning would

be more integrated as opposed to fragmented. He was confident that this new model

would be implemented well in any other subject matters, such as criminal justice (Figure

14).

Dean Nobles concluded,

> [A]ll of [the curriculum] is educationally based, [but] some of it is not necessary academically based. [Services provided at Novelty Community College] is an opportunity for people to explore different educational alternates, at different points and time...[W]e try to offer [non-academically based personal enrichment] classes as well; that's just reaching out to community, offering an educational experience in a different way.

Criminal Justice

Academic & Career Opportunities
Partnership Education with Dept. of
Homeland Security & F.B.I., C.I.A., etc.

Professional Continuing
Education for Line,
Commend, and Executive
Officers

Doctor of
Criminology

*Entry-Level
Career Goal:
Deputy Sheriff
Or
Police Officer*

High School Law
Enforcement Classes
& Summer Career
Academy

Doctor of
Jurisprudence

A.A. S. in Law
Enforcement or
Crime Lab Tech.

M.S. in Criminal
Justice

Basic Police Academy
Professional Continuing Education

B. S. in Criminal Justice

High School Law Enforcement Career Academy

Figure 14: Application of Continuum of Learning Model in Criminal Justice

In addition, he also agreed that his concept of community education would remain the same as the model of the continuum of learning he showed in the context of training to be a school teacher, but the ways the programs and courses were being delivered might be different depending on the contextual changes from the society as well as educational policies. Said Dr. Nobles,

> Community education is always there and [people] have the opportunities to enter... Rather than a traditional mode [of a hierarchy of education], I would

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advocate for that there is more of a continuum of learning, of lifelong learning, a learning that never ends, as opposed to learning more and going higher up if you will. To me, there is never a finish line.

Community Education Programs in the College

Distinctiveness of the programs.

The programs offered through the Division of Continuing and Community Education at Novelty Community College are designed to provide non-degree-credit lifelong learning opportunities to the community. The Division runs approximately 500 class sections three times a year in a variety of areas. "We are very entrepreneurial, " said Dean Nobles of the Division of Continuing and Community Education of the characteristics of his programs. "[I]n some sense, it's a business in a college, just as food services or business working in the college." To Mr. Nobles, continuing and community education are a business; he explained his reason, "I think it's great because it gives us a lot of flexibility." He further commented on why such programs is a business from a financial standpoint,

> When it comes to finances, we're subsidized but we are subsidized differently than the degree credit courses. With continuing education, uh… the students pay the full tuition, okay. So, if we develop a class that's very popular, we can price it how we'll want… So without sticking to a tuition rate per credit hour, it is really based upon supply, demand, popularity and such.

Dean Nobles continued,

> I don't really see [naming community education a business] as a conflict… It's really complimenting what's done academically. It is recruiting students… What we try to do is really to reach out to people… [and] provide the program that is not part of the credit side, and you just fill the hole for the community… [In continuing and community education], people are more, in some sense, serious about learning.

According to Dean Nobles, the continuing and community education programs at Novelty Community College are run like a business of encouraging students to come

back to school to take classes for individual learning needs. He thinks that being

entrepreneurial in creating alternative learning opportunities for people from the

community compliments the community college mission since the flexible nature of

continuing education allows space to customize different learning needs. President

Newton did not directly describe why the continuing and community education programs

are distinctive in Novelty Community College, yet his appreciation of the concept of

continuum of learning throughout the conversation indicated his awareness of embracing

non-degree-credit programs as an important venue to meet community needs.

President Newton mentioned education, enrichment, and economic development as

the threefold core missions of Novelty Community College, and added that community

education is indeed critical to each of them. "The institution's perceptions of [community

education] is important," said the college president.   Speaking with passion and

assurance, he pondered over the status of community education in higher education

institutions in general,

> I think for far too long, community education has been seen as a second class
> citizen within most organizations. There's still the tendency to believe that the
> degree credit program is what matters and nothing is gonna matter as much... I
> think it will remain difficult to persuade the academic organizations to really
> embrace the value of community education. [P]art of my preaching to the [college
> administrators], I actually talked to them about the need to embrace the value of
> all learning here... [W]e should not create a hierarchy, but the truth is... in most
> institutions... there's still a hierarchy, and the community education is not seen as
> being as important as the degree credit program.

He thought that the community education component has not been appreciated to the

extent that it should be. He said,

> [I]f we would only look at learning through the eyes of the learner, rather than the
> eyes of the institution, we would be better off, because when a student signs up
> for any class, whatever that class is, what they're saying is, 'this is what's
> important to me right now.' I wish we could do more to realize and respect the

fact that what matters is what's important to the learner right now, not who may be the deliverers.

In lights of his words, as far as President Newton is concerned, community education programs play an important role in providing and facilitating different levels of learning and they fill in the space that the degree credit programs will not be able to.

Dean Nobles agreed that the continuing and community education programs align with the institutional missions of Novelty Community College. Through different ways, he believed that his unit fulfills the mission of the College,

> [We know because] people are taking classes and doing well. At the conclusion of every class, the students [complete] an evaluation form... and we monitor those closely [to know the quality of] instruction, the faculty members, the resources that were available... We also do community surveys every other year... The College is accredited so there're rules that make accreditation sustain, and meeting community needs is [one of those]. So a number of different ways to evaluate whether or not we're doing what we said we will be doing, if we are fulfilling the college mission.

Unit structure and programming process.

Both President Newton and Dean Nobles explicitly recited the recent organizational restructuring that occurred at Novelty Community College. There used to be three separate educational programs at the College, a degree credit program, a workforce development program, and a community education program. Since the learning opportunities were more discrete then, there were not many overlaps between those three programs. However, learning needs started getting blurred recently because the society changes rapidly; President Newton as well as Dean Nobles confessed that it is out of sudden difficult to tell where one learning leads off and the other terminates.

Feeling the pressing need of coordinating Novelty's three educational programs better, President Newton and his cabinet, including Dean Nobles, decided to restructure

the programs by creating a chief learning officer overseeing the collaboration of all

educational programs on campus in order to not only get them all aligned but also

provide more coordinated responses to the community's continual learning needs. The

model of continuum of learning, introduced earlier, then would be implemented as the

practice framework for the new office.

Particularly, President Newton commented,

> [The three programs] are coordinated at a learning level as opposed to an
> institutional level... [W]e need a more coordinated response; we actually found in
> some cases we would have two units of the college responding to the same
> employer who has the same need... [The new chief learning office] will get
> funding, and then with the right leadership, [the office as a whole] determine
> which response of learning is better, not just more cost-effective but better for the
> learning outcomes.

Dean Nobles added that with the new structure in place, the Division of Continuing and

Community Education got promoted to a higher level on the organizational chart,

resulting in reporting to the Provost as deans of academic and career education programs

do. Before the restructure, the Dean reported to the Vice President for Continuing

Education and Services, who directly reported to President Newton.

Interviewees were asked to share the typical programming process taking place at

the community education programs. As the head of the Division of Continuing and

Community Education Programs, Dean Nobles oversees the administration of the unit.

Therefore, he most of the time is not thoroughly involved in the programming process.

He supervises 9 program coordinators who are responsible for about 75-80 classes in 5

sessions. As a result, he did not provide a comprehensive introduction to their

programming process; instead, he highlighted a few tasks that are critical to their

programming.

Dean Nobles firstly described how the work in his unit is divided: "Nine program coordinators are responsible for [managing our classes]. [B]roken down by area, each program coordinator has a list of classes that they are coordinating each semester." In other words, each program coordinator is the division contact person of the classes he/she manages and he/she is responsible for the scheduling and logistics of those classes.

He then talked about pricing. Dean Nobles said,

> You have to make sure the classes are not underpriced because people think [those do] not have values, or make sure it's not overpriced, because you know, *that's too expensive I'm not going to take that class*. So it is critical to mark the price right.

However, he did not share how to determine if a class is being priced appropriately. Next, Dean Nobles said the program coordinators had to decide what the maximum and minimum numbers of students are for each class. He explained,

> [We need to know] how many students or what's the minimum enrollment for students to be in the class, in order to make it a go. When I say go, I really mean... that has to be minimum numbers of students at least they pay the faculty member to teach the class, and then there's a maximum numbers of students, too.

According to the Director, those numbers are determined by the subject matter and its popularity, and the set-up costs. If the enrollments are under the minimum or over the maximum, his office will make a decision of cancellation or adding a second section.

Last, Dean Nobles merely mentioned the importance of developing a marketable title for each class to intrigue people to enroll and of requesting a syllabus from the instructor beforehand to give his office a heads-up of the content of the class. As far as the Director is concerned, marketing strategies and quality control are both critical tasks involving in the programming process.

President Newton shared his experience of dealing with the circumstances in which he had to decline requests from the community. Generally speaking, the president thought

the community is very understanding. "There is a sense of reality, they know that our major industries are struggling... people know that." He continued,

> [T]hey understand, you know, and if it's done with compassion, and with understanding, and we are not callous when we say no, when we feel badly when we say no... People know... it's a history, they know that the college is there to help when it can.

The president's comments suggest that Novelty Community College has established a positive image of providing as many services as possible to the community over the years. As President Newton emphasized, "[T]his is the history of group work and fair play, and honest relationships. It is a culture... Sometimes you just have to say you can't, and they respect that."

Relationship with other agencies.

Neither President Newton nor Dean Nobles raised any concern over the competitors in the region. On the contrary, they said a lot about the collaborative relationships Novelty Community College has formed with various agencies. President Newton thought if people from different agencies have learned to collaborate, to partner, and have learned mutual respect, the positive way of being would make work easier. He also agreed that sometimes Novelty Community College does not have enough capacity to solely meet community demands; therefore, they have to share responsibilities with other agencies.

As previously discussed, the continuing and community programs did not interact with the academic degree-credit programs often. Dean Nobles noted that his unit has started to collaborate with the academic side of the house since the model of continuum of learning has been implemented. He shared an example of a non-credit pharmacy tech program that evolved into an associate's degree program after such collaboration took

place. Besides collaborative relationships with internal units, the Division of Continuing

and Community Education also reaches out to the community and delivers

community-based programs and services at local churches, local schools, union halls,

hospitals, community centers and etc.

Resource needed.

Dean Nobles admitted that he did not have complaints about the support and

resources for his unit. He did not even see any resource constraints that affect how he

leads or operates the community education program at Novelty Community College. He

said with pride,

> In terms of financial resources, support from the president and board of trustees,
> it's all there. A lot of that support is earned, you know it's not just available
> because you say you're doing wonderful things. That's saying and doing,
> providing services, fulfilling the college mission, those are all things that have
> been achieved.

Apparently, Mr. Nobles has earned sufficient support from the leaders of the college

through the quality work his office has performed. Dr. Newton, the president of Novelty

Community College, implied that communicating his vision of the college with his

colleagues, especially those in entry-level positions, is challenging. He used what he

called the hill theory of leadership, to describe his frustration:

> [The theory] is that, [as a leader,] the further up the hill you go, you should be
> able to have a furthest horizon of vision; you climb that ladder you could see
> further than you are on the ground. So the person at the very top of hill, or the
> president, should be in the position to see out, further than anyone else. On the
> other hand, the person at the bottom of the hill, is the first one to meet reality,
> every day reality, whatever it is going on. Sometimes, what you see from the top
> of the hill is not looked as [what is] being experienced at the bottom of the hill
> and vice versa... I think it's my job to do whatever I can to communicate down
> the hill, on what I see so that they are prepared for it, but at the same time, it's the
> responsibility of everybody on the hill to communicate back out saying, but this is
> what life is really like here, and together if I can do a better job of communicating,
> in a better job of listening, you know.

President Newton admitted that he would like to work on it all the time, communicating

better and listen better, in order to serve all of the constituencies better. In addition, Dean

Nobles acknowledged that he could improve his leadership by going to professional

conferences, reading, taking leadership classes to keep his thoughts fresh.

Site Synopses

This section provides an overview of each site. Each synopsis has four parts, starting

with the backgrounds of the site and participants, then moves on to the discussion on each

individual's concept of community education. Next is a snap shot of the practice of

community education at the college, and then the synopsis concludes with key

characteristics of each site. Each section of the site overview includes brief comparison of

the president and the program director regarding their responses to each section.

Site 1: Timberland College

Background

Timberland College is a rural community college serving an economically depressed

region. It is the primary higher education provider for many of the people living in the

northwest part of the state and the northern part of its neighboring state. 60% of the

students enroll in the baccalaureate transfer programs, 38% in vocational programs, and

the remainder takes part in community education programs. Since Timberland County has

a very low tax base, the College struggles with financial difficulties.

President Turner and Dean Thompson of Instruction have worked at Timberland

College for over 10 years. President Turner oversees the operation of the College while

Dean Thompson is responsible for the administration of all instructional programs,

including community education. They both agreed that the existence of Timberland

College is very critical to the community: the College is the primary provider of higher education and the leader and catalyst of local economic development. They observed strong interdependence between the college and its service area, leading to extensive collaboration for providing educational opportunities and services to meet community needs. Due to restraining budgetary support from the state and local governments, President Turner emphasized the use of Timberland College's primary mission – providing educational programs, as the guideline to prioritize various demands requested by the residents. Dean Thompson consented that he always made sure his programs were consistent with the mission of Timberland College. Both leaders relied greatly on feedback received from various advisory boards to identify community needs.

Concept of Community Education

President Turner's concept of community education was presented in a concentric circle, placing Timberland College in the center. Community education programs were described as non-credit and were placed in the third circle, implying they were not central to the college's mission and priority. This concentric circle reflects that to President Turner, the leading mission of Timberland College is to provide academic credit classes, corresponding to the decision of cutting community education programs when the budget got tighter. Dean Thompson's concept highlighted participation in community, personal enrichment, workforce development, and community services as the four areas that make up the community education programs at Timberland College. In comparison, the community education concept of President Turner is blurred with the hierarchical order of Timberland's organizational structure, while Dean Thompson's includes various types of community education programs available at Timberland College. However, they both

agreed that their respective concepts of community education would remain the same at least five years from now, but how the program is operated and executed might be different depending on the availability of resources.

Community Education at Timberland

President Turner highlighted characteristics of the general management of community education programs at Timberland College while Dean Thompson shared a great deal from his first hand experiences of operating these programs. Because of the small size of the institution and the surrounding community, the magnitude of the community education programs at Timberland College is small, too. Particularly, these programs must have an academic value, meaning that students could take such classes as part of their degree plans. Despite limited offerings, President Turner emphasized that community education is a viable and valuable part of the community college mission. Had not there been recent budget difficulties, President Turner admitted that more non-credit community education programs would be provided since there were interests from the surrounding communities.

