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Characteristics and Motivations of Mississippi Community College Donors

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MOTIVATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY
COLLEGE DONORS

by

Fred Russell Young

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School,
the College of Education and Human Sciences
and the School of Education
at The University of Southern Mississippi
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for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to identify characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors. The researcher interviewed the lead administrator in charge of fundraising at 11 of the 15 participating Mississippi community colleges and asked them what they believed were characteristics and motivations of community college donors in Mississippi. The findings of the study suggest that the majority of Mississippi community college donors are white males, over 60 years of age, that live within the community college's district.

Furthermore, this study revealed that relationships, donor recognition, participation in extracurricular activities, and belief in the community are motivators to give. Corporate giving is also an important part of community college fundraising. These factors can all contribute to the whole picture of identifying characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors.

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To my children, Luke and Clara, education is important, and I want you to know that your father loves you very much. Always remember that with hard work and determination, you can accomplish anything. To my wife, Katie, thank you for always encouraging me, being there for me and not letting me give up. Lastly, a special thank you to my grandparents, Fred and Doris Jean Young and Wilbur and Margaret Holland. You always encouraged me, loved me, and stressed the importance of education. You were excellent role models and I appreciate everything that you have done for me. Thank you.

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CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

In 1969, John Lennon and Paul McCartney wrote the song “You Never Give Me Your Money” which was featured on The Beatles’ Abbey Road album. As they were recording that song, little did they know that this could very well become the modern-day theme song of Mississippi Community Colleges with regard to funding that they receive from traditional revenue streams. According to the American Association of Community Colleges (2017), state funding for community colleges dropped from a high of 36% in 2008-2009, to 31% in 2014-2015. Offsetting this increase was primarily an increase in revenue from student tuition and fees (2017).

Tuition and fees at Mississippi’s 15 community and junior colleges rose by 13% in the Fall 2017 semester, with the average price exceeding \$3,000 for the first time as compared to the 2016 academic year (Amy, 2017). Mississippi Community Colleges started their 2017 budgets with \$265 million in state funding, but after a series of cuts, will start the 2018 semester with only \$237 million (Amy, 2017). Statewide, tuition at Mississippi community colleges continues to increase faster than inflation and income (Amy, 2017). Another alarming trend is that although community college tuition cost 3.1% of the median family income in Mississippi in 2000, it cost 6.4% in 2016 (2017). On a national level, since 1983, college tuition has increased three times faster than inflation (Kingkade, 2012). This is in direct correlation to rising costs and budget constraints. According to the U. S. Census Bureau’s 2015 American Community Survey, Mississippi is the poorest state in the United States. Therefore, it is vital that community colleges look towards alternative sources of funding to bridge the ever widening funding gap from traditional sources of revenue.

Exploring characteristics and motivations of community college donors in Mississippi may be a potential method to bridge the funding gap between state support and tuition increases. If one can better identify these characteristics and motivations of a Mississippi community college donor, perhaps community college leaders can use this information to specifically target and identify donors which can help bridge this gap in funding.

Colleges and universities have faced challenges in fundraising since the beginning of their existence; additionally, community colleges have shared in this struggle. Community colleges are designed to serve smaller populations than colleges and universities. According to The College Board, a community college education is an option that will save students money compared to going to a four-year institution. Therefore, the importance for community colleges to raise money to maintain a lower tuition price is vital.

Community colleges have not been in existence as long as universities. To put things in perspective, in 1641, members of the clergy were soliciting private gifts for Harvard (Brittingham & Pelluzo, 1990). The oldest community college in the United States, Joliet Junior College in Illinois, was not founded until 1901 (AACC, 2000). Community colleges did not form a national network until the 1960s (AACC, 2000). Nationwide, some community college foundations were established between the 1940s and the 1950s; however, the majority of community college foundations were started after the late 1960s (Robison, 1984).

Both the community college and the four-year institution share a common belief that higher education is a vital national resource (Loss, 2012). Loss (2012) argues that

college-educated Americans contribute more to society civically and community colleges are known to bring an economic boom to their communities and regions. Basically, community colleges and four-year institutions are in the business of educating people.

Conversely, there are many differences between community colleges and four-year institutions. According to The College Board, community colleges are the entry point to higher education for most students. With lower tuition, minimal admission requirements, and regional locations accessible to more students than most institutions, community colleges provide opportunities for education and training that would otherwise be unavailable. As the workforce seeks more educated workers with a certificate or associate's degree, the demands for community college education are growing.

As a result of a significant difference in tuition cost, the composition of the student body that exists at a community college is more varied than that of the university. Therefore, the type of prospective donor varies as well. Due to the nature of the degrees offered in relationship to the job obtained by the graduate, the graduate's access to disposable income varies. Historically, four year institutions have devoted the human and financial resources necessary to solicit and secure donations from private sources (Kener, Carrier, & Meaders, 2002). However, since community colleges have historically been state supported, little emphasis has been placed on fundraising (Finkel, 2017).

According to Skari (2011), research on community college alumni giving is limited, even though a wealth of literature exists related to fundraising at four-year colleges and universities. Because community college fundraising programs are relatively immature, community colleges rely largely on gifts from non-alumni donors to

build their endowments (Carter & Duggan, 2010). Due to limited fiscal resources and a lack of experience, community college administrators tend to be cautious and need some assurance that a return on investment can be realized before deploying capital into fundraising programs with money for expanded operations (Stephenson & Bell, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

Rising tuition costs and budget constraints have impacted community colleges throughout the nation. Traditionally, community colleges have worked to make higher education more affordable to students, but state funding for these institutions climaxed in 1980, and has been declining ever since (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). In a poor state, such as Mississippi, alternatives sources to traditional funding, such as improving fundraising by focusing on community college donor motivations and characteristics can help bridge this lack of funding. Community colleges have seen the greatest enrollment growth in higher education (AACC, 2013). When operational costs are rising and funding from traditional sources are being reduced, as is the case in Mississippi, increasing revenue is vital to the community college's continued operational life-span.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the characteristics and motivations of the Mississippi Community college donor based on the opinions of what those characteristics and motivations were from the lead administrator in charge of fundraising at Mississippi community colleges. An understanding of the characteristics, motivations, relationships, and theories of these concepts can allow community college leaders to make informed decisions about the use of already limited fiscal resources.

Research Questions

R1: What are the characteristics of Mississippi community college donors?

R2: What are the motivations of Mississippi community college donors?

Theoretical Framework

This study viewed the characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors through the lens of the social exchange theory. The social exchange theory suggests associations and relationships have some bearing on giving. This theory expands on the idea of altruism and frames giving as a two-way course of action, built on social interactions and relationships (Scott & Seglow, 2007). Further, the social exchange theory suggests that people intensify relationships with organizations when they feel the exchange is fair and the institution is acting with integrity (Cardona, Lawrence, and Bentler, 2004).

Social exchange theory indicates that the maintenance of the relationship between the donor and the institution is the basis for continued giving behavior (Emerson, 1976). Therefore, institutions of higher learning employ many methods to engage their donors through social connections. For example, many colleges and universities host tailgating events during football season to provide a forum for donors and potential donors to gather, socialize and develop or deepen relationships with both university or college administrative and fundraising personnel as well as with other donors. Additionally, many institutions of higher learning publish and distribute an alumni magazine or other publication intended for alumni and friends of the institution. In addition to articles about events at the institution, lists of donors are often published on annual basis. The purpose of the publication is to keep them informed on current happenings at the institution.

These are just a few of the many ways to keep donors, alumni and friends connected to the institution.

Cook and Lasher (1996) and Kelly (2002) used the social exchange theory to explain the inter-dependent relationship that exists between donors and their alma mater. The relationships between donors and their alma maters are often predicated on an alignment of their respective needs and interests; when donors understand that their needs and interests are aligned with those of the institution, they are more likely to give. The potential relevance of studying the characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors has the opportunity to add to theory development and practice in the field of community college fundraising. From a theory development perspective, there is not one clearly defined theory associated with fundraising for community colleges (Skari, 2011). Exploring the characteristics and motivations of community college donors through the lens of social exchange theory could potentially give fundraising a place in the behavioral and social sciences with regard to theory development.

There is no question that institutions of higher learning are facing funding challenges amid the budget constraints of the current times. Therefore, if one could study and learn about the characteristics and motivations of community college donors, a development officer may be more successful at identifying and securing donations from private donors. As traditional sources of funding evaporate, institutions of higher learning will have to look to alternative sources in order to generate revenue. Private fundraising is one of those sources. The more the theory and behavior around donors can be understood, the more value that individual can bring to the community college's

development efforts. This knowledge can be used to add to the limited literature in the field of fundraising for community colleges in the United States.

Delimitations

The study is delimited to the lead administrator for donor relations/fundraising at each of the fifteen community colleges in Mississippi. They were asked by the researcher what they view as being the characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors from their experience.

Assumptions

The researcher assumed that all participants responded accurately, truthfully, and in an unbiased fashion in response to each questionnaire item. Participation in this study was voluntary. Furthermore, the researcher assumed that all participants were a lead administrator for donor relations/fundraising at their respective Mississippi community college.

Justification

In order for community colleges to create successful fundraising programs, a clearer understanding is necessary regarding the effectiveness of donor engagement practices (Skari, 2014). According to American Association of Community Colleges (2016), today, community colleges educate nearly half of all the nation's undergraduates. Skari (2014) argues “the success of alumni giving at 4-year institutions illustrates the potential that exists in generating private gifts from former students. Considering the 13 million community college students in America in 2011 alone, 2-year colleges have an ample pool of alumni to ask” for support (p. 24). Currently, four year institutions of

higher learning are better able to leverage donations, grants, and investment returns more than 100 times that of community colleges (Kreisel & Patterson, 2013).

