Summer 2019

Learning to Lead: Examining Leadership Competencies of Participants in the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy

Renyetta Johnson

Recommended Citation
Johnson, Renyetta, "Learning to Lead: Examining Leadership Competencies of Participants in the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy" (2019). Dissertations. 1687.
https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations/1687

Follow this and additional works at: https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations
Part of the Community College Leadership Commons

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu.
LEARNING TO LEAD: EXAMINING LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

by

Renyetta M. Johnson

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 in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Approved by:

Dr. Lilian H. Hill, Committee Chair
Dr. Richard Mohn
Dr. Thomas Lipscomb
Dr. Kyna Shelley

Dr. Lilian H. Hill
Committee Chair

Dr. Sandra Nichols
Director of School

Dr. Karen S. Coats
Dean of the Graduate School

August 2019
ABSTRACT

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC, 2005) developed and approved a research-based competency framework for leadership development, consisting of six leadership competencies that were deemed as being “very” or “extremely” essential to the effective performance of community college leaders. The six leadership competencies are: “organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, community college advocacy, and professionalism” (AACC, 2005, pp. 4–6). While it has been well researched and documented that a leadership crisis exists within the leadership ranks of community colleges, an abundance of the research has focused on the position of president. Other leadership positions in the community college are faced with the nearing retirements of current leaders. As a result, community colleges are tasked with the growing demand to find qualified individuals to fill these leadership roles. These roles include the likes of mid-level leaders (e.g., deans, directors, department chairs) and upper-level leaders (e.g., chief academic officers, chief financial officers, vice presidents). To address the growing shortage, grow your own leadership programs and in-house leadership have become one method used to equip aspiring community college leaders with the necessary skills to become effective leaders. One such program, known as the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy (MCCLA) focuses on addressing the projected demand for upper-level leaders within the Mississippi community college system (MCCF, 2016).

The purpose of this study was to extend prior research studies on the AACC leadership competencies by examining how participants in the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy (MCCLA) rated the importance of the AACC leadership competencies.
competencies that outline the essential skills for effective community college leadership, as well as examining ratings of their level of preparation to perform the competencies. Participants for this study (n = 105) consisted of new and veteran participants in the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy. These individuals were also involved in mid-level and upper level leadership roles in the Mississippi community college system. The Qualtrics administered survey instrument used for this study relied on the AACC leadership competency framework, as outlined and modified by Duree (2007), and included the six leadership competency domains broken down into the 45 leadership competency illustrations. Participants in the MCCLA were emailed an invitation to participate in this research by completing the Qualtrics survey.

There was a significant difference between mid-level and upper-level leaders’ rating of importance of the leadership competencies. There was no difference in the importance rating by veteran and new leadership academy participants. A significant difference was found in the rating of preparation by mid-level and upper level leaders. Similarly, there was a difference in the rating of preparation by new leadership academy participants and veteran academy participants. Participants in this study ranked mentoring as the most beneficial to their development of the leadership competencies, followed by on-the-job training and in-house leadership programs. In general, the results of this study indicate that participants found the leadership competencies to be important and supported within the MCCLA curriculum.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A very special “Thank you” goes to my committee chair and advisor, Dr. Lilian H. Hill, and my other committee members, Dr. Richard Mohn, Dr. Thomas Lipscomb, and Dr. Kyna Shelley, for all their support, advice, feedback, and patience throughout this research process. I am forever grateful for the opportunity to learn from each of you, and your expertise. Thank you all for being so supportive and encouraging me along the way towards my goal of finishing my dissertation. There are not enough words to express how appreciative I am that you were willing to take on this project with me. I extend thanks to my colleague, Mr. James L. Rush, for his words of encouragement, and for frequently checking in with me and asking how my dissertation writing was going.

I would also like acknowledge Dr. Christopher Duree and Dr. Howell Garner for their support of my research endeavors.
DEDICATION

I give all glory and praise to my Heavenly Father. Without Him, none of this would have been possible. As Philippians 4:13 (New King James Version) tells us, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”. Throughout this process of earning my doctoral degree, I am forever thankful for all the support and words of encouragement from my husband, Jairus “Jay” and daughter, Jaida. Jay, we started this journey together, and none of this would have been possible without you along with me for this journey. I am truly grateful for everything and can never forget our many, many road trips to Hattiesburg for class, and the discussions we have had throughout our journey together. Thank you for being there and taking the time to listen. You stood by my side through it all, during the good times and the bad times. Thank you for cheering me on when the road got a little bumpy. Jay, your pep talks kept me motivated and helped me when I needed it the most, especially for those late evenings and nights that I spent writing. You helped me find a way to make things work out when I did not believe they would. I thank you most for your understanding, patience, and for listening to me when I needed to vent my frustrations.