Different from most community colleges, the community education program at Timberland is not a free-standing unit. The Dean of Instruction, Mr. Thompson, is responsible for its coordination and operation. He noted that it is particularly critical to him to weight whether what Timberland provided actually met the need of the community, due to resource constraints. In the programming process, he has to quantify the requests by looking at the number of people that could benefit from the program and to evaluate whether or not it makes sense to offer it. Dean Thompson realized that the College cannot be everything to everyone, and would honestly tell the community if the need cannot be

fulfilled but help the constituents to seek assistance from other providers. From his perspective, the College is the broker that can identify appropriate educational alternatives for the community.

President Turner and Dean Thompson both spoke a great deal from their experiences regarding Timberland College's relationship with other agencies. President Turner did not use "competitor" or "competition" to refer to other community agencies who provided learning opportunities to community members, indicating that as leader of the College, he tended to look at the overall region as one entity rather than competitors in order to make much use of the monetary and non-monetary resources they could get. On the other hand, Dean Thompson identified higher education institutions in the neighboring state as competitors, indicating that it was critical for him to recruit students into Timberland's academic programs. Additionally, they both explicitly stated that organizations in the region as a whole collaborate with each other to fulfill the needs of the community. Dean Thompson also spoke of the collaborative culture within Timberland College to fulfill the institutional mission of serving the needs of the community.

Conclusion

Due to resource constraints, the area of emphasis at Timberland College was on academic/transfer programs, since the college leaders positioned protecting educational programs as the first priority. Although from different perspectives and by using different examples, President Turner and Dean Thompson were in great agreement on the way in which the College should operate to meet the educational demands for the community. They were confident that when the budget was more sufficient, they would have more flexibility to start new innitiatives and revitalize the non-credit programs.

Site 2: Midway Community College

Background

Midway Community College, located in the heart of a multiple-county area, is one

of the leading higher education institutions in the east region of the State and is a primary

corporate training agency thereof. The College provides a lot of things other than just

degree or non-degree seeking educational programs. It owns public television stations

and a public radio station, in addition to various periodically-run programs that are

available to community residents. Manufacturing and health care are the primary sectors

of local economic vitality, implying an enormous need for continuing education to the

area.

Dr. Ryan Marshall served as the president of Midway Community College for

twelve years and retired from this position in 2005; he was responsible for the total

operations of the college. Not as seasoned as the president, Ms. Angela Moore only

worked at the College as the Programming Coordinator for the Continuing and

Workforce Development Center for four years. Her primary job responsibilities were to

conduct research to find great ideas that meet the regional demands of professional

advancements, and to recruit qualified instructors for the audience. They both stressed

that Midway Community College has established a tradition in maintaining accessibility

to its overall service population and a close relationship with key community people,

such as chambers of commerce, economic development groups and etc.

President Marshall was committed to keep the lines of communication between the

college and the local community wide open in order to identify what people from the

communities needed. Ms. Moore claimed that she did not purposefully make particular

efforts to identify community needs. The same as the college president, she kept the communication channels open, and additionally, kept herself constantly informed of the happenings in the community. As far as Ms. Moore is concerned, people approached her if they had a need and her knowledge of current events and trends helped her assess the unit's capability of fulfilling that particular need. To President Marshall and Ms. Moore, identifying community needs was their day-to-day responsibilities, not a task they have to make a specific effort to do.

Concept of Community Education

President Marshall named community education as one of the core competencies of Midway Community College. In his concentric circle of college core competencies, academic credit classes are the foremost, followed by non-credit classes and special events, respectively. He perceived community education as primarily non-credit classes in specialized areas, either short-term professional development opportunities for workforce training, or special enrichment activities for the community. On the other hand, Ms. Moore's concept was presented by illustrating the relationship between providers and recipients, with Midway being the largest provider in the area. Her drawing shows the interactive provider-recipient and provider-provider relationships. In comparison, President Marshall's concept reflects where the community education program stands in Midway Community College, while Ms. Moore's showcases the competing and complimentary nature of these type of programs among peer providers, hinting at how community education as a whole operates. Nevertheless, they both expected to observe some growth in offerings and services in this program area and their respective concepts of community education would remain unchanged if drawing the graphs five years from

now.

Community Education at Midway

Ms. Moore shared details from her first-hand experiences of coordinating the community education programs at Midway Community College, while President Marshall supplemented his visions in fragments.

Community education programs at Midway Community College underwent a direction change a couple years go, from an everything-included model to the new one oriented to workforce development. Currently, such programs are offered through the Continuing and Workforce Development Center, under the leadership of Ms. Angela Moore. In concert with President Marshall, Ms. Moore thought not being able to generate revenues and to reduce program redundancy were the major reasons for the re-orientation. They both believed the change was necessary and felt their current practice was more active in responding to community needs. The Center is jointly supervised by the Division of Career Education (a degree program) and by the Division of Business/Industry Services (a non-academic division). Therefore, Ms. Moore reports to two different units that have very different corporate cultures, which she thought is challenging and difficult.

Ms. Moore used ideas of marketing management into her programming process, indicating a mindset of entrepreneurship. In her work, she constantly calculated whether or not a program would be marketable and profitable, because her unit must be self-supporting. When encountering the circumstances where the College had to decline requests from the community, Ms. Moore and President Marshall both perceived that being honest with them regarding the college's limitations was important. Ms. Moore also

referred those requests to other competitors for prompt and appropriate assistance since she thought channeling people was a way to help them with their needs, as well.

In regards to relationships with other agencies, President Marshall and Ms. Moore indicated that competition with other local community education providers resulted in service and program redundancy, and to a certain extent, it forced leaders of Midway to make direction changes in the community education programs. In terms of collaboration, in addition to the community resources such as local automotive manufacturing companies, that Midway partnered with in educational programs, Ms. Moore mentioned the collaborative relationship between different units on campus.

Conclusion

It is clear that the community education programs offered at Midway Community College have a strong history in providing non-credit programs to answer the demand of workforce development from the area. Although President Marshall did not provide insights on the operation of community education programs as Ms. Moore did, the vision he set as a college president was well received and carried out by Ms. Moore. They both make great efforts to ensure community education programs offered by Midway are marketable and profitable, or at least self-supporting.

<center>*Site 3: Bridge College*</center>

Background

Bridge College is an urban comprehensive community college serving people living in a metropolitan area in the east central part of the State. It offers programs in areas of university transfer, technical and lifelong learning programs. Brighton County, the administrative region where the College is located, is facing imminent major economic

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and financial difficulties: the one-time thriving and self-contained economy is disappearing, leading to increased unemployment in the area. However, Brighton County has many strengths to build on, including a wealth of regional educational institutions from K-12 to higher education, a continuously growing healthcare industry, and a cadre of citizens committed to the region's revitalization.

Dr. Mark Baker assumed the presidency at Bridge College in 2000. As the chief executive officer of the college, he oversees the administration and operation of the College. He believes that community colleges are critical to the community and local economic development. Ms. Jill Bayer is the Director and Coordinator for Community Education Programs at Bridge, with the primary responsibility to bring together the non-credit courses to the community and lifelong learners, and to offer programs that could advance people's skill sets. She has enjoyed the privilege of helping community residents out through her work. These two leaders have at least served in their current positions for 5 years, and well acknowledged that the various innovative responses that the college could provide to the residents solidified the closeness of the college-community relationship. The coordinator of community education programs said her unit was very vocal in identifying community needs, by means of listening to different voices from the community. President Baker believed it is the leader's job to support people's willingness of participating in knowing what is demanded by the community.

Concept of Community Education

When graphically presenting his concept of community education, President Baker put Bridge College in the center, and then added the programs and services, and

community partnerships that the college reaches out to complete his concentric circle. His concept of community education was basically grounded in the various relationships that Bridge College has established with units within the institution and with agencies outside of the institution. Ms. Bayer portrayed her concept of community education in her drawing of the earth being embraced and held by big, warm hands. She thought the world is the community, and her unit was holding up and reaching out to everyone who had learning needs beyond the border of discipline. In comparison, President Baker's concept suggested different levels of control and interactions that the college leaders could have, while Ms. Bayer's concept was more confined to looking at the function and practice of her work in community education.

Community Education at Bridge

From the perspective of being a leader of the college, President Baker shed lights on his personal beliefs in community education while Ms. Bayer, from her perspective of an administrator, articulated more on details of the practice in community education.

President Baker acknowledged that community education programs played a very specific role in providing specific products and services that well meet different needs of the stakeholders in the community. In accordance, Ms. Bayer believed that her unit bridged gaps in areas where academic programs have limited coverage and linked every aspect of college missions together. Organizationally after some recent restructuring, Ms. Bayer reports to the Executive Dean of Continuing Education, and the Dean reports to the president of the College. Ms. Bayer thought such a reporting line was a good arrangement since it is important for the college president and other senior administrators to know that her unit exists and functions well. In this new reporting line, she felt less that community

education programs was seen as the nonessential stepchild of the college. President Baker confirmed that as a leader, he had to be sensitive to the performance of every unit. Having the community education programs directly report to his office helps the college to value the role such programs play in achieving institutional missions.

Ms. Bayer stressed that it is critical to take into account whether a program has been offered somewhere else and the set-up cost in the programming process. Because her unit is expected to be able to give money back to the college, she realized that she had to run it like a business. To President Baker, community education programs is indeed the business side of the community college administration; however, as long as his staff kept being responsive and respectful to the community without over-expanding themselves, Bridge College as a whole could maintain integrity as an education institution. In line with such belief, President Baker thought college leaders must periodically evaluate institutional mission and their products and services to better respond to community need. When he had to turn down requests from the community, Baker did it by respectfully telling the community of the college's limitations, or asked the board of trustees to be involved if the community had fierce opposition.

President Baker also used neither "competition" nor "competitor" to describe other organizations in the community. Instead, he used "peer" to refer to other higher education institutions in the region. However, he and Ms. Bayer were both well aware of the importance of knowing what other organizations are doing in order to maintain institutional uniqueness and reduce program redundancy. Contrary to competitors, President Baker excitedly expressed that collaborating with different organizations, such as health care providers and community development coalitions, to help with community

issues is a direct way to respond to community needs. Besides external organizations, Ms. Bayer stressed the particular efforts she made to establish collaborative relationships with the academic programs at Bridge College. She believed it is a way to share campus resources and to reduce the disconnection between credit and non-credit programs.

Conclusion

At Bridge College, community education programs are positioned by college leaders as the programs that bridge the gaps between various offerings and services. Although articulated differently from different lenses, both President Baker and Director Bayer were sending the message that the work of community programs is frequently under-appreciated and it needs institutional support to increase its visibility to help academic/credit programs recognize the value of non-credit programs. These two leaders agree with the idea of running some of the college programs like a business, as long as the college remains committed to providing responsive and quality services to its shareholders.

Site 4: Great Lake Community College

Background

Great Lake Community College, located in a rural town, has been a place that supports learning to all in the northwest region of the State for eighty years. According to a recent community survey of the 6-county service area, over 80 percent of the population has had some type of contact with the college. The College resides in Lake City, to where a significant number of people have migrated from other parts of the State and many of those new residents are white-collar, well-educated retirees. With the population growth, the property tax has continued to grow about 5% per year.

President John Gates and Director Sandy Goodman of the Continuing and Extended Education Program have been in their current positions for at least 5 years. They saw Great Lake Community College as the regional leader in cultural and personal enrichment. They also agreed that the community residents talk about the college being their college, showing a solid ownership that helps the College work more closely with the community to meet local educational demands. Both President Gates and Ms. Goodman emphasized that the key to sustain the connection between the college and its community is to create multiple and abundant ways for people to get involved in college-related events. Supplementing by informal contacts in the community, President Gates employed a data-oriented approach to identify community needs. Director Goodman, on the other hand, mentioned that constant listening and communication helped her stay on top of what is needed in the community.

Concept of Community Education

President Gates thought he could put everything he and his employees do into the category of community education. He presented his concept of community education in a matrix, showing that learning is multidimensional and the college has to create integrated opportunities to meet diverse learning needs. Ms. Goodman verbalized her concept with a metaphor of water. She illustrated community education as the continuous relationship between water and the bay. In her concept, the communities (creeks, rivers, all kinds of water) come together and feed and grow the bay (Great Lake Community College), and the bay in turn splits all waters back out. These two leaders presented their concepts very differently: the president highlighted the learning occurred within the college, while the director emphasized the continuous relationship between the college and the community.

Community Education at Great Lake

President Gates is not deeply involved in the practice of community education at Great Lake Community College, therefore, he did not share details of how such programs were coordinated. On the other hand, Ms. Goodman was more vocal towards how the mission of her unit aligns with the institutional mission. She was confident that her unit contributed to fulfilling the institutional mission of providing responsive and proactive learning opportunities to the community. She firmly believed that to be successful in community education is to pay attention to the core of institutional mission and to be a competent college representative to the service areas.

As the Director of Continuing and Extended Education Programs, Ms. Goodman reports to the Vice President of Lifelong and Professional Development, and manages her office as a self-contained unit that allows a great deal of entrepreneurship when reaching out to the community. She perceived her unit as a college-like entity, in terms of the magnitude and variety of tasks that the community education programs had to accomplish. Her programming process involves a lot of conversation with people from different units and community organizations to polish the new ideas and their workability. Furthermore, both President Gates and Ms. Goodman realized that Great Lake Community College is not the only place people could go for educational opportunities, especially for continuing education and non-credit community education programs. Therefore, they spoke a great concern of constantly trying to identify what other regional education providers are doing. Because of restrained resources, they agreed that the college focus on maintaining its uniqueness and rely on other competitors to offer certain educational programs. They also shared the belief that, both leaders shared when facing the

circumstances of turning down certain community needs, it was important to help people locate alternate resources from other providers.

President Gates professed that the College has established a strong orientation towards developing partnerships with various groups in the region, and because of this, he believed that the college is truly the community's college. In addition to acknowledging that collaboration with external forces strengthened the capacity of her unit, Ms. Goodman stressed the internal connection she initiated with academic programs, such as jointly offering a course or recruiting academic faculty to be instructors of her unit, and thought that the distance between credit and non-credit programs was been shortened because of her efforts.