Due to the lack of funding from traditional sources, community college leaders are looking for ways to improve their revenue streams (Phelan, 2017). Community colleges are relatively late to the fundraising game, unlike their university counterparts, and the expansion of their fundraising efforts can be a tool to bolster their revenue (Phelan, 2017). In 2015, higher educational institutions received \$40 billion in gifts, whereas community colleges only received about 1.5% of that amount (Finkel, 2017). What is really astounding about this statistic is that community college students account for half of all enrolled college students in the U.S. at any one time (Finkel, 2017).

Marc Westenburg, director for the Center of Community College Advancement at the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) states “it makes no sense, except that community colleges are far behind [their university counterparts] to cultivate donors and turn them into long-term contributors” (Finkel, 2017, p. 20).

Community colleges typically have a small number of fundraisers, and oftentimes these people are wearing many hats with only often outdated technological tools at their disposal (Finkel, 2017). Based on this information, it is vital that community colleges hone in on their most likely prospects (Finkel, 2017). By studying the characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors, this can be accomplished.

The Mississippi Community College System has suffered tremendous cuts since fiscal year 2001 (MCCB, 2017). The percentage of state support for Mississippi Community Colleges has decreased from 55.8% in fiscal year 2000, to 42.7% in fiscal year 2016 (MCCB, 2017). Additionally, student fees at Mississippi community colleges

has increased from 17.8% in fiscal year 2000 to 32.3% in fiscal year 2016 (MCCB, 2017). The operating budgets of Mississippi's community colleges are funded primarily by local property taxes, appropriations from the state of Mississippi, and student tuition and fees (MCCB, 2017). Mississippi is one of the poorest states in the United States of America. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the state is not going to experience a financial windfall that will help support the funding of Mississippi community colleges in the near future. Alternative sources of revenue, particularly fundraising, is an endeavor that merits additional study as a potential source to generate additional revenue for Mississippi community colleges. By studying the characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors, there is potential to unlock another level of potential sources of funding to benefit all of Mississippi's community colleges.

CHAPTER II – REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nationwide, approaching a decade since the Great Recession of 2008, spending at the state level for public colleges and universities remains significantly below historic levels (Mitchell, Leachman, Masterson, 2017). In fact, overall state funding for public two-year and four-year institutions of higher learning was nearly \$9 billion below its 2008 funding level (Mitchel et al, 2017). It is common knowledge that community colleges have the lowest tuition and fee structures and therefore allow far-reaching access to higher education (Mullin & Phillippe, 2013). While community colleges served 43% of undergraduates nationwide, community colleges received only approximately 20% of state tax appropriations for higher education (Mullin & Phillippe, 2013). Community colleges educate 45% of all students in higher education in the United States (AACC, 2016).

The Mississippi community college system was recognized as #1 in the country in 2015 (MACJC, 2018). However, that ranking is no longer valid today, due to significant funding cuts (2018). As a result, community colleges in Mississippi have been forced to rely less on state funding and more on student tuition and fees to provide the same level of service to students. For this reason, fundraising from private sources is now more important than ever before. Foundations serving institutions of higher learning must maximize their fundraising efforts in order to provide the financial support needed by their respective institutions. Critical to the success of community college foundations and their fundraising efforts is the engagement of and contributions from donors (Phelan, 2017). In order to maximize private donations, this study proposed to identify characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors. If these

characteristics are identifiable, Mississippi community colleges may be able to more effectively obtain donations from private donors which can supplement their evaporating revenue streams from traditional sources of funding.

The Community College Review argues that “many community colleges could improve their overall success by implementing more effective fundraising strategies and actions” (Chen, 2017, p. 1). Studying the characteristics and motivations of donors could help to achieve this fundraising success. Community college presidents must rely more on trustees and foundations for financial support (Chen, 2017). Chen (2017) argues “by assigning advancement officers with specific tasks of seeking out external revenue sources...community colleges may be able to encounter more private donations” (p. 1).

Few studies exist on community college fundraising. Lisa Skari (2014) studied the motivations of community college donors of Washington community colleges. Rachel West (2012) studied philanthropic motivational patterns of Florida community college donors. Phelan (2017) states “unlike public and private universities...community colleges are relatively late to the fundraising game.” (p.1). To the researcher’s knowledge, there has not been a study on the characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors. This study will add to the gap of existing literature on community college fundraising, and also assist Mississippi community college leaders in their quest to generate alternative sources of funding to operate their institutions. Community Colleges are uniquely local in that they are directly influenced and funded by the specific counties in which they operate (Young & Ewing, 1974). Therefore, a study of the characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors will assist Mississippi community colleges in their fundraising strategies.

To understand financial restrictions experienced by colleges, a history of collegiate fundraising is needed. College fundraising has been around since institutions of higher learning first began in the United States (Thelin, 2013). Fundraising was an obvious avenue to increase revenue and make college more affordable. In the early days of higher education, colleges were often the recipient of “country pay” (Thelin, 2013). Specifically, these institutions received donations in the form of livestock, land, and other non-monetary sources (Thelin, 2013). Eventually, the presidents of the institutions of higher learning solicited monetary donations from individuals or religious organizations (Thelin, 2013).

Many examples of the evolution of fundraising exist throughout history and illustrate in the formative years of America, institutions relied on the support of churches and wealthy benefactors (Thelin, 2013). In the 17th century, George Whitefield, Cotton Mather, and John Wesley pursued financial assistance for American churches and schools by writing letters to people back in England (Twombly, 1998). In the 1600s, a gentleman by the name of John Harvard bequeathed his library and half of his estate to a newly established college in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, which would eventually be named Harvard University (Curti & Nash, 1965). In 1641, clergymen by the names of William Hibbens, Hugh Peter, and Thomas Weld traveled from the colonies in what is now known as Boston to London to personally solicit gifts for Harvard College (Brittingham & Pelluzo, 1990).

During the span of the next 125 years, eight additional colonial colleges were established in the United States. Yale, Rutgers, and Brown were each named for benefactors, just like Harvard. Given that one of the primary roles of most of the colonial

colleges was to train and prepare ministers, many of the earliest fundraisers for colonial colleges and universities were members of the clergy (Thelin, 2013). With religious enthusiasm, clergy tried to convince their members that supporting the college would help spread Christianity throughout the New World (Brittingham & Pelluzo, 1990; Curti & Nash, 1965). Shortly thereafter, college presidents took on the role as primary fundraiser, soliciting significant capital gifts from wealthy donors (Pray, 1981). From an institutional perspective, this model of fundraising would continue well into the 1800s and even to today, with the president focusing their fundraising efforts primarily on individual donors with significant personal wealth.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, wealthy philanthropists such as Andrew Carnegie and John Rockefeller formed new opportunities in educational fundraising (Thelin, 2013). Through the Rockefeller and Carnegie foundations, philanthropists and corporations made substantial gifts to higher education with the belief that such gifts would benefit all of American society (Thelin, 2013). Gifts from the Carnegie and Rockefeller foundations “typically focused on larger research-oriented institutions, medicine, and social service” (Brittingham & Palluzo, 1990, p. 11). Throughout the 19th century, alumni would begin to contribute a larger role in fundraising efforts (Thelin, 2013). As early as 1792, “a group of Yale University graduates created an organization to gather information about classmates for a newsletter, and promote class activities that would become the catalyst for the solicitation of money (Brittingham & Palluzo, 1990, p. 213). Communicating with donors through articles, emails, brochures and other written publications can be traced back to the idea decided upon by the group of Yale graduates.

Colleges have slowly begun to develop strategies for raising numerous smaller

gifts from their own graduates. The first alumni association in the United States was formed at Williams College in 1821 (CASE, 2016). The creation of this first alumni association initiated a new type of fundraising strategy for higher education. In the past, fundraising primarily focused on a few wealthy benefactors. In the early 1830s, nearly \$100,000 was raised by the College of New Jersey with the largest single gift being \$5,000 (Curti & Nash, 1965). It was not until 1890, however, that Yale created the first alumni fund when \$11,000 was raised from less than 400 alumni (Brittingham & Pelluzo, 1990). For perspective, using an inflation calculator, \$5,000 in 1830 would be equivalent to \$131,578 in today's dollars, and \$11,000 in 1890 would be equivalent to \$289,473.

Four-year institutions have been fundraising in the United States since their inception (Thelin, 2013). The oldest community college in the United States, Joliet Junior College in Illinois, was founded in 1901 (AACC, 2013). Further, community colleges did not form a national network until the 1960s (AACC, 2013). Nationwide, the first community college foundations were established between the 1940s and the 1950s; however, the majority of community college foundations were started after the late 1960s (Robison, 1984).

Four-year institutions have a long tradition of using private giving to accomplish institutional mission and goals. Fundraising in higher education began at Harvard in 1640, when the first college president, Henry Dunster, sought private gifts to supplement minimal financing (Cook & Lasher, 1996). The first alumni association appeared at Williams College in 1821, with additional associations appearing at Princeton (1826), Yale (1827), and Harvard (1840) (Dollar & Zucker, 1981), however, Harvard claims to have the oldest formal alumni giving program (Worth, 1993). In its infancy, alumni

engagement concentrated on athletics, though this focus changed in the late 1800s as these institutions found themselves facing financial challenges. Four-year institutions addressed their financial challenges by seeking private support from alumni, and during this time, an institution's chance of survival correlated with their number of alumni (Stover, as cited in Dollar & Zucker, 1981).

The long tradition of alumni programs and alumni giving at four-year institutions produces sizable economic returns today (Skari, 2014). In 2009, almost all of the \$7.13 billion donated by alumni of went to four-year institutions (Skari, 2014). Furthermore, those institutions creating alumni programs initially generate more alumni dollars today, as evidenced by Harvard, Princeton, and Yale repeatedly ranking on the top 10 list of dollars generated by alumni. In 2009, Harvard placed second, receiving almost \$212 million from alumni, while Yale was fifth with over \$132 million, and Princeton was eighth with nearly \$118 million (Skari, 2014).