Conclusion

With a healthier property tax base, Great Lake Community College faces less financial burden than many of their rural counterparts. Therefore, without encountering the fear of cutting programs because of budget crises, President Gates and Ms. Goodman projected continuous enrollment growth in Great Lake's community education programs. The two college leaders were in agreement on how Ms. Goodman's unit helped the College remain connected to the community, but the President was concerned about how the unit could be improved to expand its capacity in order to react to the foreseen growth. At the same time, Ms. Goodman thought it would be discouraging if people working in education can only do things that are marketable and profitable. She believed that programs, especially hers, must function like a business, but she hoped education always stays more than a business.

Site 5: Novelty Community College

Background

Novelty Community College, located 25 miles away from a metropolitan city, provides learning opportunities to residents living in the suburban areas of a metropolitan city. It is one of the largest community colleges in the state, and its programs and activities are delivered at many locations throughout Novelty County.

Dr. Andy Newton, the President of Novelty, has been in this position for 25 years. Based on his rich experiences, he saw the role of a community college president to a great extent the connection between the college and some community leaders. Dr. Tim Nobles, also long serving senior administrator, is the Dean of Continuing and Community Education at Novelty. His job responsibility is to oversee the operation of non-academic-degree-credit continuing education and to interact with other people on campus and at the community centers. During their long tenures at Novelty Community College, President Newton and Dean Nobles both witnessed the evolution of an institutional culture of striving to engage capable partners to advance the offerings of the college and to stay connected to the surrounding communities. To apply such culture to educational programs, Mr. Nobles and a few colleagues crafted a concept called Continuum of Learning. The intent was to build an integrative learning model to facilitate students' seamless transition from one learning experience to another.

President Newton believed that improving the quality of life for varying populations sustains the ties between the college and its community over time. In concert with the college president, Dean Nobles also discerned that if the community is changing, the college has to change accordingly in order to meet new needs of the community. These

two leaders' articulation of the college-community relationship suggested that the College is more dependent upon its community than vice versa. To constantly assessing the happenings of the community, President Newton employed a strategic guidance process through which his staff has an evolving plan depending on external and internal factors. In contrast, Dean Nobles relied on information from various sources, such as newspaper, job releases and etc., to identify community needs. While not exactly the same, the both approaches are data-oriented.

Concept of Community Education

President Newton visualized his concept of community education as a bus with unlimited seats, indicating that community education is a safe vehicle that is affordable and accessible to every one in the community who needs to head to a learning destination. Dean Nobles' concept of community education is the model of Continuum of Learning, which attempts to break down disciplinary and divisional boundaries to help students transit their learning experiences from one to another seamlessly in order to meet their respective processual learning needs. In comparison, the President's bus metaphor features the interdependent relationships between the college and the community and the stewardship of the college to provide affordable quality services to the community, while Dean Nobles' model largely represents the people's flexibility of accessing different learning options according to their current needs.

Community Education at Novelty

Without going into details of day-to-day practice like Dean Nobles did, President Newton emphasized his vision of community education. He believed that this program is indeed critical to every aspect of the core institutional mission, including education,

enrichment, and economic development. However, he also realized that community education has been seen as a second-class citizen within most organizations, not as important as the degree credit program. Therefore, he envisioned community education programs at Novelty taking on the important role of providing and facilitating different levels of learning to fill in the space that the degree credit programs would not. In response to the president's vision, Dean Nobles perceived that the programs offered through the Division of Continuing and Community Education, which are non-degree-credit lifelong learning opportunities to the community, were entrepreneurial.

Both President Newton and Dean Nobles explicitly cited the recent organizational restructuring at Novelty Community College to better coordinate educational programs. The new unit will be created in order to not only get all programs (including the community education programs) aligned but also provide more coordinated responses to community's continual learning needs. Both President Newton and Dean Nobles agreed that once the model was fully implemented, Novelty's educational programs would be coordinated at a learning level as opposed to an institutional level to better respond to the community. However, they deeply believed that the college has established a positive image of providing as much service as possible to the community over the years; as a result, the community understands the reality that the college has limitations.

Neither President Newton nor Dean Nobles raised any concern over competitors in the region. On the contrary, they said a lot about the collaborative relationships Novelty has formed with various agencies. Both leaders understood that the College did not have enough capacity to solely meet community demands, therefore, they had to share responsibilities with other agencies. Given the disconnection with the academic

degree-credit programs, Dean Nobles noted that his unit has also started to collaborate with the academic side of the house.

Conclusion

President Newton and Dean Nobles presented similar perceptions of community education programs at community colleges in general. They both agreed that community education is viable to institutional missions, but often times is under-appreciated. Their efforts to increase the visibility of the value of community education were through the organization restructuring process to align all educational programs together without distinctive divisional separations.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

This chapter begins by introducing a series of methodological remarks that emerged as the study progressed. Then, a cross-site analysis is presented to discuss themes that emerged from the interviews relating to the development and implementation of community education programs in community colleges. Next section addresses four research questions that guided this study. This chapter concludes with a presentation of the essences of practice of community education in community colleges.

Methodological Remarks

This study was to explore how community colleges organize and position their community education programs in order to fulfill their commitments to address the needs of their surrounding constituents. The questions guiding this study were:

1. How do community college leaders perceive the college mission of serving community needs?

2. How do community college leaders identify community needs?

3. How do community colleges implement community education programs to serve community needs?

4. What are the challenges that the community college leaders are facing in the process of delivering community education programs?

A phenomenological approach was employed for this qualitative study. Phenomenological inquiries focus on the study of how people describe and experience things/feelings through their senses (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 1990). Because the nature of this study was to look at how community college leaders perceive the mission of meeting community needs and how they execute the mission, phenomenology was an appropriate

approach to understand the essences of the practice of community education programs through the lived experiences of the participating community college leaders.

The participants for this study were drawn from community college presidents and their senior administrators who hold leadership positions in the units of Community Education Program, Community Services, and the like in a Midwest state. In a phenomenological study, it is essential that all participants have lived experiences being investigated (Patton, 1990); therefore, only community colleges that have both presidents and directors of community education programs serving in the positions for at least three years were chosen. This "criterion sampling" (Miles & Huberman, in Creswell, 1998) strategy increased the likelihood that all potential participants had relevant experiences and knowledge of the studied phenomenon. The inclusion of presidents in this study provided opportunities to examine if the perception of meeting community needs was aligned with that of program directors.

An invitation email was sent to seasoned presidents and program directors. Follow-up phone calls were made two weeks after the email was sent. The community colleges where both the presidents and directors agreed to be interviewed became the sites for the study, and final participants were selected depending on their geographical locations, enrollments, and demographic distribution of the service areas. As a result, Presidents and Directors of Community Education Programs from 3 urban and 2 rural community colleges were selected. All were Caucasians; all of the presidents were male; three of the directors were female, and only male participants in the director subgroup held a deanship; the average years in the position when interviews took place was 10.7 years for presidents and 7.4 years for directors (Appendix C for demographics of

interviews).

Interviews followed an open-ended, semi-structured protocol focused on perceptions

of community college missions and their experiences of organizing community education

programs to meet community needs. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and

one-on-one, and were audio-recorded with participants' permission. Digital recordings

were transcribed verbatim.

Thematic Discussion

Six themes emerged from the interviews. Each of them represents an issue

commonly shared by the participants that is critical to understand how community

education is implemented in community colleges in order to serve the community needs.

The themes are: meeting community needs as the core mission of all community colleges,

the concept of community education, sustainability of the practice of community

education, reaching out to older adults, data-orientation in all aspect of participants' work,

and entrepreneurship. Discussion of each theme begins with a direct quote from the

interview transcripts.

Meeting Community Needs as the Core Mission of All Community Colleges

*The work of the community college is critically important, but not very
prestigious work. And I won't know that we would ever get the recognition for
that. Where I think we do get the recognition for that is from the people. When
they realize it is the community college that gave them the opportunity when no
one else can give them.*
... ... Andy Newton, President, Novelty Community College

This quote captured the critical role that community colleges play in providing

educational opportunities for everyone who has needs. Other participants in this study

were all in concert with President Newton in speaking positively of the college mission of

serving community needs. With great pride and ease, some related to the chronological

evolution of community colleges as "democratic institutions" and "people's/community's colleges," some reviewed their mission statements, some explained why their institutions were established in the first place, and some assessed the culture of their institutions. The data in this study suggest that all participants, both college presidents and program directors, regard serving community needs as the core mission of every community college.

With the acceptance of the universal mission of serving community needs, participating community college leaders tended to pinpoint the specific roles their institutions play in the community to show responsiveness to community needs. For example, when Dean Thompson said, "we are the only higher education opportunity in this region," he was indicating the substantial instructional services that Timberland Community College provided. "We are critical to economic development," Director Bayer of Bridge College said when referring to efforts her college made to offer short-term workforce training to local business. Across all sites, participants named a couple of unique services that their institutions provided to respond to demand requested from the community.

The data indicated that community college leaders well understood the universal institutional mission. More importantly, the data suggested that the participants critically reflected on which needs they were trying to serve, especially in the face of reduced state funding. All participating colleges adopted a comprehensive community college framework to respond to various needs of the community. As President Gates of Great Lake Community College said, "comprehensive community colleges do not have a single mission or purpose;" every institution provides a large array of programs. Just to name a

few: Bridge College offers services in transfer education, career preparation, community

education, and economic development. Besides credit and non-credit programs, Midway

Community College regularly holds events, such as golf outings, and K-12 science and

math Olympiads. Novelty Community College has a university center on campus that

facilitates the delivery of programs and courses beyond associate degree levels to the

region. With restrained resources and multiple missions to fulfill, community college

leaders confessed that they could not always treat every mission within their

comprehensive community college framework equally, and they had to prioritize the

multiple needs of the community or sometimes, even decline certain requests. President

Marshall of Midway Community College shared his struggle,

> We try to figure out ways to continue to operate at the levels we currently operate.
> With less resources, it is not always possible. We had to reduce some services and
> certainly have to reduce staff as well, over the last 5 years. And that has been a
> difficult decision. But we had to do that in order to protect the institution.

Another president also mentioned,

> I think we are being asked to be more involved now than any other time, in all
> parts of the community. And that's a challenge, because at the same time, we have
> to make sure that we are true to our mission and visions of the college, and we are
> not over-expanding ourselves (Dr. Baker, Bridge College).

Apparently, although community college leaders are continuously committed to the

universal mission of serving community needs, they have started to develop a diplomatic

rationalization to not accept all that is being asked of them. "We have to prioritize," "we

have to break even with the cost," "we cannot be everything to everyone," "we need to

protect the instructional education," and "we have to be good shepherds of community

money" are some of the quotes of the informants suggesting institutional missions and

priorities come before the commitment of serving community needs. Although it is

inherent in leaders' responsibility to protect the institution, their rationalization of prioritizing different needs causes community education to fall into the "danger of being centralized, with the decision making power resting in the hands of the professionals" (Shoop, in DeLargy, 1989), such as program directors and other institutional leaders. How to involve community members in the decision-making process become imperative to community college leaders if they want to maintain the concepts of community education as grass-roots and community-based.

Besides reflecting on institutional limitations to serve all the needs requested by the community, participants of this study raised a notion of the critical task of building partnerships with other community agencies to advance institutional capacity to meet community needs. Dean Thompson used the term "broker" to describe the role he and his staff played in the situation where students were referred to other providers when Timberland College could not fulfill requests. Through this referral process, community education leaders utilized community resources resulting from the collaborative relationships established with other providers to help the students. Working at an institution where resources are extremely constrained, Dean Thompson said, "We make extensive use of partnerships. In fact, frankly without partnerships, we don't have the resources to do everything." Ms. Bayer from Bridge College expressed a similar observation, "Every aspect of the college, whether it's credit, non-credit, whether it's student services or..., we are always reaching out and working with different parts of the community. "

Concept of Community Education

Community education goes beyond the borders... is to reaching out to anybody that needs us. I can't be everything for everybody, but there's a group of people out there, that I feel need us.

Participants' concepts of community education were parts of the fabric of this study, and they were asked to present graphically. Three (all presidents) drew concentric circles, three (all directors) presented relational charts, two (one president and one director) presented symbolic images, and one (a president) used a matrix. The remaining one (a director) verbally presented her concept. Across the board, presidents tend to illustrate their concepts in concentric circles and a matrix, while program directors used various types of graphics to present their ideas.

Although they were asked to illustrate their concept of community education, drawings of most of the presidents were reflections of the organizational charts of their institutions with indications of how community education as a type of program was prioritized on the presidents' agenda. Timberland's Turner and Midway's Marshall had similar concentric circles and both placed community education in the circle outside that of academic programs, indicating community education is secondary to academic/degree programs. Bridge's Baker drew a concentric circle as well, but placed community education at the same level as other programs, including academic programs. As well as oriented at an institutional level, Great Lake's Gates used a matrix to show where community education programs are situated in the learning model. Novelty's Newton was the only president who used a straightforward metaphor (a bus) to showcase his concept of community education with the least indication of institutional organization or priorities on his drawing.

In comparison, program directors were less confined by institutional hierarchy or priority factors, and their drawings showed more relational interactions with other agencies. Midway's Moore's chart illustrated her unit's relationship with its service

recipients and other providers; the relational chart of Timberland's Thompson specified four types of two-way activities involved in his community education programs; and Novelty's Nobles employed a different kind of relational chart showcasing the concept of a continuum of learning. Symbolically, Bridge's Bayer drew a picture of two hands holding the global to show how she envisions community education as an approach of reaching out to the community. Finally, Great Lake's Goodman verbally conveyed her symbolic metaphor of water. All participants confirmed that their ideas came from their prior and current work experiences and their concepts would remain the same if drawing five years from now, but the scale and ways of doing the work might be different. For example, Ms. Bayer from Bridge would like to have more bridges linking different gaps together, and President Newton from Novelty said the mode of transportation would be something different than the bus.

To sum up, presenting the concept of community education in different types of graphics suggested that community college leaders perceived it from different perspectives. Presidents tended to identify community education in relation to institutional priorities, while directors focuses on interactions with different units and entities. Presidents look at the concept from a senior leader's perspective, while directors convey through the everyday practice of it.

Conceptually, descriptions used by participants when explaining their concepts of community education are: non-credit, interactive, self-supporting/self-contained/self-sufficient, specialized; responsive; something that academic programs cannot do; goes beyond discipline; always needed; short turnaround time; low cost; one of community resources; short-term knowledge base; bridge; fill the

gaps; flexible; acceptance; accessibility; energetic; affordability; and integrated learning.