With many community colleges founded in the 1960s, community colleges are the last segment of higher education to engage seriously in fundraising endeavors (Glass & Jackson, 1998a). As a result, 60% of community college foundations did not emerge until the 1980s (Kenner et al, 2002, Kerns & Witter, 1997). Alumni relation efforts followed a similar progression. The oldest, continually active community college program started in the mid-1970s at Northampton Community College in Pennsylvania (Lyons, 2007). However, most alumni efforts at community colleges nationwide emerged within the last twenty years.

Most community colleges are newer institutions and they are still developing fundraising operations. Therefore, they capture only a small percentage of total alumni

giving (Skari, 2014). Historically, community colleges have viewed fundraising as a nonessential function (Glass & Jackson, 1998a). Due to this, community colleges have not relied on gifts by alumni to support their alma mater (Keener, Ryan, & Smith, 1991). Community colleges receive less than 1% of total alumni giving, although alumni giving at community colleges is increasing (Skari, 2011). Alumni gifts at community colleges as a percentage of all gifts to higher education institutions? increased from 3.4% in 2008 to 5.8% in 2009 (Kaplan, 2010).

As community college alumni fundraising efforts advance, the community college could realize growth of alumni gifts. Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, the second largest community college in the state of Mississippi, did not establish its own foundation until 1974 (Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, 2011). In 2012, only 1% of more than \$30 billion donated to institutions of higher learning by private donors recorded in 2012 was donated to community colleges (Kaplan, 2013). In 2015, higher educational institutions received \$40 billion in gifts, whereas community colleges only received about 1.5% of that amount (Finkel, 2017). Clearly, there is potential for community colleges to expand their fundraising operations.

This review of the history of alumni giving in higher education suggests that the older the institution, the more alumni gifts tend to be received (Skari, 2014). According to Heaton (2014), “former students offer some of the greatest opportunities for growth in community college advancement” (p. 36). Much research and literature has been written about donor characteristics and motivations for four-year institutions of higher learning. However, there is a gap in the literature with regard to characteristics and motivations of donors at community colleges, particularly in the state of Mississippi. This study will

help to bridge that gap in the literature and will provide additional insight into the motivational factors of donors of community colleges in the state of Mississippi.

In resource development, individuals have become the primary donors to community colleges, and the importance of individual donors should not be overlooked. A study by Kenner et al. (2002) discovered that individual gifts and bequests were the primary source of funds for public community colleges. Phillippe and Eblinger (1998) reported that 60% of donations community colleges received came from individuals. Community college presidents understood that positive relationships between the college and individuals in the community would increase contributions (Hall, 2002). This concept is also widely practiced in the private sector business: people tend to do business with people they like.

Resource development strategies that usually work for traditional, four-year institutions of higher learning, do not work for community colleges (West, 2012). Therefore, “substitutions in the formula” could be the key to increased effectiveness (Kubik, 2002). For example, fundraising activities for university alumni could be instituted at community colleges in order to attract different donors, such as community leaders and retirees who are new to the area (West, 2012). At the university level, researchers have discovered that replication is not automatically successful, and new plans and strategies must be created (West, 2012). If institutions of higher learning share similar characteristics; however, development commonalities can be established (Cook & Lasher, 1996).

Briechle (2001) and Jackson and Glass (2000) reported that community colleges institutional sectors generally supported by donors can usually be divided into nine

categories: scholarships and awards; specific program or department; general fund; library; endowed faculty chair; general endowment; technology; renovations and new buildings; or athletics. A 1997 American Association of Community College's survey of community college foundations analyzed by Phillippe and Eblinger (1998) demonstrated that the distribution of foundation funds reflected basic community college institutional characteristics: faculty sabbaticals, endowed chairs, program innovation or research, renovation or new facilities, equipment, student support, program support, and scholarships. These characteristics all reported by Jackson and Glass (2000), Brichtle (2001), and Phillip and Eblinger (1998) can be summarized into seven general sectors: scholarships (awards, student support); endowed faculty professorships and chairs; buildings and renovations; athletics; unrestricted general fund, library; and specific college department or program. As beneficial as these sectors are, they do not reveal why people choose to donate to these sectors (West, 2012).

To understand this study, a historical background on Mississippi Community colleges is necessary. The first community college established in the state of Mississippi was Pearl River Community College in 1921. To put things in perspective, Mississippi State University was founded in 1878, The University of Mississippi was founded in 1848, and The University of Southern Mississippi was founded in 1910. The three major universities in the state of Mississippi had been in existence for at least ten years before the concept of community colleges came to the state of Mississippi. Community college fundraising is a relatively new concept when compared to fundraising for four-year institutions.

Donor Characteristics

Prior studies have shown that alumni of community colleges often give to their baccalaureate universities, but not to the community college that they attended (Brittingham & Pezullo, 1990). Individuals involved in resource development at North Carolina community colleges identified a shifting donor pool from large institutional givers to individuals and observed “the wealthy elderly are a potential source of private donations” (Jackson & Glass, 2000, p. 734). The majority of the Mississippi community colleges are at least 75 years old, and many of their alumni are reaching retirement age.

The “Baby Boomer” generation, those born between 1946 and 1964, have begun to turn 65 years of age (West, 2012). Americans 65 or older are anticipated to number 70 million by 2030, which would account for 20% of the population, up from 34.5 million senior adults in 2000 (Nichols, 2000). Strout (2006) implied that “Baby Boomers” will soon be inheriting wealth, and community colleges should have strong foundations in place to position their institutions to compete for these funds. As a group, Nichols (2002) noted that “Baby Boomers” have shifted their spending power to community needs as opposed to individual needs.

The majority of donors to higher education are married (West, 2012). Foley (2003) reported 85% of the University of Virginia donors were married, and 42.4% of the donors credited their spouses’ input as very or somewhat important in their philanthropic decision. Carter and Duggan (2011) found that 68.1% of their current community college donors were married. Of those married couples, reasons for decisions about donations fell into three categories. The three categories were: decisions were made jointly, decisions were made by the husband, and decisions were made by the wife. Andreoni,

Brown, and Rischall (2003) detailed that 53% of the decisions were made jointly, 19% made by the husband, and 28% made by the wife. Couples with higher educational levels were more likely to make joint decisions. Regarding donating to education, wives alone were more likely than husbands or as couples to contribute a donation. The dollar amount given to education when wives made the decision was almost double than when husbands made the decision alone (Andreoni, Brown, & Rischall, 2003). Married donors represent the majority of those who donate (West, 2012).

Whereas research exists on how parents influence giving in their children, there is little to no research on how children influence their parents' giving (West, 2012).

Bjorhovde (2002) outlined four concepts that should be implemented to teach philanthropy to children: factual, motivational, procedural, and personal development. Factual refers to the specific facts of philanthropy, whereas motivational and personal development refers to the reasons why people donate. Procedural refers to the actual process of making a donation. Even though Bjorhovde was writing regarding outside organizations to teach philanthropy, parents could apply some of these techniques within the family (West, 2012). If donors used any of these approaches with their children when the children were young, the children could then influence their parents in turn when the parents were considering which charities to donate towards (West, 2012). Eighty-eight percent of the University of Virginia donors had children (Foley, 2003). Of those responding, children's input on its own had little impact on whether or not a donation was given (West, 2012).

Donor Motivations

Alumni surveys have been the primary method of extracting information in regard to donor motivation. However, past research has shown alumni donations at community colleges are miniscule compared to university donations although aggressive fundraising efforts are still relatively new to community colleges (Kubik, 2002). Prince and File (1994) and Foley (2003) collectively outlined what motivates donors in a higher education setting and in a general public setting. Combining their research led to identification of six motivational factors: social, recognition, and reward; belief in the institution; self-fulfillment; relational; financial; and obligation and responsibility (West, 2012). These motivational factors correspond with the social exchange theory and attribute to why an individual donates (West, 2012) This study will help answer the question of how donor's demographics influence their motivations to give to Mississippi community colleges. Motivations contributed to belief in institution are principally intrinsic (Schervish, 1997a), yet external prompters such as needs, efficiency, and effectiveness are externally influenced (Mixer, 1993). For Prince and File (1994), belief in an institution is analogous with the Communitarian. A Communitarian is a form of philosophy that accentuates the relationship between the individual and the community Prince & File, 1994). For current donors at a Virginia community college, Communitarian was the role most chosen when donors contributed (Carter & Duggan, 2011). Foley (2003) underscored that on the surface, belief in the institution and academic excellence initially fell into the expression of value category, but his research revealed that these points were associated with organizational characteristics. The value

category refers to donors feeling that they are valued for their contribution, and the value that the donor sees that the contribution makes to the institution (Foley, 2003).

Ashforth and Mael (1989) magnify social identification into organizational identification. A feeling of connection with the college, whether it is through belief in the mission or academic excellence, will further motivate a donor to support the institution (Mann, 2007). Donors contribute and associate to the organization in which they chose to donate if they share the organization's vision and mission and feel as if they belong (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Kirsch & Shell, 1998; Mann, 2007; Panas, 2005). A group endeavor aspect, meaning donors want to see believe and support the organization's purpose parallels a shared vision of donors (Mixer, 1993). If donors believe in the mission of the college, donors desire the feeling of being a part of the organization, the group (West, 2012). Contributors who donate based on the college's mission are not limited to alumni. Curti and Nash (1965) noted in their history of college philanthropy that pride in a local institution influenced the decision of many donors to give to a college or university with which they had no association as a student (pg. 147). These beliefs can date back to the earliest colleges as John Harvard did not attend Harvard College but gave funds, and his name, to an institution to help it get started (Curti & Nash, 1965).

Excellence in academics often cannot be separated from the institution's mission; therefore, both represent an organizational component (West, 2012). Donors who cite giving based on belief in institutional missions could be basing this gift on the college's reputation for academic excellence. Confidence in the institution's leadership also leads to donations. Panas (2005) discovered that he "did not know of a . . . major gift to an institution where the donor did 't have high regard and respect for the Chief Executive

Officer” (p. 142). The leadership, of either the institution or the development/foundation officer, is often the face of the institution of higher learning to the donor. Analysis by Foley (2003) deemed belief in leadership to be critical to the University of Virginia donors.

Needs-based giving also continues to be a powerful motivator (Mixer, 1993). Understanding institutional need increases donor participation (Mann, 2007; Schervish, 1997a). However, development officers often ascertain that the immediate needs of their institution do not always align with those of the donor. In this case, listening to the contributor and finding common ground often ensures a gift (Kirsch & Shell, 1998; Panas, 2005).

One can see that financial stability and responsibility prove important as well to donors. At times, donors view fiscal soundness and conscientious stewardship as criteria for their gift (Kirsch & Shell, 1998; Panas, 2005). Schervish (1997a) elaborated that —organization efficiency (p. 118) draws and maintains contributors. Prince and File’s (1994) Communitarian donors pride themselves in their business acumen and measure non-profits, and colleges, with the same fiscal management standards. These donors look beyond the surface of the institution and explore the financial and academic environment of the institution of higher learning.

Most self-fulfillment motivations are intrinsically driven (Mixer, 1993). Joy, spirituality, and establishing a legacy fall into the internal motivation category. Additionally, family philanthropy proves to be an internally-driven motivator, for it addresses the family and progeny factor (Mixer, 1993). Although making a difference is traditionally labeled as an external influence, it positively impacts the donor as well as

the receiver. Donors in the self-fulfillment category value personal growth over external rewards. Foley (2003) asserted this group is less concerned about expressing one's values and more about fulfilling one's individual need for growth and self-actualization (pg. 103).

Panas (2005) labeled the joy of giving as "a satisfaction to giving that knows no bounds" (p. 123). This personal delight cannot be measured or rewarded externally. For many donors, the joy in giving is enough for them (Guy & Patton, 1998). Spiritual or religious beliefs often manifest themselves as the Devout giver (Prince & File, 1994). However, the Altruists are also concerned with growing spiritually, which is not limited to organized religion (Prince & File, 1994). Spiritual motivation does not always have to be defined as religious. The donors might have a —reverence for the institution (Panas, 2005, p. 145). Whether it is primarily spiritual or primarily religious, there is recognition of the value of the institution. Establishing a legacy could be labeled as a desire for immortality. Wanting a gift to continue after one's death would satisfy the donor's present and future self-fulfillment needs. This continuity of what a donor values lives through the legacy (Schervish, 1997b). These goals can be achieved via planned gifts (Rohrbach & Dlutowski, 1998). Personal legacies lead into family-valued philanthropy. Many donors advocate a culture of giving and encourage their family to continue the tradition (Panas, 2005; Schervish, 1997b). According to Prince and File (1994), "Dynasts give because philanthropy is a strong family value" (p. 95). Family tradition is the rule in this category with regard to donors that are considered dynasts. Dynasts are defined as legacy donors, or donors who come from families that have been donating for several years (Prine & File, 1994). An example would be the Rockefeller family.

Changing and saving lives is important to donors who contribute to make a difference with their gift to the college (West, 2012). These differences can be a new building for a donor-valued program, scholarships, or anything the donor sees that will improve the institution and/or its students' lives (West, 2012). These donors want to furnish programs that can produce a change for the better and make a difference (Panas, 2005; Rohrbach & Dlutowski, 1998; Schervish, 1997b).

Dynasts played a strong motivator in some Virginia community college donors (Carter & Duggan, 2011), yet Foley (2003) separated Dynasts into two categories: Self-Fulfillment and Relational. Depending on whether the community college Dynasts were driven by family tradition or an urge to honor a friend or family member will put them in either category.

One can see that a sense of purpose to return good financial fortune drives the dynast group of donors (West, 2012). This group believes they are obligated to repay even if it is not to the organization that originally helped them (Cascione, 2003). This group also recognizes need. Mixer (1993) identified these donors as internally and externally motivated. While their intrinsic drive derives from wanting to repay a past benefit, recognizing other donors and organizational needs leans toward extrinsic motivation. These Repayers "feel a particular obligation to repay to help in return or help others in similar situations" (Prince & File, 1994, p. 82). Carter and Duggan (2011) discovered that many community college donors envisioned themselves as Repayers. Guy & Patton (1988) had already labeled the nature of the appeal for help and the other people involved as external mitigating factors; previous experience is an internal mitigating factor.

Impressive lead gifts often encourage others to contribute because the original donor made such a strong statement with the gift (Mixer, 1993; Panas, 2005). This bandwagon effect influences additional gifts (Kirsch & Shell, 1998). Volunteers, who are usually donors themselves, can be used effectively to solicit other contributors (Kirsch & Shell, 1998; Panas, 2005). Schervish (1997a) pointed out that urgency can also compel donors. Usually urgency relates to emergencies; however, cutbacks to educational programs and scholarships can be construed as an emergency in some donors' perspective about how to give.

Tax and financial benefits are external motivators (Mixer, 1993; Schervish, 1997a). However, this motivation is based more in the amount of the gift than the gift itself (Mixer, 1993; Panas, 2005). Prince and File (1994) labeled this group as Investors. They approach philanthropy similar to the way they approach any business decision. This group is more impressed by actual acts rather than motivations (Prince & File, 1994). Panas (2005) cited many donors who claim tax benefits are not their primary reason for giving; however, many do take advantage of the tax laws.

Planned giving is classified as gifts of securities or other property intended for use now or in the future (Rohrbach & Dlutowski, 1998, pg. 181). Many Baby Boomers find this option viable (Rohrbach & Dlutowski, 1998). Charitable remainder trusts and charitable lead trusts are two such vehicles that enable donors to have access to income during their lives yet have the organization retain ownership upon the beneficiary's death.

Donors appreciate the ability to choose where their tax savings are directed; regular taxes do not afford them the same options (Mixer, 1994; Prince & File, 1994). The Tax Reform Act of 1986 also opened the door to greater philanthropy. These donors

give a higher approval rating to nonprofits' abilities to serve society than the government's ability (Prince & File, 1994; Schervish, 1997b). Despite the donors' decisions, it is imperative that the resource development officers, or someone in the organization, understand tax and financial considerations for the donors (Kirsch & Shell, 1998).

Donor Development and Theory

Researchers in the field of development and fundraising use different theories of giving in an effort to comprehend what drives philanthropic behavior in donors. There are three common theories related to giving that are cited in research and are useful for this discussion; these theories are altruism, utility maximization theory, and social exchange theory. These theories explore giving by donors through economic, behavioral, and social perspectives. Each of these theories, altruism, utility maximization, and social exchange, provide valuable insight into the question of why do donors give.

This study was viewed through the lens of the social exchange theory. The social exchange theory suggests associations and relationships have some bearing on giving. This theory expands from altruism and frames giving as a two-way course of action, built on social interactions and relationships (Scott & Seglow, 2007). Further, the social exchange theory suggests that people intensify relationships with organizations when they feel the exchange is fair and the institution is acting with honesty (Cardona, Lawrence, & Bentler, 2004).

The social exchange theory was introduced in the 1960s by George Homans (Emerson, 1976). After Homans founded the social exchange theory, a number of theorists continued to explore and document the theory including Richard Emerson, John

Thibaut, Harold Kelley, and Peter Blau. Assessing and understanding community college fundraising in context of the social exchange theory provides the realm of fundraising with a conceptual and theoretical home in the behavioral and social sciences.

Social exchange theory is considered a quasi-altruistic theory because the donor receives some benefit from the gift, social interaction, and relationships, but the benefit received is not the donors' primary motivation (Kennett, 1980). While the social exchange theory recognizes personal benefit to the donor in ways that are not always specific or tangible (Cardona et al., 2004), it still requires an exchange with the donor receiving something back for what they gave. According to Blau (as cited in Emerson, 1976), "social exchange as here conceived is limited to actions that are contingent on rewarding reactions from others" (p. 336). Emerson (1964) argues that the social exchange theory implies a mutually contingent, two-sided and mutually rewarding process that involves transactions or exchange. Homans (1961) (as cited in Emerson, 1976) states that the basic principles of the psychology of reinforcement and microeconomics may be relevant in studying the social exchange theory. Emerson (1976) further argues that a resource will continue to flow only if there is a contingent return valued upon it. Lawler and Thye (1999) state that a close analysis of many typical exchange relations insinuates that emotions both enter and pervade social exchange processes. Furthermore, friendship relations are often driven by powerful affection or feelings of joy. Alternatively, corporate mergers "may result from fear or anger; economic partnerships may thrive because they produce positive feelings such as confidence or pleasure" (Lawler & Thye, 1999, p. 218). In Lawler and Thye's (1999) research and study on the social exchange theory, they hypothesized that "cohesion and

solidarity of relations based on reciprocal exchange should be quite sensitive to emotional expressions in the exchange process” (p. 239).

Social exchange theory indicates the maintenance of the relationship is the basis for continued giving behavior (Emerson, 1976). Therefore, institutions of higher learning employ many methods to engage their donors through social connections. (West, 2012) For example, many colleges and universities host tailgating events during football season to provide a forum for donors and potential donors to gather, socialize and develop or deepen relationships with both university personnel and other donors (West, 2012). Additionally, many institutions of higher learning publish and distribute an alumni magazine or other publications intended for alumni and friends of the institution (West, 2012). The purpose of the publication is to keep them informed on current happenings at the institution (West, 2012). These are just a few of the many ways to keep donors, alumni and friends connected to the institution (West, 2012).