These descriptions suggest that, regardless of institutional organization and priorities, the

participants generally conceptualized community education as programs that are less

restricted by regulations than other college offerings and more accessible to anyone at

anytime with an affordable cost. They also collectively believed that community

education as an educational philosophy that is extremely community-based. With a short

timeframe, community education is a type of program that is able to respond to requests

from the community with flexibility, affordability, and accessibility. These findings are in

great accordance to what has been discussed in the literature (Baker III, 1994; Bogart,

1994; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Fields, 1962; Gleazer Jr., 1974b; McGuire, 1988).

Surprisingly, business-like or entrepreneurial were not among the descriptors that

these community college leaders used when explaining their drawings. Throughout the

interviews with the community college leaders, entrepreneurship was an idea mentioned

in many aspects of their practice of community education, such as how leaders reach out

to the community, and how they established relationships with other community agencies.

It is possibly because community college leaders in this study were conflicted as to

whether educational institutions should be operated like a business. Ms. Goodman of

Great Lake Community College spoke to this dilemma,

> I know that we have to function like a business, sort of, but I hope education
> always stays more than a business.

This may be part of the reason why, when they processed their concepts of community

education, entrepreneurship was not part of the conventional ideology of education

expressed, despite the fact that many mentioned their belief in running education sectors

as an industry.

Sustainability of the Practice of Community Education

We can't afford to do those kind of things any longer. We just don't have that kind of resources that allows us to do that... for the long-term health of the institution, it was the right thing to do at the time.

... ... Ryan Marshall, President, Midway Community College

The direct quote of President Marshall alluded to issues relating to the sustainability of community education programs at community colleges. To facilitate discussion, I lay out the contexts of each factor first, and then identify why it matters. Four relevant factors were identified from the interviews: distinctive orientation, partnership, socioeconomic status of the community, and finding the balance.

Distinctive Orientation

Context.

As suggested in the literature (Baker III, 1994; Bergquist, 1998; Cohen & Brawer, 2003), offerings of community education programs are broad and complex. According to the participants, their community education programs were, "non-credit/degree," and "customized" courses designed for the purposes of providing "personal enrichment," "short-term professional training," and "lifelong learning opportunities" to the community. A few of those interviewed also mentioned that sharing campus facilities with community organizations was part of the community services that their units offered.

Aside from the general description of what the community programs were in each institution, the data specifically showed that each program had a different orientation to serve the needs of their respective communities. Timberland College and Midway Community College are the most distinctive, in terms of program orientation. At Timberland College, community education programs have to have academic value,

meaning when people are taking the classes for different reasons, the credit earned must be transferable. As a result of limited resources and budget, leaders at Timberland College have to protect the functioning of the college by putting most of the emphasis on the college's primary mission, credit instructional education. Even though President Turner stressed that there is certainly an interest from the community in personal enrichment form of community education programs and he personally believes community education is vital to a community college, he was firm in placing educational instructional programs as the first priority during fiscal difficulties. Different from Timberland, Midway Community College's community education programs have a strong workforce orientation. Both President Marshall and Ms. Moore mentioned that the transformation from a typical community education with courses in almost any area to the current one with a stronger focus on workforce training was necessary to Midway since the old model was not self-supporting. Therefore, the direction change took place, focusing on serving the demand for workforce and continuing education of the Counties area. Even though the program orientations are different, leaders from both Timberland and Midway believed their current models are ones that can best respond to community needs without hurting the survival of the institution.

The remaining three community colleges all have programs that cover a broad array of topics to serve diverse needs in their surrounding communities. They all identify these programs as "non-credit" "non-degree" "lifelong" educational opportunities for meeting "different needs, perceptions, segments, stakeholders, of the community." Ms. Goodman from Great Lake Community College said her program is like a "college within a college" emphasizing their small unit solely handles all aspects of administrative work to

make programs run. Bridge College's Ms. Bayer identified her unit as the one that fills the gaps of the community with short-term skill-based instruction and training; she thought her programs bridge all the gaps that are left by academic credit programs. Last but not the least, the coverage at Novelty is trying to break the boundary between credit and non-credit programs and will implement a model of a continuum of learning to provide a coordinated response to answer the educational needs of the community. Although administered somewhat differently, leaders from these three community colleges assert that their services complement the credit programs and link every aspect of institutional mission together. They constantly see that their programs are delivered with a professional image and align with college missions.

Why it matters.

Keeping programs distinctive from other providers in the area is a way implied by many community college leaders to sustain the success of community education programs. The reason why Midway's old programs were not self-supporting was because they were redundant in the area; there were multiple providers that provided personal enrichment classes at the time. Without a clear distinction in program orientation, Midway's community education programs failed. Representatives from Bridge College made similar comments about trying to avoid program redundancy in order to stand out among others. As President Marshall said, "We have to be a lot more specific about what we offer."

Given the examples participants shared during the interviews and information assessed from the program catalogues that I collected during the site visits, there is a trend of increasing offerings in the areas of skill-based and vocational-oriented

continuing education and workforce development. While they go up in those areas, offerings in community services and personal enrichment are dropping. In other words, across the five sites, workforce training is currently the primary concentration of the community education programs in these community colleges. This is also a pattern found in recent literature (Kasper, 2002-3), that community colleges are more responsive to the workforce needs of their service areas. In addition to responding to community needs, workforce development is a market-driven program (Levin, 2001), inclined to generating profits for the self-contained community education units and help make them sustainable.

Partnerships

The *contexts* of how participating leaders perceived building partnerships with other community groups have been presented in the first thematic discussion section. This part therefore, focuses on why building partnerships *matters* in the survival of community education programs. Leaders of the self-supporting community education programs realize that their institutions financially do not support the operation, so that they have to rely on resources from the outside. Partnerships are therefore established with entities that are potential beneficiaries to their services, particularly with local industries and state agencies. In other words, the operation of community education programs is dependent upon the availability of monetary and human resources from the community, at least to a fair extent. Besides partnering with external agencies, leaders of community education programs also seek collaborative relationships with the in-house academic programs when appropriate, such as recruiting instructors from the English Department for a creative writing class for the elders, or jointly offering an engine repair class with the career education program. Mutual benefits nurture the external and internal partnerships,

leading to the sustainability of the self-supporting community education programs.

Socioeconomic Status of the Community

Context.

Two rural community colleges were included in this study to examine whether or not urbanicity contributed to a different breadth of community education offerings in urban and rural community colleges. Defined by the Office of Management and Budget's standard (2003), Timberland College was located in an extremely rural area and Great Lake Community College was in a rural area. Rubin (2001) found the following phenomena are common in rural communities: low educational level, a sense of powerlessness because of a lack of ownership of land and resources, a weak local economy, and high dependence on social welfare programs. However, such a profile does not fit with residents living in the service areas of Great Lake Community College. Lake City, the place where the college is located, is a growing city with many well-educated retirees migrating into the area leading to a continuous growth of property tax. Therefore, Lake City does not fall into the description of a typical rural community (Rubin, 2001). Residents in Lake City have a much better socioeconomic status than people living in Timberland County, where many are dependent upon Social Security and 75% of the county property is tax exempt.

In terms of number of enrollments, 20,000 students enroll in Great Lake Community College annually, which is the second highest enrollment among the five colleges in this study. On the other hand, enrollment in Timberland is only 1,500 a year, the lowest of the five. From the standpoint of total enrollments, the rural Great Lake Community College exceeds many urban community colleges. In addition, the overall similarity in

community education offerings at Great Lake to those at Bridge College and Novelty Community College, indicates that urbanicity is not the primary factor that results in the differences in term of breadth of community education programs. Rather, socioeconomic status of the residents in the service areas is more influential.

Why it matters.

Community education units are self-support, meaning the operating funds of the unit come directly from tuition. Therefore, a sustainable community education program lies in how much energy and money people are willing to invest in education (DeLargy, 1989). In Timberland's case, because a large number of people have lower socioeconomic status, it is structurally difficult for its leaders to operate community education programs as other peer institution if wanting to at least break even on cost. This study, at least based on the data collected in the five community colleges, suggested that residents' socioeconomic status is influential in whether or not a college's community education program can succeed or be sustained.

Finding the balance

Context.

Participants in this study were expressive about the difficulties of finding the balance between success and survival of community education programs. One challenge is to balance what the institutions can do and what the community wants. Across sites, community college leaders confessed that they do not always have the resources to fulfill community needs, so they have to be calculating about what they can do to serve the community with the optimal capacity they can afford. In situations when the leaders have to turn down community requests, they refer those help-seekers to other organizations for

more appropriate and prompt assistance. As the president of Novelty Community College said, "we have to rely on others, because we sometimes do not have the capacity to solely meet the community needs." The president of Bridge Community College also noted that "we have to make sure that we are true to our mission and visions of the college, and we are not over-expanding ourselves." The Dean of Instruction of Timberland College raised a similar concern to look at "how extensive the need is... We need to look at numbers, and whether or not it makes sense to do."

Ms. Bayer from Bridge College discussed another dilemma; she mentioned that she sometimes had to balance the input received from funding agencies and advisory boards and the vision of her work. "You need your space," she said. She thought working with funding agencies and advisory boards is bittersweet in the community education area, because she felt they sometimes have too many egos and people do not have consensus of what is good for the community. In a way she needs their inputs and resource support, but she does not "have time" to deal with their hidden agenda.

Many program directors addressed the importance of getting external grants to help their units establish new programs, but Ms. Bayer shared another balancing act that she thought was important to maintain the integrity of a unit. She had a chance to contract with a nursing initiative to produce registered nurses within 13 months. After assessing the details of the proposal, she decided to pass on the 50 million dollar contract because she had doubts about the quality of the project. She said, "[The money] looks good on paper, and it looks good in the revenue column, but not always [a guarantee of] quality and may turn around and hurt the institution." President Gates touched upon the political side of partnerships, too. He realized that sometimes a leader has to make choices or

changes for the betterment of the college, and any time such circumstances happen,

"there will be special interest groups that come out and oppose to it. So you have to be

pretty firm in your belief of what you're trying to do and where you're taking your

organization."

Why it matters.

The difficulties in finding a balance in every day practice to a certain degree

suggests that it is tempting for market-driven community education leaders to pursue

profitable opportunities without taking into account the obligation of protecting the

reputation of their institutions. The leaders in this study felt it was more important to

protect the integrity of the unit and the college than just to find revenue producing

opportunities, even when this did not resolve the conflict between the two goals. As Ms.

Goodman said, "I am the gatekeeper for quality... we are responsible education."

Without quality service and institutional integrity of being a responsible education

provider, the programs and even the colleges will lose their reputation and easily be

deserted by constituencies, especially when there are other service delivery options. Even

though Dean Thompson's program was not prosperous as many of others, he kept true to

Timberland's mission when making a decision of whether or not to start a new program

or a new relationship. He always followed the four-step guideline: "One is [to] be

consistent to our mission; secondly, does it advance students' [and stakeholders']

interests... three is if we are ethical; and four do we have the resources to do it."

Reaching out to Older Adults

We only have 78 millions people moving into what traditionally would've been called retirement, but what we have is a phenomena of the 65 year-old today is not the 65 year-old of 30 years ago. Not just psychologically, physically it's changed, it's a different world... [B]oomers expect to be around, and they will be in vast numbers, what does that mean for society? So, this isn't a philosophical

discussion, but it is an educational discussion.
... ... Sandy Goodman, Continuing and Extended Education Director, Great Lake
Community College

Whether there has been a program in place specifically for older adults or not, participants across the sites raised the notion of the increasing percentage of "seniors" in their communities and the importance of reaching out to this constituent group. In Great Lake Community College, the Forever Learning Academy is a program for older adults. While adults of all ages are welcome to enroll, residents who are over 62 years of age can register with a reduced tuition price. The program has grown so much, currently represents 20% of the total enrollment in the Continuing and Extended Education. During my site visit on campus, Ms. Goodman introduced me to some Academy members who were volunteering in the office working on signage for a brown bag session that would take place the next day. Smaller in scale than the Forever Learning Academy, Bridge College provides a senior specific program. Bridge's senior program meets once a month at a local café featuring different topics facilitated by local professionals in the fields. At Novelty Community College, a senior program is also available to senior citizens living in the service area. Seniors over age 60 can receive a discount rate if enrolling in certain courses offered through Continuing and Community Education. Although Midway Community College does not have any program targeting the senior citizen population, the president was well aware of its existence and needs:

> As the population of the country changes, we are going to see changes. You have a huge local baby boomers they are gonna be moving into retirement, many of them may be retiring and just want personal enrichment classes; others of them may retire from their current job and want to do something else you know. We ought to provide personal enrichment classes for those that need those things and also skill type classes if [people] want to pursue a different career.

Although the leaders at Midway just reoriented their community education program in

workforce development, President Marshall predicted that,

> There is a likelihood that we will bring back some things in the adult ed area...
> and other personal enrichment, other classes that would satisfy the needs of the
> older adults. So in years to come, we will be doing it.

President Turner was more reserved in terms of projecting whether or not and when a

senior program would be in place at Timberland College, but he still mentioned preparing

for services to meet the needs of the senior citizens in the area.

Apparently, senior citizen programs and the like is conceivably an emerging trend in

the offerings in community colleges. Particularly when the K-12 system is also facing

budget cuts, a district's community education programs may also be in danger and people

will start looking at community colleges as an alternate. Participants in this study

provided first-hand experiences of witnessing and reacting to the evolution of the new

trend of lifelong education in the community college contexts.

Data-orientation in All Aspect of Their Work

More importantly I think, it allow us to make more, much better decisions, that
would be data-based.
> ... ... *Chris Thompson, Dean of Instruction, Timberland College*

The study showed that community college leaders have applied an information- and

data- oriented approach to identify community needs. Means being used were forming

community advisory groups, utilizing community surveys, organizing discussion forums,

following national trends, and using informal contacts. Across the sites, only one

community college employed an environmental scanning and needs assessment model for

need identification. Participants were in agreement that the interactions that take place

through needs identification processes provided not only opportunities to identify

community needs, but also platforms to assess institutional performance. How the college

leaders purposefully involved community members in community surveys and meetings

also proved there colleges were community-based higher education institutions.