Cook and Lasher (1996) and Kelly (2002) used social exchange theory to explain the inter-dependent relationship that exists between donors and their alma mater. The relationships between donors and their alma maters are often predicated on an alignment of their respective needs and interests; when donors understand that their needs and interests are aligned with those of the institution, they are more likely to give. Many common exchange relations suggest that emotions both pervade and enter the social exchange processes (Lawler & Thye, 1999).

The context of exchange may have a distinct emotional tone, invoke particular emotions, and generate corrective responses when emotions surface or are expressed (Hochschild, 1979). Further, individuals may feel good, satisfied, relieved, excited, and

so forth as a result of the exchange (Lawler & Yoon, 1996). Finally, the outcome of social exchange may generate pride or shame directed internally (Kuhnert, 1992) or anger or gratitude directed externally (Weiner, 1986).

Donor motivation has been studied extensively. In the social exchange theory, motivators are peer and social approval (Blau, 1964). Research has indicated that motives are often mixed between altruism (the charitable model) and self-interest (an economic model); moreover, one rarely exists without the other (Kelly, 2002; Brittingham & Pezzullo, 1990). In spite of all of these identified categories with comparable themes and diverse titles, donors above all give if the opportunities align with their own interests (Kelly, 2002).

Researchers in the field of higher education have created a list of factors as to why alumni of institutions donate. Some donate from a sense of obligation, positive impact, loyalty to the institution, the institution's mission, the person requesting the gift, tax benefits, public recognition, and the gift level of other donors (Briechle, 2001; Ryan 1997). Young (1981) revealed that people that are most likely to donate to an institution of higher learning are those "with a personal stake in the organization" (p. 74). This personal stake results in donors reporting that their motivation was to seek social approval, dedication to the institutions' mission, motivated by sympathy, feelings of moral obligation, or to gain tax advantages (Young, 1981). These responders typically reflected "communities of participation" defined as "the networks of formal and informal relationships with which the people are associated" (Shervish & Havens, 2001, p. 113). Leslie and Ramey (1988) conducted research which generated predictors of voluntary support from different categories of donors for 73 Research I universities. The size of the

institution as it relates to local impact and expenditures per student influenced giving among non-alumni donors (West, 2012).

Role of the Community College Development Officer

Given all of the possible categories, diverse perspectives, and themes it remains the community college development officer's role to help donors realize their interests can parallel institutional needs (Guy & Patton, 1988; Jackson & Glass, 2000; Ostrander & Schervish, 1990; Panas, 2005). The role of the community college development officer is to bring in donations to the community college at the community college president's direction. In Mississippi, community college development officers are tasked with not only fundraising for scholarships, academic support, and building campaigns, but also for athletic programs. This is different from their four-year university counterparts in that university development officers are usually staffed more, and have specific development officers assigned to each college or school in the university, as well as having dedicated fundraisers to athletic programs (Skari, 2014). The community college development officer is typically one individual, and that individual is tasked with managing the fundraising campaigns of the entire community college (Skari, 2014). This can present a potential challenge because typically the number of community college donors are less in numbers than the donors at four-year institutions. The challenge that this presents at the community college level is that the development officer is dealing with the same donor for multiple potential fundraising requests, whereas the four-year institution can have multiple donors that do not overlap for asks. This study will assist community college development professionals by aiding them to identify characteristics and motivations of community college donors which can increase their efficiency, as well

as contributing to the existing literature on community college donor motivations and characteristics.

Summary

Philanthropy in higher education has been around since the 1600's. However, fundraising for community colleges is a relatively new concept. With the evaporation of funding from traditional sources becoming more of a reality, community colleges need to look to alternative sources of funding to bridge the gap in funding going forward.

CHAPTER III - METHODOLOGY

This mixed-method study attempted to identify the motivations and characteristics of donors amongst Mississippi's fifteen community and junior colleges. The researcher proposed to conduct the study in two phases. Phase One involved an exploratory qualitative approach (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) in which the researcher interviewed the lead administrator for donor relations and/or fundraising at each of the fifteen community and junior colleges in the state of Mississippi. Exploratory qualitative research enables the study to be usable in practical applications, which can benefit community college administrators and foundation personnel (Glasser & Strauss, 2017). Phase Two would have used the survey method to ask donors directly about their characteristics and motivations. Phase II was dependent on interview participants' response to an interview question that inquires whether or not their community college maintains a donor database to track their donors, and if so, would the lead fundraiser be willing to provide access to the researcher so that he can send a questionnaire directly to donors to ascertain their characteristics and motivations. The majority of the lead administrators for donor relations and/or fundraising replied that their college did not have a donor database, and did not allow the researcher to submit the questionnaire to their donors. Therefore, the second phase of the approach (quantitative) was omitted. Only the qualitative data obtained in Phase One was used in this study. As a result of this, the research questions were answered based on what the opinions of the lead administrators in charge of fundraising at Mississippi community colleges that participated in this study were of characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors.

This study addressed two research questions.

Research Questions

R1: What are characteristics of Mississippi community college donors?

R2: What are the motivations of Mississippi community college donors?

Phase One: Exploratory Qualitative Research

Because donor information for an institution's fundraising division is treated with great care and confidentiality, the researcher believed interviewing the fundraising professionals at each community college is the best approach to obtaining information about donor characteristic and motivations. The researcher spent approximately 50 – 60 minutes interviewing each individual in order to determine, based on their experience, what they viewed as being characteristics and motivators of community college donors in Mississippi. Qualitative research was the best fit for this study because it allowed the researcher to conduct interviews with the participants in their temporal and local environment, thus creating a level of comfort and trust for the interview (Flick, 2014).

Research Design and Procedures

The researcher employed purposive sampling for Phase One. The criteria for selection as a research participant is that the individual must be a lead administrator for donor relations and/or fundraising at each of the community colleges in Mississippi. or be his/her designee. The researcher obtained permission to conduct this study from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at The University of Southern Mississippi, as well as obtained permission from the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges (MACJC) before conducting the interviews.

Data Collection for Phase One

After the researcher received IRB approval, data collection began by the researcher interviewing the foundation director or fundraising chair for each of the fifteen Mississippi community colleges. The researcher's primary data collection method was in-depth, open-ended interviews. An interview guide which the researcher prepared, was used in the interview process (Bowen 2005) (Appendix A). The researcher chose the Mississippi Community College system because the state has consistently ranked as possessing one of the lower per capita household incomes and as one that has the lowest educational attainment among residents of any state (NCES, 2012; U. S. Census Bureau, 2013).

Positionality

At the genesis of my doctoral program, I was serving as the Associate Vice President for Development and Executive Director of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College Foundation. I was in charge of fundraising for the college, and the day-to-day operations of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College Foundation. I served in this capacity for two years, during which I got to know and work with the foundation directors of each of Mississippi's fifteen community and junior colleges. As a community college employee, I was able to experience first-hand how important private donors can be to an institution's revenue stream. Attending annual foundation conferences in Mississippi, I discovered that no true donor profile existed for the Mississippi community colleges. This piqued my interest in that there was a true need for academic research with regards to developing a method to gauge the motivations and

characteristics of the Mississippi community college donor. Information such as this would be a valuable tool to community college leaders and foundation officers.

I did not anticipate being viewed as a competitor to the community college foundations for two reasons. First, community colleges are defined geographically. Therefore, it was my experience as a Foundation Director that schools do not compete for donors. Secondly, I no longer work in the community college system. I am a Vice President and Commercial Lender with The First, A National Banking Association. I am a twelve-year banking veteran, and left the banking field during the financial crisis of 2009, and worked in the community college system briefly before returning to commercial banking in 2014.

Interview Process

The most common method used to collect data in a qualitative study is through the interview process according to Merriam & Tisdell (2016). They suggest that interviews are necessary as individual perceptions cannot be understood or interpreted without explanation. Therefore, interviews will be a technique that the researcher will use to collect data that will allow him to decipher the characteristics and motivators of Mississippi community college donors. Research participants for Phase One were selected based on their position at the community college. Face-to-face interviews lasted approximately 50 - 60 minutes for each participant and were conducted in a location selected by the participant. At the beginning of each interview, the study's purpose was explained to each research participant. The researcher informed each research participant that his or her participation was strictly voluntary and that the process would remain completely anonymous to encourage research participants to speak openly and honestly.

Interviews were conducted in areas that are quiet, primarily in offices or conference rooms on the campus of the institution.

Instrumentation

Interviews were conducted using the questions written by the researcher (Appendix A). Semi-structured interviews were used so that the interview questions acted as a guide but the researcher may deviate from them if interesting ideas are brought up or to follow-up more deeply in an area. They were recorded using a voice recorder and the researcher transcribed them following the interview.

Data Analysis

As interviews were being conducted, the researcher took notes. Upon completion of the first interview transcription, the researcher analyzed the responses in order to determine direct responses were given in response to the items asked. The researcher continued to analyze the content of the responses throughout the entire interview process. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argued “without ongoing analysis, the data can be unfocused, repetitious, and overwhelming in the sheer volume of material that needs to be processed” (p. 171). Once the data process was complete, the researcher saved the transcripts on a file on his computer.

Data collection and management were the first two steps in the data analysis spiral that Creswell (2013) illustrated. Utilizing this spiral approach, Creswell (2013) suggested that researchers start with collecting data, and as the researcher moves through the interrelated and intertwined spirals, the researcher will end their narrative account.

Creswell (2013) identifies the third step in the data spiral as “reading and memoing” (p. 183). During this step, the researcher read the transcriptions of the interviews in order to familiarize himself with the content of the transcribed responses.

The final step in the process was coding the data. The researcher coded the data and formulated categories. Creswell (2013) states that this step “is the heart of qualitative data analysis” (p. 184). Once coding of the data was completed, the researcher holistically examined the data, and developed three themes, as three themes are typically acceptable for most publications (Creswell, 2013). In the development of themes, the researcher employed thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is an analytical approach that occurs as the researcher analyzes the data imparted by the research participant (Riesmann, 2008). This analysis is an appropriate strategy for this study as the researcher was interested in examining the characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors. After themes were identified, exhaustive categories were established, and themes were assigned to specific categories in order to be analyzed by the researcher. Finally, the researcher used a narrative analysis in order to determine the characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors.

Phase Two

Fundraising professionals devote a great deal of time and energy creating and maintaining a donor and prospect list for their solicitation efforts. Therefore, a prospective donor, or a current donor is often fostered over a period of months, sometimes even years. An inopportune comment to a “prospect,” the term used to depict a prospective donor, could devastate the time and efforts of a development officer in an attempt to build a relationship with a perspective donor (Twombly, 1998). Furthermore,

donor information is treated with great care and respect (West, 2012). Based on the information gathered during Phase One, access was not granted to survey current donors of the Mississippi Community Colleges. Therefore, permission was not granted by any of the institutions to send a questionnaire to their donors.

Data Collection

Data collection did not begin since permission to survey the respective community college's donor database was not granted.

Instrumentation

This study would also contain a questionnaire utilizing the survey methodology if the majority of the interview subjects agree to allow their donors to be surveyed. This question was asked in the interview between the researcher and the lead administrator or chief fundraising officer of the community college. Permission was not granted, and therefore the questionnaire utilizing the survey methodology was not used.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire would have been used by the researcher in order to chart the donors' motivations on how their specific motivations correlate to their demographics. The data would have been entered into the statistical software program SPSS in order to run statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics would be run first on each independent variable to develop a profile of donors to community colleges. Next, applicable statistics would be run on the collected data with regards to the corresponding response of each research question. Data analysis did not take place because permission was not granted by the participants to access their donor databases.

Limitations of Study

This study was limited to the donors of the fifteen Mississippi community colleges. Since this study is about determining characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors, the study will be limited to the fifteen Mississippi community colleges.

CHAPTER IV – RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to identify characteristics and motivators of Mississippi community college donors. The research questions that were addressed were

R1: What are the characteristics of Mississippi community college donors?

R2: What are the motivations of Mississippi community college donors?

This chapter reports the findings of the study.

Semi-structured research interviews were conducted with 11 participants during May 2018 and June 2018. The data that were collected during those interviews was transcribed. Research participants were the lead administrators in charge of fundraising at 11 Mississippi community colleges. All 15 of the Mississippi Community colleges were invited to participate in this study. Eleven agreed to participate, one declined to participate, and three did not respond.

Data Analysis

Research Participants

Research Participants were the lead administrator in charge of fundraising at each community college in Mississippi. Each of the interviews took place at a location chosen by the participants, at a time convenient for the lead administrator in charge of fundraising. Of the 11 total participants in this study, five were male, six were female, and over half of the participants had over 10 years each of fundraising experience at the community college level. All of the participants were Caucasian.

Table of Demographics of Participants

Participant's Name	Race	Gender	Years' Experience
CC1	White	Female	Over 15
CC2	White	Male	Over 10
CC3	White	Male	Over 15
CC4	White	Male	Less than 5
CC5	White	Female	Over 15
CC6	White	Male	Less than 5
CC7	White	Female	Over 10
CC8	White	Female	Less than 5
CC9	White	Female	Over 10
CC10	White	Female	Over 15
C11	White	Male	Over 15

Note. Individual participants are numbered, not named, in order to protect their anonymity.

The researcher explained the purpose of the study and encouraged participants to speak openly and honestly. Therefore, the researcher assumed that the research participants responded truthfully to the interview items. The responses collected were based on the research participants own knowledge and experiences as the lead administrator in charge of fundraising and their applicable community college. Based on

their collective knowledge and insight regarding characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors, these professionals could contribute to information that may answer this particular study's research questions:

R1: What are the characteristics of Mississippi community college donors?

R2: What are the motivations of Mississippi community college donors?

Anonymous Data and Data Analysis

As was stated in the IRB application, the researcher proctored the research participants' identity throughout the data collection process. The researcher used numbers instead of names or pseudonyms to refer to individuals in order to ensure anonymity, e.g., CC, CC2. The researcher did not reveal the participants' real names or any identifying factors to describe these individuals in order to protect the research participants. The following themes emerged through thematic coding of the data analysis process:

1. Relationships
2. Donor Characteristics
3. Donor Motivations

Theme One: Relationships

All of the participants in this study reported that relationships are vital to a successful fundraising program. They also indicated that donor relationships have to be fostered. CC10 stated "the relationship that the individual had with the college is vital. I hear many donors say I wish I could have been here for all four years of college." CC1 echoed that relationships with donors are vital commenting, "I nurture our donors. I want them to know that I am their friend, and not because they are giving me money. Believe

in what you are doing- I believe in sincerity.” Community college presidents understand that positive relationships between the college and individuals in the community will increase contributions (Hall, 2002). This concept is also widely practiced in the private sector business: people tend to do business with people they like.

Several of the participants responded that a donor’s relationship with a faculty member was also an important component of giving. Many of those donors have established scholarships in honor of that faculty member who made an impact on their academic career as a student when they attended the community college. This information is accurate and does not deviate from standard ideas about donors. All of the respondents reported that scholarships were a significant part of their fundraising programs, and a significant part of their foundations.

Another relationship theme that emerged was that if a donor met his or her spouse at the college, there was a strong chance that the individual would donate to the foundation. CC2, CC3, CC4, CC6, and CC11 all responded that they each have several donors who met their spouse at the college and due to that relationship have been good donors to the foundation.

Carter and Duggan (2011) found that 68.1% of their current community college donors were married. Of those married couples, the decision on donations fell into three categories. Andreoni, Brown, and Rischall (2003) detailed that 53% of the decisions were made jointly, 19% were made by the husband, and 28% were made by the wife. Couples with higher educational levels were more likely to make joint decisions. Regarding donating to education, wives alone were more likely than husbands or as couples to contribute a donation. The dollar amount given to education when wives made the

decision was almost double than when husbands made the decision alone (Andreoni, Brown, & Rischall, 2003). Married donors represent the majority of those who donate (West, 2012). This appears to align with what the data indicated in this study.

A final theme that emerged was the relationship with the college and its workforce development partners. As community colleges perform more and more workforce training in their districts, industry is taking notice. CC7 asserts “work-force relationships have opened the doors for corporate donations. It really puts a value on the services that the community college offers. The corporate sector has sponsored the scholarship dinner and other events.” CC10 asserts “most of our non-traditional donors are work-force partners.”

Corporate partnerships are common in fundraising in higher education. In the community college sector, one can see the importance of these partnerships because the community college most often is training the work force of the corporate partner in industry. This appears to be a good relationship because the college is receiving a donation in some form, be in monetary, or equipment, and the corporate partner is receiving recognition for their good will efforts in the community. All in all, relationships are extremely important in community college fundraising.

Donor Lists

Of the eleven participants in this study, five reported that they have a donor database used exclusively for fundraising purposes. Six of the eleven reported that they either had no exclusive donor database, or they had a partial working database to track donor records. All eleven of the participants declined to allow their alumni to be sent a questionnaire.

The majority of the respondents reported that they receive new records from admissions once students graduate, and then this information is imported into their database. Further, obtaining donor and potential donor information is primarily acquired via sign ups at college events such as homecoming and athletic events where everyone is encouraged to register and give current address and contact information. This information is inputted in existing donor records. The researcher was surprised that many community colleges are still working on implementing an exclusive donor database. This is different from their university fundraising counterparts.

Theme Two: Donor Characteristics

Location

All eleven respondents in this study reported that most of their donors live in the community college's district. A possible reason for this is the majority of community colleges in Mississippi began as agricultural high schools in the early 1910's (Young & Ewing, 1978). The eleven participants in this study also stated that the majority of their donors were older, meaning over 60 years of age. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that these donors more than likely attended the community college when it was an agricultural high school. CC7, CC8, and CC10 all stated that they were aware of donors to their foundation that had also attended the institution when it was a high school.

CC4 asserted "there is a belief in the mission and the values of the college . . . there is a desire to see the college continue to have a positive impact on the regions and the county as a whole." CC3 shared a similar sentiment, "Donors believe in the community, the area, and the college. There is a vested interest in the area, the regions, and the college. We want to make the area a better place, make the area desirable- an

educated workforce can do that.” Similarly, CC2 shared the sentiment that “most people have gotten sold on the idea of what the community college is doing. Folks can see the access, and see what it is doing for the area. It’s an economic development tool. More people put money behind it.”

CC6 stated that “the community from the 6 counties that are our district- the businesses with our 6-county district- we help them with our workforce development training and they are excellent supporters of the college.”

According to CC5, “some of our best donors are mainly people from the community, and had heard good things about the college, and wanted to help the college and the community. I would say the closer to the college they live, the better the donors.” CC11 remarked, “the number of donors that give that live within the 6-county district makes up the majority of our donors. However, the largest gifts, monetary-wise are from people that live outside the district.” This information surprised the researcher in that it deviates from what is standard information about donors. Most of the research regarding fundraising does not mention location of donors and the proximity of their location to the college in which they are donating as a motivation or characteristic of a donor. A possible explanation of this could be that Mississippi is a rural state with no significant metropolitan areas. The majority of the population resides in rural areas.

It is also possible that community college donors are less geographically mobile than their university donor peers.

Participated in Extracurricular Activities

Each of the 11 respondents indicated that donors to their foundations that attended the community college participated in some type of extracurricular activity while they

were a student at the community college. Eight of the eleven respondents replied that the majority of donors that attended the community college participated in athletics while they were a student. Ten of the eleven respondents also indicated that many of their donors were members of the band while they were a student. Five of the respondents indicated that their donors were members of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society while they were a student. Two respondents reported that some of their donors were former Student Government Association members while they were students at the community college.