Besides identifying community needs, data-oriented approaches were used by many

community college leaders in measuring cost-effectiveness. Due to being defined as

self-contained and self-supporting units, community education program directors were

extremely concerned about if new initiatives were sustainable, especially when a

substantial set-up cost is involved. Dean Thompson's assessment in how extensive a need

is, and Ms. Bayer's and Dean Nobles' waiting on minimum enrollments for each course

provided through their units, are straightforward examples of leaders' dependence on

cost-effectiveness in the decision-making process.

Entrepreneurship

*We are very entrepreneurial, in some sense, it's a business service in a college,
just as food services or business working in the college... I think it's great
because it gives us a lot of flexibility.*
        *... ... Tim Nobles, Dean of Continuing and Community Education, Novelty
Community College*

Across the sites, entrepreneurship was the term that best captured what the practice

of community education was in the community colleges. According to the definition of

Carton, Hofer, and Meeks (1998, in Anderson, 2002), entrepreneur is a person or a team

that identifies opportunities, gathers useful and necessary resources, and is responsible

for the performance of their decision and the organization. The data showed that

community college leaders administer their community education programs to

responsively serve community needs by establishing partnerships in order to utilize

community sources, which fits the characteristics that Carton *et al.* defined. All in all,

with the flexibility to take action on community requests, every aspect of the work in

community education programs are calculated, weighing cost-effectiveness, assessing

true needs of the community, and finding the appropriate resources to respond to them.

The synergy that is created from the process and through the partnerships with different agencies seemingly adds sufficient reaffirmation of community colleges' historical reputation as the community's colleges.

Addressing Research Questions

Research questions guiding this study were answered one by one.

1. How do community college leaders perceive the college mission of serving community needs?

This question is analyzed through the interviewees' understanding of the contexts of their institutions and their relationship to the community. All participants in this study spoke positively of the institutional mission of serving community needs and regarded it as the core mission of every community college. However, adopting the comprehensive community college model has caused these leaders, especially the presidents, difficulties in prioritizing different needs requested by the community. The data suggested that presidents critically reflected on which needs they tried to serve, and confessed that they could not always treat every request equally, particularly in the face of fiscal difficulties. To cope with the dilemma, the college leaders have developed a diplomatic rationalization to not accept all that is being asked of them, indicating that institutional missions and priorities come before the commitment of serving community needs at least through community education.

Across all sites, there is no difference in community college leaders' perception of serving community needs; both presidents and program directors saw serving the needs requested from their service areas as important and the core institutional mission. However, the program directors in this study did not articulate why they thought this

mission was important to them as well as the presidents. Presidents tended to seriously consider what it meant to serve needs and how to balance multiple purposes of the college; their director counterparts seemed to regard this as something natural and without too much reflection, as seen in the direct quotes from two program directors: "our college is a community college, and we are to meet community needs; we go out into the community" and "we are here to serve the people, to help." It is possible that role differences result in different levels of understanding. Since presidents are more involved in institutional mission framing and goal setting, they present a macro understanding of the college's mission of serving community needs. It would be more challenging for community education directors, perhaps, to question the centrality of the mission component that is the purpose for their positions.

2. How do community college leaders identify community needs?

Area 2 of the community-based programming model focused on identifying community issues. This research question parallels to it and was answered by examining the methods through which the community college leaders distinguished learning needs requested by the community.

Community college leaders in this study, both presidents and program directors, used similar means to identify community needs but at various degrees. These means include forming community advisory groups, utilizing community surveys, organizing discussion forums, following national trends (want ads), constantly talking to people, and using informal contacts.

Community advisory groups

Advisory groups and committees composed of local professionals were frequently

identified by the community college leaders as informants providing insights into

community needs. College leaders and administrators usually take counsel with advisory

groups and committees, given their expertise and first-hand interaction with local people,

to obtain information of what is being demanded by the community in order to furnish

them with quality programs and services. In this study, three participating colleges

formed such groups specifically to help identify community needs. Great Lake

Community College was one of them, and its president shared,

> [M]any of our programs have community advisory groups... [T]hey meet
> with faculty and staff of that area and talk about these things that we need,
> these things that we think could help to improve the program. So there's
> that direct link (John Gates).

Community surveys

Conducting periodic community surveys is another way leaders at three of five

community colleges in this study systematically assess community needs. As Dean

Thompson of Timberland College said, "we've done more purposeful[ly] perhaps over

the last several years... It has been the last ten years that we've done more formal,

telephone surveys...We now take a more purposeful approach... It's more of getting in

touch with your stakeholders." Another example is what President Marshall at Midway

Community College called market research, which is a systematic approach to define the

niche of the college. According to President Marshall, knowing how to respond to the

needs is as important as, if not more than, knowing what are the needs. Therefore, his

staff does market research to continuously evaluate how well the needs fit into the

services Midway provides.

Discussion forums

Certain events, such as community breakfasts, community meetings, and public

hearings have been organized by leaders at Great Lake and Timberland College for people from their service areas to address concerns and needs. Coincidently, these two are rural institutions serving the least population bases. Whether or not it is the town hall meeting mentality that explains the intentional use of such forums is not the focus of this particular study, but it is an interesting phenomenon being observed in small settings.

<u>Public information</u>

Leaders from four colleges in this study specified that they use different information sources, including published national trends, local advertisements and classifieds, and TV programs to gather clues in understanding what are the current or imminent needs of the community. "We read the paper, we watch TV," said Ms. Brayer from Bridge College and, "I also look at the want ads in the local newspapers to see what employers are looking for," said Ms. Moore at Midway Community College. According to both participants, those written forms of public information hints the latest social demands and provides college leaders marketing niches.

<u>Informal contacts</u>

In addition to the formal informants on the advisory committees, participants in this study also identify community needs through informal networks. Dean Thompson at Timberland College provided his perspective on this information source,

> We encourage our staff to be involved in communities... We have people involved in non-profit organizations... in civic groups... lion's club. We have a number of staff members who coach youth teams. And all of those types of community services, if you will, are means by which we can gather inputs and look at... what's community... looking at, what are their needs, are there things that we can do to help if it's something for us to help.

Ms. Moore, the Director of Continuing and Workforce Development Center of

Midway Community College, stated her high dependence upon contacts in the community:

> I don't identify what [the community] really need[s]. I talk to some of my contacts in the community... and they give me a heads-up on what people need in the community... I also call my connection, I have a lot of friends in the community, to find out what the hot jobs are... When you work in a job long enough, you develop friends within the areas.

A few participants raised the notion that people from the communities call the college offices directly to address their concerns and ask the college to react to what they were looking for; this is another way leaders get acquainted with the needs of their service areas. As President Marshall from Midway shared, "people from the community call me to or call one of my VPs, or one of my faculty members and say, *you know gee... we need some more people to be trained in this particular area....*" Community members' being comfortable making the initiation to provide feedback to the colleges suggests the ownership that the community feels towards the college in its area.

Model

Among all participants, only one president claimed that his institution identifies community needs by using a particular model. President Newton at Novelty Community College explained,

> We have a comprehensive environment scanning and needs assessment system here... for looking at how things are changing and trying to identify what we need to do... [Our guidance model] is more continuous.

According to Newton, this model is the strategic planning process through which college administrators have an evolving plan for each need identified. The process is alert to the changes in internal and external factors, so that the plan will change accordingly.

In summary, there were no particular differences between the participating presidents' comments and those of the directors across the sites. These approaches indicate that open communication channels are key for the institutions to stay connected with their surrounding environments, and every college employee has the responsibility to report what they know from their after work activities to their institutions. It is also clear that community colleges participating in this study have adopted a more data- and information-oriented strategy to assess community needs. Constantly learning and communicating with the community are the overarching behaviors shared by community college leaders to crystallize what people from their service areas want. All in all, community colleges have frequent interactions with their constituents, through which they can constantly identify their clientele's needs. Furthermore, such interactions provide community college leaders platforms to assess their institutional performances.

3. How do community colleges implement community education programs to serve community needs?

This question is largely answered based on program directors' responses since they have more direct first-hand experiences than the presidents. In addition, since the participants were asked to use an example to provide the contexts of programming and implementation, the answers from each site might be very contextual. However, collectively, participants from the five community colleges provided sufficient information to understand the practice of community education programs in community colleges. This section is made up of four overarching segments contributing to understanding practice of community education programs at community colleges: distinctiveness of the programs, organizational structure of the unit, programming process,

and relationship with other agencies.

<u>Distinctiveness of the programs and their ties to institutional mission</u>

According to this empirical study, community education at community colleges is operated by the units like Community Education, Continuing Education, Workforce Development, Extended Education, and so on. In terms of course offerings, these units typically focus on non-credit, short-term, skill-based, enrichment courses that are requested directly from the community. They are also expected to be self-supporting. In addition, community education programs in community colleges are perceived by their leaders as community-based and learner-centered. Based on the data, even though the program orientations were different, leaders all believed their current practices in community education were ones that can best respond to community needs without hurting the survival of the institution. They also perceived their units provided offerings that were complementary to the credit programs and their services linked every aspect of institutional mission together.

<u>Organizational structure of the unit</u>

Where the unit is located in the organizational chart and what the reporting line looks like imply how an institution positions the unit and where leaders' frustration with internal politics come from. Among the five participating community education program directors, 2 hold a deanship and the remaining 3 are titled either director or coordinator of the programs. Of the three non-dean directors, one directly reports to the Vice President of Lifelong and Professional Development, one reports to the Executive Dean of Continuing Education housed under the President's Office, and one is jointly supervised under two units. Except at Timberland College, directors of community education

programs at the participating sites specified that financially, they are self-supporting and do not receive the same kinds of budgetary resources as their academic counterparts do.

The distribution of unit structures suggests that each community college situates its community education programs differently, depending on the contexts of the institution and the visions of its leaders. For example, Ms. Bayer's office is the only one among the five that is not associated with any instructional program and is housed under the President's Office. She said, "it's working out very well... We're now, we know we have a line on the agenda every month with the executive cabinet... [President Baker] sees the value that we bring non-credit courses to college." She clearly believed that her work has been better valued partially due to the college president's endorsement. Midway Community College presents another example. At Midway, Ms. Moore reports to two different units, one on the degree side and the other on the non-degree corporate side. She thought it was odd working for two departments that have very different cultures:

> There's been found conflicts... [and] it slows us down... Sometimes it makes [my unit] a little bit harder to get our ideas across to what we figure is important... There's a competing priorities to what other people think that are important.

To Ms. Moore, internal politics negatively affects the effectiveness and efficiency of her programs, and it was a result of how her unit was placed on the organizational chart.

Programming process

Across sites, community college leaders, especially program directors, applied a similar programming process: identify a need and then evaluate whether or not to turn the need into a program. If the answer is no, then the process stops. If yes, then start determining content, recruiting instructors, and advertising the new program. Although the process is similar, the leaders assess each step differently, depending on the contexts

of each unit and college. For example, people determine the magnitude of a need differently: Mr. Nobles estimates the possible enrollment numbers while other program directors evaluate based on whether or not the need has been or can be served by other providers in the area. The sources that those program directors turn to, such as advisory committees, continue to be heard to get insights for the contents.

A critical element that is related to program planning is the consideration of cost-effectiveness. Due to being defined as a self-contained and self-supporting unit, community education program directors are extremely concerned about whether any new initiation is sustainable, especially when there is a substantial set-up cost involved. "I have to run [my programs] like a business, or at least break even [on cost] even," shared by Ms. Bayer. Similar comments were made by Ms. Goodman and Dean Nobles.

Relationship with other agencies

Two kinds of relationships were identified in this study: competition and collaboration. Most informants referred to other entities in the community that provide similar services as competitors. For example, Thompson at Timberland named universities in the neighboring state as competitors since they were recruiting students mostly from the same population. However, according to these participants, competitors could also potentially be collaborators. All interviewees mentioned that if their programs could not provide the services requested by the community, they would refer constituents to other providers as alternates. Through such process, a new collaborative relationship is formed, which is more important to the community as a whole since it allows for community resources to be more united and coordinated by connecting different educational providers.

All participants agreed that they cannot be everything to everyone, so it is necessary to partner with other agencies to broadly serve community needs. Such partnerships can easily be found in continuing education courses when the college works with local industries to train future employees. Besides working closely with external agencies, community education program directors make efforts to build internal collaborative relationships with other units on campus, especially with the degree programs. Such relationships are built primarily to share faculty expertise and campus facilities. Yet, Ms. Goodman and Ms. Bayer confirmed that working with the academic side of the house helped them to understand and value non-credit community education programs more. The new continuum of learning model that Novelty Community College is implementing is another example of how collaborative relationships are formed to better utilize campus resources for responding to community needs.

4. What are the challenges that the community college leaders are facing in the process of delivering community education programs?

Every community college is unique; therefore, this question sought to ferret out contextual challenges and factors that each program faces, and strategies to address them. Every participant in this study identified several critical issues that they face in the practice of community education. The issues fall in three areas: resources, administration, and leadership improvement.

Resources

As a self-supporting unit, it is important for community college leaders to have sufficient resources in order to maintain the day-to-day practice in and sustain the longevity of community education. A variety of resource-related issues were raised by the

interviewees is discussed in this section.

Shrinking state funding has forced some community college leaders to cut or reduce their services in order to protect their institutions. Timberland College is the one that faces the greatest financial challenges among the five participating sites. Because of the small tax base of Timberland County and the increasing cut from the state funding, "we had to make a lot of staff cuts and program cuts here... we had to reduce a lot of elective courses, and we made cuts in community education, non-credit, we made a lot of cuts in that area," said the president of Timberland. It is the reality to people in Timberland that they have to do less because they barely have enough to maintain the basics. Another college leader who made similar comments was President Marshall from Midway Community College. He thought the restrained resource base made his staff less able to start new programs, because the college cannot afford to take the risk of running a program that is not self-sustaining anymore. President Gates of Great Lake Community College emphasized that resource constraints are a challenge to him because it is not easy to share resources across the college. He thought if he did not distribute the resources well, he would be replicating inefficiencies in multiple places.

Since community education programs are typically non-credit/academic and skill-based, instructors are usually recruited from the local community. Several program directors confessed that it is not always easy to find instructors to teach. "Finding right people to teach... there's a demand and people want o take this class, but I don't have an instructor," Ms. Moore said of her biggest challenge. "You just cannot find the expertise locally," Dean Thompson claimed, saying that if looking for someone teaching very high level skill-based courses, "the expertise has to come in from outside." Ms. Goodman

thought she is very fortunate since there are many well-educated young retirees living in Lake City who could be appropriate community education instructors; however, "experts in our community... sometimes we can plug them right in [to our programs], and sometimes things are a little embarrassing, because the person will be wonderful but you know, we don't have a market." To sum up, recruiting instructors locally is somewhat challenging because of either a lack of human capital from the area or lack of market to support certain courses with available experts.