CC10 exclaimed “most donors were athletes, high steppers, or band. Now, we are seeing more that were Phi Theta Kappa and from our student recruiting group.” CC6 stated that a “good portion are former athletes, some band. More Phi Theta Kappa than band. [The] biggest givers are the ones that met their spouse here.” Likewise, CC4 remarked that, “donors are segmented. Athletes will usually give to an athletic project and band members will donate to a band project. Phi Theta Kappa members tend to donate for Phi Theta Kappa. Whatever interest you had when you were there (as a student), that is what they tend to support.” CC11 noted that there

would be a fairly equal split - those that participated in an extracurricular activity and we have several that worked their way through college that are excellent donors. Athletes do give, and there are several that give that were involved in band, cheerleading, and the fine arts.

On an interesting note, CC1’s response to questions about donor characteristics differed from the others: “I would say the donors that have come back are not sports[athletes]. It was the instructors that they loved. A lot have scholarships named after favorite instructors at the school . . . teachers that they encountered, the education that they got

here. The researcher was surprised by this response as it deviated from the rest of the lead administrators in charge of fundraising responded in the interview. All other respondents indicated some sort of participation in athletics. However, CC1's response regarding the donors that donate to the college because of the instructors that they had correlates with the importance of relationships that donors have with the college. This relationship aspect appears to be consistent with standard ideas about donors. The data indicates that participation in extracurricular activities while a student at the community college is a major factor of community college donor characteristics. Participation in sports and the fine arts appear to be the most common. However, participation in clubs and other organizations such as Phi Theta Kappa are a significant component, as well.

Demographics

All eleven of the respondents reported that the majority of their donors are white males, over 40 years of age. Specifically, they were 60 years of age or more. CC8 and CC10 reported that a large portion of their donors had spouses. The eleven respondents also indicated that the majority of their donors lived within the college's district, and did attend the college. Some of the respondents did report that white females did compose a segment of their donors, as well. All respondents reported that they had some minority donors, but this segment did not make up the largest percentage of their donor base.

This information appears to be reasonable given the fact that Mississippi schools were segregated until the late 1960s. Therefore, the composition of the student bodies of the colleges would be white males and white females. As minority donors grow older, this could be an emerging potential group of new donors in which foundation directors can target. All respondents reported that they had some minority donors, but as this

segment ages and makes more money throughout their lives, this group could have a major impact on future fundraising in Mississippi community colleges.

Theme Three: Donor Motivations

Belief in the community

Another theme that emerged from the research was the donors' belief in the community. According to CC4: "the donors have to believe. Belief in the mission, in the values of the college. There's a desire to see the college continue to have an impact on the regions and counties as a whole." CC1 echoes this sentiment by stating, "the community knows the college is a big part of the community." CC10 stated, "they believe in the community, the area, and the college. They have a vested interest in the area/community. They want to make the area a better place, make the area desirable." CC2 remarked:

It boils down to the absolute love of what a community college does for their area. They got a start. They've bought in to what a community college does for the area. They have gotten sold on the idea that community colleges' can see the access and what it is doing as an economic development tool. More people put dollars behind that because they can see the impact.

On a similar note, CC11 said:

People give to people. You have to cultivate the relationship, do what is best for people. The community college is part of the community; it involves the community. People feel like they are a part of it. We truly have a family atmosphere.

Young (1981) revealed that people that are most likely to donate to an institution of higher learning are those “with a personal stake in the organization” (p. 74). This personal stake results in donors reporting that their motivation was to seek social approval, dedication to the institutions’ mission, motivated by sympathy, feelings of moral obligation, or to gain tax advantages (Young, 1981). These responders typically reflected “communities of participation” defined as “the networks of formal and informal relationships with which the people are associated” (Shervish & Havens, 2001, p. 113).

This data surprised the researcher in that it deviates from standard ideas about donors. There is substantial literature regarding a donor’s belief in the college or institution of higher education. To the researcher’s knowledge, a donor’s belief in the success of the community as a whole has not been identified as a donor motivation or characteristic. This information is valuable in that it potentially identifies a new donor segment of individuals who did not attend the college, but may be willing to give because of the positive impact that the college has on the community as a whole.

Corporate giving is vital

Community colleges are heavily involved in workforce training. When community college administrators in charge of fundraising were asked about corporate giving, all eleven respondents answered that donations from businesses were an integral part of their fundraising efforts. CC5 remarked, “we don’t have a lot of large, corporate donors, but they support our golf tournament and sporting events.” CC3 stated “out top 10 annual givers, one through four are corporate. Very vested in the community. Banks are the best examples.” According to CC7:

Work-force relationships have opened the doors to the corporate donors. It really puts a value on our services. They sponsor our scholarship dinner and other initiatives of the college...we have some Foundation Board Members that are part of the corporate world and they have helped us with corporate giving.

CC1 exclaimed, “corporations give their money for work force. [Their] tie-in to the college is not necessarily to the foundation, but training because they want to have the workers. They may give to the foundation for work force development.” CC9 reported “businesses and people in the community want to see the college succeed.” CC10 stated “most non-traditional donors are work-force partners, Foundation Board Members.” CC4 noted:

Because of our location, we do not have a lot of corporate donors. The ones we do have, are very supportive. There’s tremendous potential to grow, if we can serve the needs of those corporate donors.

Finally, CC11 stated:

Our corporate partners help not only the Foundation, but the college, as well. From the Foundation side, the businesses sponsor our events, we solicit those. They like that because it gives them an opportunity to help the college and advertise themselves. The businesses also give to scholarships, and our work force programs. They know that they are getting trained workers that come from the college.

The responses with regard to corporate giving appear to be consistent with standard ideas about donors. The majority of respondents indicated that corporate donors

like to support the community college because they believe in the mission of the college, and it also gives them some good marketing exposure.

Recognition

All eleven of the respondents indicated that most donors like to receive some sort of recognition. It is noteworthy to mention that all eleven of the respondents reported that their foundation conducts a scholarship dinner, or some type of event/reception to recognize their donors. CC11 stated that donors liked to be recognized, and that their college does a scholarship dinner where the donors and students are both recognized. “Scholarship support is big because they can put a face with it. People give to people. People want to be associated with the different levels of giving” remarked CC11. CC11 further stated “That’s why you establish those levels, that’s how they can move into them.”

All of the respondents stated that they recognize their donors, should the donor not decline to be recognized, in their college’s publication or magazine. CC2 remarked:

we used to do a scholarship recognition program that was a luncheon. We had the donors there and the scholarship recipients together so that they could meet each other and interact with each other. Everybody was doing that. It was successful, but the only ones there were the ones that were already donating to the Foundation. We decided to change that, and recognize the donors at a football game. There are lots more people at the game - people that haven’t donated before, a more diverse group there, from all walks of life and from all over the community. That has been successful for us, and brought in a lot more people that have not donated before.

Impressive lead gifts often encourage others to contribute because the original donor made such a strong statement with the gift (Mixer, 1993; Panas, 2005). This bandwagon effect influences additional gifts (Kirsch & Shell, 1998). For example, CC3 stated, “people see the scholarships named after someone. Yes, when it is published [donor lists], other people want to be on it. Whenever we publish donors, it encourages others to do the same.” CC1 said:

Yes, donors like to be recognized. The Foundation magazine – [they] love their picture in there and they up their giving. It’s a big deal. We built a chapel and recognized the donors for their contributions to it. We also have a donor recognition wall.

CC8 stated, “the Foundation Hall of Fame banquet has been a big success. We recognize donors [dollar amount] and above. It is motivational to donors. We also recognize them in our alumni publication.” CC9 remarked, “we do a scholarship dinner, and do lots of publicity to recognize and promote it.” CC10 believed that donor recognition is important, especially to the business/corporate donors. CC4 agreed and commented “it’s marketing for the businesses. It shows that they are supportive of the community.”

Social exchange theory indicates the maintenance of the relationship is the basis for continued giving behavior (Emerson, 1976). Therefore, institutions of higher learning employ many methods to engage their donors through social connections. (West, 2012) For example, many colleges and universities host tailgating events during football season to provide a forum for donors and potential donors to gather, socialize and develop or deepen relationships with both university personnel and other donors (West, 2012). The literature supports the responses given during the interviews. All of the participants’

foundations hosted some type of event that was for the purpose of recognizing their donors. This is a common practice in fundraising, and is consistent with standard ideas about donors.

Specific Cause

Ten of the eleven respondents answered that donors prefer to give to a specific cause when donating their money to the community college's foundation. CC10 reported, "donors tend to like specific projects. Whatever cause is special to them." CC9 stated, "scholarships are important. The more specific you can be, the better. We were able to raise funds for furniture for a new building because we were able to tell the donors exactly what we needed and what the cost would be." CC2 reported "donors absolutely are more likely to donate to a specific cause. Even with the annual fund drive, they like to know what it is going to. Name components are also something that they like." A name component refers to having a building or classroom named after a donor in. CC6 remarked, "no question that donors are more likely to donate to a specific cause. I am very specific in what I am trying to do when I ask." CC4 stated, "100% yes donors are more likely to donate to a specific purpose or cause...they would rather donate to a scholarship or a building rather than unrestricted funds." CC5 interjected, "people need a reason to give, they need a purpose, we try to come up with a criteria." CC3 reported, "most of our substantial gifts are restricted...we make our annual fund specific." CC11 stated "unrestricted gifts are nice, but most people prefer to designate their contributions. Scholarship support is a great example because they can put a face with a name. People give to people."

This data appears to be consistent with standard ideas about donors- most donors like to give to a specific cause or purpose. The most difficult funds to raise are unrestricted dollars, meaning those that have no restrictions tied to the funds and may be used for any purpose at the foundation's discretion. Although these unrestricted funds are necessary, most donors prefer to know exactly where their dollars are being invested. However, the researcher was surprised by the response given that indicated that most donors did not give to a specific cause. All of the respondents indicated that donors prefer to give to scholarships. In addition to this being a donation for a specific purpose, it would also fall into the relationship category, as well.

Summary

Based on the data analysis, the research findings indicated the characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors based on the opinions of the lead administrators in charge of fundraising at Mississippi community colleges. Participants in the study indicated that the majority of their donors were white males, 60 years of age and older. They also indicated that the majority of their donors lived within the community college's district. Participants in the study indicated that the majority of their donors were involved in an extracurricular activity while they were a student at the community college. It is also noteworthy to mention that the participants in this study reported that the donors, whether a former student of the college or not, had some type of relationship with the community college. Donors were reported to prefer to donate to a specific cause, and to receive some sort of recognition for their donation. Corporate giving is also a large component of the community college's fundraising plan. This giving has been fostered through work-force development training and relationships

within the communities in which the colleges operate. Participants in this study noted that these are all key components of motivations and characteristics of Mississippi community college donors.

CHAPTER V – CONCLUSIONS

This study described the characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors based on the opinions of the lead administrators in charge of fundraising at the participating Mississippi community colleges. During this study, the researcher conducted interviews with 11 community college administrators who were in charge of fundraising at their applicable community college. In doing so, the researcher gained an understanding of what the lead administrator at each community college believed were characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors.

The findings of the study suggested that characteristics of Mississippi community college donors are predominately white males, over 60 years of age, and attended the college at which they are employed. Three primary themes emerged in the findings of the study which were: relationships, donor characteristics, and donor motivations. Recognition, belief in the community as a whole, and corporate giving were components of the donors' motivations to give.

This study viewed the characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors through the lens of the social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976). The social exchange theory suggests that relationships and associations have some bearing on giving. The findings of this study support that statement. The participants in this study reported that the donors, whether a former student of the college or not, had some type of relationship with the community college. The relationship between the donor and the college was primarily fostered through the community college's development officer, or foundation officer. Emerson (1976) wrote that the social exchange theory indicates that the maintenance of the relationship is the basis for continued giving behavior. Therefore,

the relationship between the donor and the foundation and/or development officer is critical.

Blau (1964) argued that in the social exchange theory, motivators are peer and social approval. The findings of this study demonstrated that donors like to receive recognition for their contributions, and donor recognition, such as having one's name listed under giving levels in a college publication can encourage others to donate to a community college. Emerson (1964) revealed that the social exchange theory implies a mutually contingent, two-sided and mutually rewarding process that involves transactions or exchange. The findings of this study support this statement, as well. For example, the majority of the respondents in this study reported that corporate donations were a great partnership because the college received some support from the corporation, and the corporation received recognition, or favorable marketing of their organization for their support of the college. Therefore, the college received something, a donation, and the corporation received advertising for their donation. This is a mutually beneficial relationship.

Relationship to Existing Literature

This study was unique in that to the researcher's knowledge very few studies, if any, have explored Mississippi community college donors' characteristics and motivations. In fact, few studies exist on community college fundraising. This study differed from existing studies (West, 2012, Skari, 2014, & Foley, 2003) in that the focus was on both donor characteristics and donor motivations at the community college level in the state of Mississippi. Previous studies have explored either donor characteristics or motivations. For example, West's (2012) study examined what motivates current donors

to contribute to Florida community colleges, Skari's 2014 study examined characteristics of community college alumni, and Foley's 2003 study examined characteristics of University of Virginia donors.

The primary difference between this study and the three above mentioned studies is that this study looked exclusively at community college donors and motivators as a whole, not just community college alumni, and looked at characteristics and motivations of community college donors in the state of Mississippi. Community colleges are uniquely local in that they are directly influenced and funded by the specific counties in which they operate (Young & Ewing, 1974). Hence, the primary focus on Mississippi community colleges.

The findings of this study supported the various facets of the literature. As West (2012) reported in her study, resource development strategies that work for traditional four-year institutions typically do not work for community colleges. This statement was verified through the participants of this study. Most community colleges do not have the monetary resources or staff devoted to fundraising that their university counterparts have. Few community colleges have donor databases exclusively for tracking donor contributions and data. Additionally, most community college donors are located within the community college's district foot-print.

West (2012) argued that excellence in academics can play an important role in the college's mission. This study revealed that most donors had a relationship with a faculty member who positively influenced their academic career, and because of this positive relationship, the donor set up a scholarship in that faculty member's name. Relationships and academics can play an important part in fundraising for the institution.

Limitations

Limiting factors of this study were that this study was restricted to only Mississippi community colleges, and participation. As Young & Ewing (1974) wrote, community colleges are uniquely local in that they are directly influenced and funded by the specific counties in which they operate. Because of this, this study was limited to Mississippi community colleges. Regarding participation, 11 of the 15 Mississippi community colleges participated in this study. One community college declined to participate, and the remaining three community colleges did not respond.

Recommendations for Practice

According to the results of this study, there are several recommendations for practice for community college administrations and fundraisers. Relationships are vital. This was a consistent theme that emerged from this study. The donor must have a positive relationship with the institution. This relationship is primarily with the community college's fundraising officer or foundation director. Donors like to have one primary point of contact. They want to be able to pick up the phone and talk to someone that they know, who understands them, and their philanthropic views. Administrators at the community college can let the foundation director be the primary point of contact with the donor, and also allow the foundation director to foster the relationship. It is not necessary for the community college president to be involved in every single interaction with donors. That would constitute micromanaging the process. Donors can see this, and this is not a good image for the institution.

With further regard to relationships, a donation from a donor should not be treated like a transaction. Participants in this study reported that most donors liked to be

recognized for their contribution. It is important for the community college president to understand that it is not good practice for one to ask for a donation from a donor, and then keep asking the same donor for more donations. This is where the relationship aspect comes into play. A donor may very well want to give multiple donations, which is perfectly fine, but the foundation officer's input needs to be taken into consideration. The foundation officer can assist the community college president on the appropriate timing for future requests for donations from the donor.

This study indicated that location plays an important characteristic of donors. A recommendation for practice could be for community college administrators to study their community college district for potential donors. The majority of the respondents of this study remarked that the majority of their donors lived within the community college's district. This could be a good starting place for development officers to look for potential donors.

Findings of this study also indicated that the majority of donors participated in some type of extracurricular activity while attending the community college. Foundation directors could use their existing databases or lists of former students who were involved in extracurricular activities as a potential donor contact list for the soliciting of future contributions.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based upon the findings of this study, the researcher recommends that further research could benefit the existing literature on community college fundraising. The sample size could be expanded to include faculty members' input since so many

respondents stated that a faculty member was the reason a donor decided to make a contribution to the community college.

Additionally, it was reported in the findings of this study that several donors were members of the community, who chose to donate to the community college in order to help the community as a whole, and because the donor could see the benefit of the community college's relationship to the community as a whole. The sample size could be expanded to include members of the community that were stakeholders in the community.

Donations from corporations are becoming more common and play a more important role in community college fundraising than before, as this study reported. A study that explored the reasons why corporations donate to organizations could benefit researchers and college fundraisers in that it could establish a link between why the corporation chooses to donate to a specific organization. This information could benefit community college administrators in that they would know how to better cater to corporations in order to ask for donations.

This study also reported that the majority of donors to Mississippi community colleges were white males, over 60 years of age. A possible study for future research could be focusing on the motivations and characteristics of minority donors. Given the changing demographics of the population, it appears that there is a large potential for minority giving in the state of Mississippi, and this could be further explored to better target donations from minority donors.

Conclusion

The motivation for this study was the researcher's desire to examine the characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors. As a former fundraiser for a Mississippi community college, the researcher was intrigued by these attributes. Research revealed that characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors do exist. Based on this information, the researcher designed a qualitative study to examine these characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors.

To answer the proposed research questions, the researchers studied information about fundraising in higher education, and fundraising at the community college level. The researcher also examined information from previous studies such as West (2012), Skari (2014), and Foley (2003). These studies failed to address specific characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors.

This study viewed the motivations and characteristics of Mississippi community college donors through the lens of the social exchange theory. The researcher interviewed the lead administrator in charge of fundraising at 11 of the 15 Mississippi community colleges and asked them what they believed were characteristics and motivations of community college donors in Mississippi. The findings of the study suggest that the majority of Mississippi community college donors are white males, over 60 years of age, that live within the community college's district. Furthermore, this study revealed that relationships, donor recognition, participation in extracurricular activities, and belief in the community are motivators to give. Corporate giving is also an important part of community college fundraising. These factors can all contribute to the whole

picture of identifying characteristics and motivations of Mississippi community college donors.

APPENDIX A – Interview Guide

1. How have you developed a donor profile at your foundation?
2. What demographic characteristics do you find most common amongst your donors to your foundation?
3. How are demographic characteristics such as age/gender/race/ethnicity predictors of donor giving compared to income/employment/degree earned and residence?
4. What activities are most common amongst community college donors when they were a student at your campus (band, athletics, etc.)?
5. Are donors more likely to donate to a specific purpose or cause (i.e. defined purpose)?
6. Can you explain any successes of increased giving through your donor recognition programs?
7. How have corporate donors impacted your fundraising efforts?
8. What are motivating factors that encourage donors to give to your foundation?
9. Does your community college have a database that tracks donor information? If so, would you be willing to send a questionnaire to your donors to try and determine what their characteristics and motivations are with regards to donating?
10. How are non-traditional donors (did not attend your community college) affiliated with your community college and fundraising efforts?

APPENDIX B – IRB Approval Letter



INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

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NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 18041303

PROJECT TITLE: Characteristics and Motivators of Mississippi Community College Donors

PROJECT TYPE: Doctoral Dissertation

RESEARCHER(S): F. Russell Young

COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education and Psychology

DEPARTMENT: Educational Research and Administration

FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 04/16/2018 to 04/15/2019

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.

Institutional Review Board

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