Except Dean Nobles of Novelty Community College, all program directors thought that the community education units in their institutions are understaffed. Running multiple scheduling cycles with at least 20% new ideas, the community education units at Great Lake Community College, Midway Community College and Bridge College have only 6, 3, and 4 staff members, respectively. The Dean of Timberland College added, "we are small and we have people here wear many hats." On the contrary, their counterpart, Dean Nobles oversees the operation of the Continuing and Community Education Programs at Novelty, and has 9 programming coordinators who directly report to him. Although the understaffing situation did not seem to decrease the passion that the four program directors had towards their work, they felt stressed once a while and hoped "to have a larger staff" since "I know we can do a better job we have more people."

In summary, according to the participants in this study, shrinking state funding, difficulty in recruiting instructors locally, and understaffing are the three resource areas of frustration Among the institutions in this study, Timberland College is the one facing the greatest challenge in sustaining its community education programs because of constraining resources in both budget and human capital. The lack of comments about

resource concerns by leaders from Great Lake Community College, Novelty College, and Bridge College may indicate that they are resourceful enough to keep their community education programs self-supporting.

<u>Administration</u>

Administration issues include tension with academic programs, series of balancing acts, and preparation for the future.

Tension between credit and non-credit programs is the most identified challenge in implementing education programs in this study. The only site in which neither the president nor program director raised such issues was Timberland College. Given the fact that educational instructional programs are the current primary mission of Timberland and the leader of the community education program is the Dean of Instruction, it makes sense that no particular tension between its credit and non-credit units exists. Leaders from the other four colleges struggled with the tension between credit and noncredit divisions.

"A second-class citizen" is a term used by one president to describe the inferiority of community education programs in many community colleges. President Newton explicitly addressed the misconception of community education programs to many leaders, "There's still the tendency to believe that the degree credit program is what matters and nothing is going to matter as much." Another negative term used to describe the status of community education is "a stepchild." Ms. Bayer at Bridge College further explained, "sometimes you spoil a stepchild, sometimes you don't. I feel we have to justify our existence to the credit side of the house. Because in academic circles, the only one good is the credited programs." Although community education programs are

expected to function as self-supporting and usually generate revenues for the college, they are not perceived as important. Phelan (1994) advocated that a full partnership of credit and noncredit divisions was critical, and the efforts can be found in the experiences of Ms. Moore at Midway College and Ms. Goodman from Great Lake Community College. They both tried to build internal collaboration with the academic programs by recruiting instructors from that side of the house to increase the visibility and familiarity of their non-credit programs. To solve the political tension, Ms. Bayer thought public support from the college president is critical. A major organizational restructuring is underway in Novelty Community College to reduce the disconnect between credit and non-credit programs; a new concept, Continuum of Learning, is being acculturated on campus. Although facing similar challenges, different institutions adopted different ways as resolutions.

Participants in this study talked a lot about the constant challenges they face to balance what the institutions can do and what the community wants. Across sites, community college leaders confessed that they cannot be everything to everyone, so they have to be calculating about what they can do to serve the community with the optimal capacity they could afford. Some leaders also struggled with balancing advisory groups' input and their professional judgments of what is good for the community, and balancing service quality and contract requirements.

Another challenge is dealing with future-oriented issues in administration. What the new ideas are, what the voids are, and how to keep a responsive unit more responsive are issues that college leaders frequently ponder to better prepare themselves for the future. They all agreed that it is challenging to accurately identify a new trend and get a program

ready in time to respond to it. Across all sites, Timberland College was the only one that neither its president nor program director mentioned difficulties in preparing themselves for the future. It is perhaps because Timberland College has very limited resources and thinking about how to protect its educational programs and survive its current difficulties as an institution is more critical than thinking about new initiatives to upgrade its present services.

Leadership Improvement

Participants identified specifics that are important to leaders of community education programs, and the capacity to provide sufficient resources and be encouraging are the two qualities that all college leaders thought are important. They felt the under-appreciated community education programs could gain more recognition if leaders, especially the college presidents, are supportive. Another critical leader quality is communication skills. Based on the nature of work in this area as frequently interacting with different constituents, participants believed it is important for a leader to communicate effectively to help people know where the institution is going and what the institution can and will do for the community.

In terms of how to improve their own leadership, participants frequently mentioned they keep learning. "If you stop learning, you stop growing," suggested Ms. Goodman at Great Lake. Participants usually stay up-to-date by attending professional conferences and workshops, and reading research publications. According to these informants, regardless of which institutions they are serving, continual learning seems to be not just the strategy to improve leadership; it is the attitude that they possess to do their work well.

Conclusion: Essences of Community Education in Community Colleges

A phenomenological study ends with constructing an overall description of the

meaning and essence(s) of the experience being studied (Patton, 1990). This study

examined the community college leaders' perception of serving community needs and

their experiences of how community education programs are implemented at community

colleges in order to fulfill the institutional mission. Thus, the essences of the practice of

community education in community colleges through the eyes of community college

leaders were constructed based on the data of and the emergent themes from the study,

and answers to the research questions. The final description of the essences is presented

here as the conclusion of the research results.

Types of Community Education Programs at Community Colleges

To community college leaders, particularly presidents and directors, community

education is identified as the type of program that is primarily offered by divisions of

Community Education, Continuing Education, Workforce and Professional Development

and the like, in order to provide responsive, affordable, and flexible non-credit,

short-term, and specialized personal enrichment or professional training courses to

community members at all ages for their various learning needs. In terms of subject

matters, community education programs cover a large array of classes, e.g., writing,

hygienic nitrous oxide administration, meteorology, nursing, basket weaving, and so on.

Some programs are designed for specific groups of people, such as senior citizen

programs for older adults, and math and science Olympiads for K-12 students. In addition,

community education units usually provide services to the community typically by open

access to campus facilities and activities to the public. In other words, most of the

non-credit and non-degree instructional programs and activities fall into the category of community education in the community college setting. Among various topics of community education programs, workforce development related courses are the most prevalent nowadays.

Organization and Finance

Community education programs are typically free standing units and are expected to be self-sufficient and self-supporting, meaning that the units are zero-base budgeted and have to provide enough income to cover their own expenses and salaries. Therefore, their operation budgets by and large depend on student tuition, and with the growing set-up costs for workforce-related programs, external funding like grants and contracts have become critical to the capacity to maintain the current scale of operation and to start new initiations. From a financial perspective, leaders in community education programs aim to generate revenues to the general fund of the colleges; thus, some people (even directors themselves) perceive this type of program as a business. As a result, market-driven beliefs become characteristic of community education programs.

Relation to Institutional Mission

Although there is a notable business element in the practice of community education programs in the community college setting, college and program leaders tend to speak positively of how the programs help the institutions to achieve the mission of meeting the community's learning needs. Leaders are aware that if not for the people living in the area, their institutions would not exist. Therefore, they perceive serving community needs is the core mission of their institutions, meaning what they do must contribute to the betterment of the community. Acknowledging this core mission reflects their belief in

seeing community colleges as community-based institutions, and their commitment to serve community needs mirrors a sense of stewardship they posses towards their work. Translating the conceived responsibility of serving local needs to the practice of community education, community college leaders are positive these programs align with the core institutional mission, because of their responsiveness, affordability, and flexibility.

However, community education programs are not viewed as prestigious as academic programs. "A second-class citizen" and "stepchild" are used to describe perceived inferiority to credit/degree programs. To resolve the misconception, community education program directors have started establishing collaborative relationships with the credit programs to increase their visibility through joint offerings and sharing faculty expertise. Program directors also think presidential support of the non-credit programs helps people understand and appreciate the work of community education.

How Community Education is Described

Responsive, affordable, and flexible are words frequently used to describe the characteristics of community education programs. Other descriptors identified by college presidents and leaders are interactive, accessible, integrative, interdisciplinary, resourceful, and energetic. To delineate the positionality of the programs in institutional contexts, community education programs are "the bridge that links every aspect of college mission together" and "complementary to other programs." All participants suggest that community education programs react quickly to the surroundings, especially community requests.

Need Identification and Programming Process

Quickly reacting implies short turnaround time, which advances the capacity of community education programs to meet community needs. Once the college and program leaders decide to offer a service that is demanded by the community, a program can be finalized within a shorter timeframe than most academic programs and up for implementation. Before reaching the decision to run a program, community college leaders use multiple ways to identify what and how extensive the community needs are and to calculate cost-effectiveness. Means frequently used are community advisory groups, community surveys, discussion forums, public information on national trends, and informal contacts from the community, indicating a data- and information- oriented approach is being utilized by community education leaders and administrators in needs identification and programming processes.

Building Partnerships

Building partnerships with different community agencies is critical in the implementation of community education programs, since college resources are restrained and limited and the program is expected to be self-supporting. These leaders feel that partnering with community groups keep the colleges connected to the communities. Other than external partnerships, community education program directors collaborate with other units on campus as much as they can, including academic departments, to provide a holistic response to community needs. To community college leaders, working with different entities and utilizing multiple community resources to serve the needs of the community represents the entrepreneurship that is inherent in their work.

Competitors

Besides partnerships and collaboration, community education programs establish relationships with community groups through competition. As far as program directors are concerned, competitors are typically other education and service providers in the community. In order to keep their offerings standout from other providers, community college leaders make efforts to reduce program redundancy. These leaders proactively develop unique and innovative programs and turn those competitors to potential collaborators; especially when they have to decline some requests from residents. Community college leaders serve as brokers and refer residents to seek help from other providers in the community.

Challenges and Sustainability

Community college leaders face several challenges in implementing community education programs: shrinking state funding, difficulty in recruiting instructors locally, understaffing, tension with academic programs, balancing what the institutions can do and what the community wants, balancing advisory groups' input and the leaders' professional judgment, balancing service quality and contract requirements, and identifying new trends. Without reconciling these challenges, the programs are likely to fail. Several efforts leaders tend to make to sustain the practice of community education in community colleges include providing distinctive and innovative programs, extensive use of partnerships, and finding a balance between conflicting interests by being true to the institutional mission and integrity.

Leadership

The discussion of the essences of community education programs in community

colleges is not complete without knowing who are the leaders of the programs. To be capable of dealing with the breadth and complexity of community education programs, the leader has to be visionary, mission-driven, passionate, and entrepreneurial. S/he also has to be student/client centered, and committed to the stewardship of community-based activities. Communication skills and beliefs in lifelong learning are assets that are required.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

Chapter Five ended with the essences of community education programs constructed

based on the data of the study. This chapter carries on the discussion, starting with critical

reflections on the essences. The next section of this chapter presents a model developed

to illustrate the organizational characteristics of community colleges in a wider

community context. Finally, the applications and limitations of the study are discussed.

Reflection: What is Missing and Beyond

According to McGuire (1988), community education is a program that "focuses on

college-community interaction, utilizes the community as a learning laboratory and

resource, helps to create an environment in which the community educates itself, and

evaluates its success by citizen successes that are recognized as significant by the

community itself" (p.9). An earlier researcher defined community education as, "... based

upon the premise that education can be made relevant to people's needs and that the

people affected by education should be involved in decisions about the program" (Weaver,

in DeLargy, 1989). Both definitions indicate that the community and people that are

involved in the learning process should be involved in the decision-making of the

learning as well. However, such learners' involvement in decision-making during the

learning process was not shown in the essences of community education programs

discussed in Chapter 5. In this study, learners (community residents) had direct

opportunities to address their learning needs to leaders and administrators of the

community education programs, but their direct involvement in voicing their needs and

opportunities to negotiate their interests (Commission on the Future of Community

Colleges, 1988; Gleazer Jr., 1974b; Vaughan, 2000) seemed to stop here. The community

college leaders were the authority that decided whether or not and how a program would be designed to accommodate the request. The grass-roots and bottom-up (LeCroy, 1993) spirits that were part of these two earlier definitions were not found in the practice of community education in community colleges, at least among the participating sites in this study. That is to say, community college leaders primarily possess an institution-focused paradigm in the process of implementing community education to fulfill the mission of serving community needs.

The comprehensive, but descriptive, essences of community education discussed in the preceding chapter are the product of mostly accommodating judgments and decisions made by senior community college leaders on the basis of institutional values and contextual constraints. Inputs of constituents are merely one element the leaders take into account in order to make institutionally-beneficial choices among different alternatives for and in a specific circumstance and context. By comparison, how community education was defined by both McGuire and Weaver is embedded in a more community-focused paradigm that emphasizes the commitment to sharing and reciprocity (National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, 1999) between the program provider and its constituents. The roots of community education as an educational philosophy in regards to respectfulness of learning needs and mutuality of benefits are clear indications of a community-focused paradigm. When leaders make decisions guided by an institutional-focused perspective, learning needs are addressed in ways that benefit the institution, rather than mutually and equitably benefiting the institution and the community. Without including community-focused values and visions, the political process of negotiating interests and needs (Cervero & Wilson, 1994) tends to

be dominated by institutional leaders, such as community college presidents and other senior administrators, with limited engagement and participation of constituents. Based on the data in this study, the participating leaders did not show significant emphasis of the community-focused paradigm as a way of being and a way of implementing community education at their institution.

Community-based education, one of the common formats of community programs at community colleges specifically focusing on being designed by the citizens for the good of the community (Cohen & Brawer, 2003), was also not mentioned by the participants. Community-based education programs operate on the assumption that communities have the potential to solve many of their own problems by utilizing their own resources and by empowering community members to reach resolutions. However, departing from being a mediator in providing opportunities to nurture community-based education should be alarming to community college leaders, since it is an indication of moving away from the grass-roots foundations, which has historically been a key part of their mission. Especially when the offerings in workforce development continue to grow, it is likely community colleges are little by little moving away form the social responsibility to facilitate community development in other aspects, and therefore, community colleges would be no different from other community education and continuing education providers in the community (Courtenay, 1990). In other words, community-based programs are critical to community colleges in retaining "the ethos of educational institutions" (Dougherty & Bakia, 2000, p. 4).

Boothroyd and Davis (1993) used three different approaches to address community economic development depending on levels of promotion of growth, structural change, or

community relationships. The primary goals of each approach is to increase employment and income, promote local control over stability and sustainability of cash and non-cash local economy through structural change, and strive for quality of life whereby people share community resources and continuously care about social and economic justice. The economic development role of community colleges (Dougherty, 1994), given the increasing offerings in workforce development, is by and large associated with the first two approaches suggested by Boothroyd and Davis, leading to the growing production of private good. Community college leaders must retain the notion of promoting public good, or the quality of life as named by Boothroyd and Davis, in their services in order to stay committed to the ethos of the grassroots public educational institutions and not become like other community education organizations, such as church-affiliated groups, for example. As public educational institutions so locally connected, they would risk a lot if they decrease their commitment to provide educational access across a range of learner needs by getting sucked into only promoting the private good. Community-based programs thus serve as a means to facilitate the third approach of community economic development aimed at promoting quality of life with the participation of empowered community residents. Unfortunately, the essences constructed based on the data in this study did not reflect such communitarian perspectives in community education, and hardly portrayed to what extent the evolution of workforce development has nibbled off the emphasis of community-based programs.

The role of the board of trustees was another component that was not noted in the essences of community education by the participating community leaders, although some presidents and directors mentioned that their boards often served on advisory committees

of many of the community education programs, were supportive of the decisions made by these chief executive officers and their senior staff, and moderated the colleges' communication with the local communities. According to the policies of the state in which this study took place, boards of trustees are composed of representatives elected from and by district residents, indicating that the boards are entrusted with political legitimacy (Davis, n.d.) by their constituents to serve not only as advocates of the public interest but also as gatekeepers for the quality performance of the institutions. The boards are the designers of high-level policies that guide and guard the publicly and locally funded community colleges (Davis, n.d.), are supposed to speak for both the college and the community, and to help both sides optimize mutual benefits. Thus, these individuals are positioned to govern the directions in which the colleges are going by systematically and regularly monitoring and evaluating the purposes and missions of the colleges in order to be accountable for community needs and public interests. For these reasons, the boards could have deep involvement in determining the prioritization of community requests and the mechanisms the colleges adopt to respond to those requests, reflecting the political process of negotiating divergent and sometimes incompatible interests of different constituents.

As a result, how community education is being implemented is influenced by the boards' perception of such programs and their decisions of how the programs should be oriented. Without specifying the role trustees play in governance, the participants' constructions of the essences of community education simplified the complexity and the politics of how each college as well as its community education program were structured and executed. The essences presented in this study then were likely often only surface

responses of the community colleges to community needs, while the troubling and political dynamics of high-level governance might not have sufficiently and adequately penetrated through in the descriptions provided by the study participants.

Lack of substantial involvement of learners in the decision-making process, absence of considerable application of community-based education programs, and silence on the role of boards of trustees are three elements found in the responses of participants in this study, but were anticipated to be addressed in some way by community education programs in community colleges. These are important issues that should be researched further. Beyond the construction of the essences of current practice and perception of community education and critics thereof, there are some indications that community education programs in this study are not just institution-centric but are shifting to an engagement model that is being advocated by extension education scholars and administrators in the four-year higher education institutions (Fear, Bawden, Roseaen, & Foster-Fishman, 2002). Fear *et al.* (2002) conceptualized engagement as a means of connecting the academy and society through outreach, a way to help community people address issues and solve problems, and a commitment to enhancing knowledge acquisition and capacity for action and participation through learning. It is a model in which higher education institutions and their surrounding communities and constituencies respectfully share mutual concern with and interest in each other. Although participants in this study talked more about institutional efforts to reach out to their service areas, these senior community college leaders situated themselves in positions to include input from those who were the most affected and to collaboratively produce context-relevant knowledge and learning opportunities with their constituents. This suggested the concept

of engagement articulated by Fear *et al.* has emerged in their practice, particularly that of the community education program directors. This was also shown in the different graphic representations of the concept of community education by presidents and program directors discussed in the last chapter. Directors seemed to reflect their work more in line with the recent engagement model with drawings showing more relational interactions with internal units and external agencies, while presidents represented the conventional institution-centric ways of being and thinking with drawings showing strong evidence of the institutional hierarchy or priority factors.

Discussion presented in Chapter Five stated that role differences contributed to different graphic presentations of the concept of community education, with presidents focusing more on institutional hierarchy and priorities and directors focusing more on everyday administration and operation of their units. Implied by the context of shifting an institutional-centric paradigm to an engagement paradigm, it is possible that generational differences also affect how people conceptualize the idea of community education: older presidents may not be as familiar with or valuing of the recently-evolved concept of engagement. Literature on career trajectories of community college administrators (Amey, VanDerLinden, & Brown, 2002; Shults, 2001) noted that a large number of current presidents are approaching retirement in the near future: the average age of community college presidents was 57 in 1998 and 45% of them plan to retire by 2007 (Shults, 2001). Two out of the five participating presidents in this study completed their tenures shortly after the interviews were conducted, echoing the trends found in literature. The results in these two national studies indicated that many of the current presidents belong to a generational cohort that received their credentials and professional development

opportunities at a time when expectations for community-institutional interactions may have been different than in today's socio-political context. The senior presidents viewed themselves and their institutions as experts while the recent researchers and practitioners (e.g. Fear *et al.*, 2002) advocate a more collaborative form of engagement. On the other hand, program directors are relatively junior on the career ladder with opportunities to explore new theories and practice in their professional development so that they may have been exposed to collaborative engagement as a new framework of conceptualizing contemporary community college administration and college-community relationships. This may help explain why their drawings of community education to a certain degree parallel the engagement model.

Besides the essences reflecting the beginnings of a paradigm shift from institution-centeredness to community engagement, the distinction made between community needs and community wants by community college leaders appears to be another issue to consider that began to emerge in the data. One example was Ms. Bayer's of Bridge College providing entrepreneurship courses to teach residents how to start small businesses instead of offering high-end technology courses to advance residents' employability. Rhetorically, needs are essentials that people must have in order to survive while wants are goods and services that are not necessary for survival. In Ms. Bayer's case, increasing employment opportunities was critical in Bridge College's service areas and some of the residents asked the College to set up classes in high technology to upgrade people's skills. Ms. Bayer understood that people wanted to have such classes to advance their employability, but she was also aware that people would leave Big City for employment opportunities in other cities once they were equipped with the new

technology knowledge and skills, which would hurt the sustainability of the community. Therefore, she responded to the issue by teaching people how to start small businesses as keeping residents was what the community needed to retain its vitality. She was conscientious about making decisions based on what was good for the community in the long run, rather than excessively depending on popular demands and marketability.

Yet, by and large, the data did not provide enough information on to what extent community college leaders painstakingly distinguish community wants and needs, nor did they suggest specific circumstances when community wants collided with college needs. If community college leaders really commit to utilize their services and programs to promote community development and to work with the community to address issues and challenges, it is imperative for them to critically reflect how they distinguish community wants from community needs, and adequately incorporate these needs into college services and offerings.

Widely recognized as the people's college and an effective democratizing agent, community colleges provide educational opportunities for all seekers with greater accessibility, affordability, and flexibility (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). However, with the rapid mission expansion in favor of a comprehensive approach to offerings and services, some researchers (Bailey, 2002; Dougherty, 1994) have raised the concern that more strict admission requirements might close the open door, particularly to people attending community colleges to obtain access to the education pipeline for terminal degrees, representing a vertical transfer between different stratified educational settings. Community education programs, on the other hand, are educational opportunities open to residents living in the service areas with even greater flexibility of and variety in

choosing subject matters and scheduling options. Because the nature and audiences of such programs are less confined and restricted by institutional regulations as suggested by the essences of community education programs constructed in this study, these programs are grassroots and community-based, representing a horizontal transfer across different boundaries and disciplines. Community education programs are therefore the true democratizing agent within community colleges in promoting learning opportunities for all seekers, and the coverage and execution of such programs are complex and heterogeneous in nature, same as the five sites in this study have suggested.

Guided by the answers to the four research questions of this study and the essences of community education programs constructed based on the data, I define community education as following to conclude the discussion as well as to provide a systematic understanding of this type of program in the community college setting:

> Grounded in the commitment to serving community needs and nurtured
>
> by college-community collaboration, community education in
>
> community colleges is a type of program that is primarily non-credit and
>
> short-term personal enrichment and professional training courses for
>
> community members of all ages to meet their various learning needs, a
>
> platform for college leaders to fulfill institutional social responsibilities,
>
> and a democratic and grassroots approach to open access to education for
>
> the public good.

An Emerging Organizational Model of Community College

"Entrepreneurial college" is the model that acknowledges the presence of a college within a college and thrives on innovation, partnership, creativity, and risk-taking (Grubb,

Badway, Bekk, Bragg, & Russman, 1997). The entrepreneurial college within a college is responsive to all internal and external stakeholders and is driven by greater demand in local workforce, economic, and community development (Drury, 2001). According to the general description of the model, it seems that community education programs at community colleges are well positioned in the concept of the entrepreneurial college. However, when the entrepreneurial college increases in size, it will become independent from its parent college (Levin, 2001). Contrary to what was found in this study, meaning community education programs are building collaborative relationships with academic programs to share campus resources and faculty expertise, as well as are undergoing an institutional organizational restructuring to jointly provide coordinated responses to community needs with other educational programs, the entrepreneurial college model is not compatible to the community education programs. I am proposing an emerging organizational model, what I call an amoebic hub organization, to conceptualize the contemporary community colleges with increasing accountability to serving community needs.

Shaped by McGuire's definition of community education, Boone and Associates' community-based programming model, and the essences of community education programs found in this study, community colleges are considered key community resources not only by the institutional leaders but also by their clientele. The evolving scholarship of engagement (Fear *et al.*, 2002) also suggested that higher education institutions and other community organizations and agencies must respectfully share mutual concern with and interest in each other; in other words, there is a mutual reciprocity among different community agencies. Given the stated concepts and models, I

consider the community as a whole is like a webbed ecology, within which the

community college is positioned as the hub to motivate and activate the connectivity of

all the agencies involved.

To be more specific, the amoebic hub organization represents an organization that is:

Constantly assessing the environment and adjusting to it accordingly,

Serving as the broker that channels people to places where they want to be,

Multi-functioning (provider and broker),

Energized by constant transactions between and interactions with other agencies

with respect and mutuality, and

Recognized by other units as the hub.

In other words, to the community as a whole, the community college is the hub; to the

community college itself, its community education unit is the hub within the college.

Amoeba is the metaphor to describe the adaptive, energetic, and innovative dynamic

within the organization. Therefore, the contemporary community college is an

organization that acts like an amoeba, but poises like a hub.

In short, an amoebic hub organization is an open system (Katz & Kahn, 1978) where

communication and transaction with other units within its ecological web are fluid and

transparent. Such an organization is active in collaborating with others to improve the

betterment of all involved with efficiency and effectiveness. In lines with the paradigm

shift from institution-centered to community-centered, amoebic hub organizations exist

out of social responsibilities of stewardship and respect for community virtue and values.

Yet, this emerging idea needs to be further explored in future research in order to solidify

the soundness of the theoretical framework.

Implications

Implications for Practice

This study provides substantial empirical evidence related to the range of

community education programs that selected community colleges in one state have

provided to serve the needs of their surrounding communities. These results have

important implications for leaders and administrators working in this area of community

college offerings to benchmark what could be applied on other campuses. Also, the

variety of topics in the community education programs indicated the viable and flexible

nature of these programs.

As workforce development gains more momentum in community colleges, fueled by

growing requests from local business and state legislatures, more and more community

education programs are partnering with different industries to advance their capacity to

meet community needs. The five community colleges in this study had different but all

successful partnerships with various agencies, and their experiences offer valuable

lessons to other colleges that are establishing partnerships with industries. More

specifically, how colleges turn local competitors to potential collaborators by referring

people to other providers when institutional community education services can not meet

the learning needs of the individuals provides other colleges insights on a better

utilization of overall community resources.

This study informs industries and community agencies that are committed to

community development and renewal about the uniqueness of community education

programs at community colleges. If these organizations are looking for someone to

collaborate with for community issues including workforce or economic development,

these programs are good candidates, due to their mission of and commitment to meeting community needs. The ability to rapidly respond, provide infrastructure support and instructional expertise can be a real bonus for the partnering agencies.

This study informs local leaders that the offerings of community education programs at community colleges are reflections of the economic health of the surrounding region, meaning the less personal enrichment classes are provided the worse the local economy tends to be. It also suggests that the offerings are reflections of the socioeconomic status of residents; the greater variety of community college programs, the larger the populations of lifelong learners from the service areas. How to utilize such programs to help diagnose and intervene in local economical difficulties becomes a creative strategy for community leaders.

This study informs community college leaders about the notion of generational learning in the near future. When the growing numbers of senior citizens start looking for educational opportunities for personal enrichment or second-career preparation from community colleges, creating a senior friendly learning environment becomes not only an imperative but also a marketing strategy to recruit senior learners onto campus. The data in this study provide examples of how senior citizen programs are implemented through community education programs in three of the five community colleges.

This study also informs community college presidents about the need to re-evaluate and re-position their mission statements when society is changing and the colleges are being asked by communities to be more involved in community affairs. It is a reality that community college leaders have to prioritize their services, however, it is important for leaders to diminish the misconception that secondary mission is by all means inferior to

primary mission. In the case of community education programs, some program directors

in the study advocated that presidential support is valuable in increasing the visibility of

their units among other credit programs. This represented an effective strategy that can be

adapted by other community college leaders to resolve the tension between credit and

noncredit programs.

This study suggests community college administrators be cautious of the fact that

the means they use to identify community needs are reflections of how they exercise

power. Since programming is a process of negotiating interests among different parties to

choose among conflicting wants and needs, community college leaders and senior

administrators should be conscientious that all voices are heard before making

programming decisions. If community college leaders and administrators truly intend to

meet what is requested by those within service areas, they need to do more than just use

multiple data-oriented means for need identification and assessments; they have to be

more reflective and conscious of how they interpret the identified needs and why they

choose one approach to respond than another.

This study also has implications for leadership development of program directors,

presidents, and boards of trustees of community colleges. The senior administrators and

leaders of the college must employ a community-focused mindset in their everyday

practice and administration. Particularly when many of the senior administrators were

trained during the years when institutionalism was prevalent, this study suggests that it is

time for community college administrators to embrace the currently evolving scholarship

of engagement. Specific professional and leadership development programs should be

designed for people in different ranks and positions to make the paradigm shift.

Finally, this study urges people working in the community education programs in community college settings to truly involve learners in decision-making process (Weaver, in DeLargy, 1989) in order to administer these programs as indeed community-based programs. Data of the study show that community college leaders have become the authority, determining which programs should be executed, which is contradictory to the philosophy of community education. This study reminds community college leaders to stay with the commitment of letting people decide what they want to learn, as suggested by Weaver (in Delargy, 1989), to prevent themselves from becoming just one of the adult education providers in the community. They have to retain the ethos of grassroots locally-funded educational institutions by more proactively engaging community residents into decision-making process.

Implication for Policy

This study informs policy-makers about the need to provide more incentives to reward good practice of community education programs in order to recognize the important work that they are doing. Special grants provided by federal or state governments, research organizations, community initiatives, and other community-based agencies should be made available to the community education programs that are in need of financial support to start new programs if institutional funds cannot be shifted adequately. The study makes clear that community education programs mediate the establishment of the extensive connection that community colleges have with their surrounding communities, which informs policy-maker to consider providing funding flexibility to support these programs that are not based solely on full-time-equivalent criteria.

This study also informs policy makers to start using a demographic approach in decision-making and policy development. The variety of community education programs indicates that the audience is make up of people from different age groups. Particularly when numbers of retirees and immigrants are increasing and the demographic community composition is changing, policy makers need to be more alert to the target population being served. This study shows that community education programs have the flexibility to respond to community needs, suggesting community agencies and policy makers could designate community education programs to activate and execute social welfare policies and programs that benefit not only the target population but also the community as whole.

Implication for Research

This study provides a set of rich data to show the current practice of community education programs. It serves as the groundwork for future studies that are designed to explore other phenomena within this work. This section outlines a few areas that need further exploration and examination.

This study provided empirical evidence on community college leaders' perception of serving community needs through the implementation of community education programs. However, the study was conducted in a single state. Even though the state has many community colleges and sufficient enrollments, the state was not representative of all community colleges in the United States, given the fact that each state has different policy in terms of community college governance, curriculum, and funding for various programs. Therefore, future research could continue investigating the implementation of community education programs in community colleges of other states, in order to

comprise a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

The community-based programming framework (Boone & Associates, 1997) was used as a guideline to shape the research questions because this was not a program evaluation study. Future studies could use this model to do an evaluation study on community education programs.

The results of this study were solely based on presidents' and program directors' perspectives; therefore, in order to acquire a more holistic understanding of how and to what extent the programs meet community needs, an immediate future study would include voices of community members who have taken and are currently taking community education programs. This follow-up study with learners would significantly contribute to the understanding of the effectiveness of the community education programs. In the mean time, it could uncover which learner needs were fulfilled.

Future studies could further examine the effects of establishing partnerships in community education programs, especially focusing on the power and politics in the partnering relationships. The results of this study alluded to the fact that conflicting interests affected work efficiencies and effectiveness. These conflicts may also determine programs that eventually are offered, to whom, and how often, as well.

Although site visits and artifacts were part of data collected, they were just supplemental to contribute to my understanding of the contexts. Future study could include participant observation and document analysis into the study to maximize the contribution of triangulation.

While community education programs are expected to be self-supporting, some program directors expressed their concerns over state budget cuts. If the programs have

zero-based budgets, why did the program directors care so much about state cuts? A future study could focus on investigating of the impact of state budget cuts on self-supporting programs.

This study presented an emerging organizational model, named amoebic hub organization, to capture the role of the community college as a key community resource that is adaptive to the changing contexts of the environment. Grounded theory could be applied as the data analysis approach to examine the soundness of the proposed organizational model.

Limitations

The employment of the community-based programming model (Boone, 1992; Boone & Associates, 1997) as the framework guiding the development of interview questions might have imposed a limitation to the study. Since this model is oriented towards institutionalism, the interview protocol may have led the participants in this study to answer the interview questions from a more institution-focused perspective so that their answers might not thoroughly reflect the current nature and contexts of the community education in community college settings. However, data collected from the participating program directors shed light on the beginning of a paradigm shift from an institution-focused to a community-focused perspective, indicating that a communitarian model or approach might be an appropriate addition to research frameworks for future studies of this kind.

The data of this study showed a great deal of harmony; not many complex and political internal and external dilemmas were addressed by the participants. The participating community college leaders seemed to provide me with safe answers, instead

of articulating the essential complexities of their work. For example, the power struggle and politics in partnership and collaboration, which community representatives should be involved in decision-making, how boards of trustees negotiate with the communities for the colleges and vice versa, the exercises of power in everyday operation, how bad the tension between the credit and non-credits units, and so on, were all complicated issues but were not addressed with great details with me. The harmonious disguise might be a result of limitations of elite interviews, from which the participants led me to the answers they wanted to provide. Multiple sources and a larger sample size will increase the heterogeneity in raw data for deeper triangulations.

Conclusions

Community college have been regarded as a "most effective democratizing agent in higher education" (Dougherty, 1994, p. 6) because of their grassroots origin of standing for open admissions, geographic proximity, and financial affordability to the potential students from the community they served. Previous studies also provide evidence that the scope of the community education programs offered by the community college particularly highlights the institution's unique position to demonstrate its awareness of community needs and its willingness to collaborate with various groups in meeting those needs (Gleazer Jr., 1974b; Harlacher, 1969; Harlacher & Gollattscheck, 1978; McGuire, 1988). This empirical study provided data leading to a systematic understanding of how community education programs in American community colleges are delivered in the 21st century and how such programs assist their institutions to fulfill the needs of the surrounding communities. The findings reaffirmed that community education programs nurture and sustain community colleges' ties with their surrounding environments, given

their flexibility to provide offerings that are less bound by institutional rules. The following summarizes discoveries of this research.

Participants in this study all spoke positively of the college mission of serving community needs and they regarded it as the core mission of every community college. More importantly, the data suggested that with restrained resources and multiple missions to fulfill, community college leaders could not always treat every mission within their comprehensive community college framework equally, and they had to prioritize the multiple needs of the community or even at least sometimes decline certain requests. Apparently, although community college leaders are continuously committed to the universal mission of serving community needs, they have started to develop a diplomatic understanding of not accepting all that is being asked of them. Besides reflecting on institutional limitations to serve all the needs requested by the community, participants of this study raised the critical task of building partnerships with other community agencies to advance institutional capacity to meet community needs.

Every participant had a different concept of community education. Presidents tend to identify it in relation to institutional priorities, while directors focus on interactions with different units and entities. In other words, presidents look at the concept from a senior leader's perspective, while directors' perspectives come through the everyday practice of it. Regardless of institutional organization and priorities, the participants generally conceptualized community education as programs that are less restricted by regulations and more accessible to anyone at anytime with an affordable cost. They also collectively illustrated that community education is an educational philosophy that is extremely community-based. With a short timeframe, community education is a type of program

that is able to respond to requests from the community with flexibility, affordability, and accessibility. These findings are in great accordance to what has been discussed in the literature (Baker III, 1994; Bergquist, 1998; Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

The study showed that sustainability is critical to community education programs since they are contextual. Relevant factors that influenced the sustainability of these programs are distinctive orientation, partnership, socioeconomic status of the community, balancing what the institutions can do and what the community wants, balancing advisory groups' input and the leaders' professional judgment, and balancing service quality and contract requirements.

The study also suggested that workforce development is the type of community education program most prevalent nowadays. However, senior citizen programs are an emerging trend in the offerings of community colleges. Particularly when K-12 systems are also facing budget cuts, district community education programs are in danger and people will start looking at community colleges as an alternate. Participants in this study provided first-hand experiences of witnessing and reacting to the evolution of the new trend of lifelong learning in the community college contexts.

The study showed that community college leaders have applied an information- and data- oriented approach to identify community needs. Means being used were forming community advisory groups, utilizing community surveys, organizing discussion forums, following national trends, and using informal contacts. The study also suggested that the needs identification process provided not only opportunities to identify community needs, but also platforms to assess institutional performance. In addition, data-oriented approaches were used by many community college leaders in measuring

cost-effectiveness.

Entrepreneurship was the term that best captured what the practice of community education was in the community colleges. According to the definition of Carton, Hofer, and Meeks (1998, in Anderson, 2002), an entrepreneur is a person or a team that identifies opportunities, gathers useful and necessary resources, and is responsible for the performance of their decision and the organization. The data showed that community college leaders administer their community education programs to responsively serve community needs by establishing partnerships in order to utilize community sources, which fits the characteristics that Carton *at el.* defined. All in all, with the flexibility to take action on community requests, every aspect of the work in community education programs is being calculating, weighing cost-effectiveness, assessing true needs of the community, and finding the appropriate resources to respond to them. The synergy created from the process and through the partnerships with different agencies seemingly adds sufficient affirmation of community colleges' historical reputation as the community's colleges.

The essences of the practice of these programs in community college through the eyes of community college leaders were also constructed, which contributes to the literature in understanding community education. An organizational model was proposed to capture the role of the community college as a key community resource that is adaptive to the changing contexts of its environment.

APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol

NOTE: The protocol below identifies the primary interview questions for this study.

The Role of Community Education in Fulfilling the Missions of Community Colleges

Interviewee: _____

Place: _____

Time: _____

Date: _____

Introduction:

Once again, thank you for volunteering to be a part of this project. The purpose of this dissertation project is to explore how community college leaders perceive the college's mission of serving community needs, and to identify how they organize community education programs to build meaningful relationships with their surrounding communities. This interview consists of questions about your role as a leader in _____ (institution), and your experiences of fulfilling the institutional missions through community education programs. There are no right or wrong answers.

Please be as honest and candid as you can when answering the questions. I promise to protect your confidentiality. Other than myself, no one will have access to your specific responses except my independent study advisor. The pseudonym you selected will be used in place of your name. I will change the name of your institution, as well as any other potentially identifying information. When the study is complete, I will destroy the audio recording of our conversation.

You are free to stop the interview at any time. This interview will take approximately 90 minutes, no more than 120 minutes. You may ask any questions regarding the research, and they will be answered fully. Results from this study will be presented in my dissertation and at educational conferences, and submitted for publication. I appreciate your time and valuable input.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. Please tell me about your job here.
    i. How long have you been working in this position and in this institution?
    ii. How would you characterize your overall experience in this position?
2. Given your experiences and knowledge, what do you see as the role of your institution in the community?
    i. How do you identify community expectations for the college / for your unit?
3. Please spend a few minutes drawing a diagram to illustrate your thoughts of community education and then we'll talk about it.
    i. Tell me about your diagram and where the ideas from.
    ii. To what extent do your ideas reflect the work you do here at _____?
4. Please tell me about the role of your community education unit in the process of fulfilling the mission of your institution.
    i. What are the role and function of your community education unit and how does this unit fit in with the larger mission of the college?
    [Probe] Where is the community education unit in your institution, and to whom does it report to?
    ii. Do you think community education programs have a role in responding to community expectations and needs? If so, why? If not, which unit(s) in your institution should be responsible for that role?
5. I am interested in getting a sense of the kinds of programs and services you deliver. Please give me one or two examples of the kinds of work with which your office is involved.
    i. What is the process of putting a community education program together? How do you go about delivering community education?
    ii. With whom do your institution and your community education unit work in meeting community needs? How does such collaboration help your institution fulfill its missions?
    iii. What are the issues you face in providing community education?
    iv. What are the strengths and shortcomings of delivering community programs to address community needs? Any challenges?

[Probe] What kinds of structure or formats are most appropriate in your
mind for providing community education?

6. Reflecting upon your role as a community college leader and administrator, what are the critical issues you encounter in your practice and experiences and how do you deal with those challenges?

[Probes]

   i. What would strengthen your ability to effectively provide community education?

   ii. What kinds of resources will be beneficial to your institution and unit in achieving the mission of meeting community needs?

   iii. What, if anything, do you see changing in the nature of this position in the future?

   iv. As a community college leader who has frequent interaction with the community, what, if any, do you see changing in your institution's relationship with the surrounding community? How does this relationship affect the role of the college in the community? Is this what you believe it should be?

7. Take a second look at the diagram you drew. Are there any changes you would like to make? Please mark your new thoughts on the diagram and share with me.

8. Is there anything else I should know about community education here at _____ ?

Informed Consent Form

Project Title: *The Role of Community Education in Fulfilling the Missions of Community Colleges*

Purpose of Study: To explore how community college leaders perceive the college's mission of serving community needs, and to identify how they organize community education programs to build meaningful relationships with their surrounding communities.

Estimate of Participant's Time: A 90-minute interview

Privacy: This study is completely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate and you are free to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty. Additionally, you may choose to not answer any questions. I will protect your privacy to the maximum extent allowable by law. The interview will be audio-recorded and I will also take notes. I will label the recorded interviews using a numerical coding system. I will report any data utilizing a pseudonym. Your name, institution and/or any other identifiable information will be omitted. I will keep all information in a locked cabinet. I will be the only person along with my dissertation advisor with access to the interviews.

Contact Persons for Participants

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For questions about the participants' rights as human subjects of research please contact Dr. Peter Vasilenko, Chair, Michigan State University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects at (517) 355-2180 or ucrihs@msu.edu.

Based on the information provided above, you agree to participate in the project "*The Role of Community Education in Fulfilling the Missions of Community Colleges*" conducted by Wei-ni Wang and supervised by Dr. Marilyn Amey. Participation in this study involves one interview. Please note that the researcher (Wei-ni Wang) may contact you at a later time if there is a need to clarify any responses.

Informed Consent Form

Please indicate:

Audio-recorded   Yes _____   No _____

Printed Name of Participant: _____.
<div align="center">(Please print)</div>

I agree to participate: _____.
<div align="center">Signature   Date</div>

Please note that your signature indicates that you freely agree to be part of the study.

APPENDIX C

Sites and Participants

Great Lakes Community College	Rural	President	John Gates	Caucasian	President	President	5
		Director	Sandy Goodman	Caucasian	Continuing and Extended Education	Director	7
Midway Community College	Urban	President	Ryan Marshall	Caucasian	President	President	12
		Director	Angela Moore	Caucasian	Continuing and Workforce Development	Programming Coordinator	4
Bridge College	Urban	President	Mark Baker	Caucasian	President	President	5
		Director	Jill Bayer	Caucasian	Community Education	Director	5 & 2
Novelty Community College	Urban	President	Andy Newton	Caucasian	President	President	25
		Director	Tim Nobles	Caucasian	Continuing & Community Education	Dean	11
Timberland College	Rural	President	Kevin Turner	Caucasian	President	President	10
		Director	Chris Thompson	Caucasian	Instruction	Dean	8

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