Jaida, my sweet child, I love you! You are my greatest creation. I thank God for you and look forward to spending more time with you now that I am done with my dissertation. Mama loves you!

Special thanks to my father-in-law, Mr. Jimmy L. Johnson (Paw-Paw), who took the time to babysit Jaida for us during this journey. We love you! To God be the glory!
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .................................................................................................................................................... iii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .................................................................................................................................... v

DEDICATION .................................................................................................................................................. vi

LIST OF TABLES ............................................................................................................................................ xi

CHAPTER I-INTRODUCTION ....................................................................................................................... 1

Background .................................................................................................................................................. 1
  Leadership Challenges ............................................................................................................................... 4

Leadership Competencies ........................................................................................................................... 6
  Leadership Development ............................................................................................................................. 9

Purpose of the Study ..................................................................................................................................... 16

Research Questions ...................................................................................................................................... 17

Significance of the Study ............................................................................................................................. 18

Definition of Terms ..................................................................................................................................... 19

Delimitations ............................................................................................................................................... 21

Assumptions ............................................................................................................................................... 21

Justification ................................................................................................................................................. 22

Theoretical Perspectives and Conceptual Framework .................................................................................. 25
  Transformational Leadership ....................................................................................................................... 25
  Situated Learning Theory ........................................................................................................................... 28
# Table of Contents

**CHAPTER II - REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Community/Junior College System</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departure of Existing Community College Leaders</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-level Community College Leaders</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current research on AACC Competencies for Community College Leaders</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHAPTER III - METHOD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrument</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection Procedures</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Validity</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHAPTER IV - RESULTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive Statistical Analysis</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Statistical Analysis ............................................................................................................63

Research Question One ....................................................................................................63

Research Question Two ...................................................................................................66

Research Question Three ..................................................................................................67

Research Question Four ....................................................................................................70

Research Question Five ....................................................................................................70

Methods used to acquire the AACC leadership competencies ........................................71

Research Question Six .......................................................................................................72

Summary ............................................................................................................................73

CHAPTER V – DISCUSSION ..............................................................................................75

Introduction .......................................................................................................................75

Mid-level leaders and Upper Level Leaders ....................................................................75

New academy participants and Veteran academy participants .......................................79

Methods used to acquire leadership competencies .........................................................82

Leadership competencies in the academy ......................................................................87

Limitations .........................................................................................................................90

Recommendations for Practice .........................................................................................91

Recommendations for future research ..........................................................................92

APPENDIX A – Demographics and Leadership Preparation Factors Survey Instrument 94

APPENDIX B – IRB Approval Letter ...............................................................................105
APPENDIX C – MACJC Institutions Approval Application........................................106

APPENDIX D – Standard Consent Form........................................................................112

REFERENCES.................................................................................................................115
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 AACC Leadership Competencies for Community College Leaders .........................8
Table 2 AACC Competency Domains and Illustrations.....................................................54
Table 3 Cronbach’s Alpha α for each competency – Preparation factor .........................58
Table 4 Cronbach’s Alpha α for each competency – Importance factor .........................58
Table 5 Survey participants’ current position (frequency and percentage) ......................61
Table 6 Participants’ time served in current position (frequency and percentage) ..........62
Table 7 Participants’ current place of employment .........................................................62
Table 8 Participants’ highest level of degree .................................................................63
Table 9 Participants’ gender .........................................................................................63
Table 10 Classification Table: Block 0 Beginning Block (mid-level and upper level) ....64
Table 11 Classification Table: Block 1 (mid-level and upper level) ...............................65
Table 12 Classification Table: Block 0 Beginning Block (new and veteran) .................68
Table 13 Classification Table: Block 1 (new and veteran) .............................................68
Table 14 Methods used to acquire AACC leadership competencies .............................72
Table 15 Mean rating for Leadership Competencies represented in the MCCLA ..........73
CHAPTER I-INTRODUCTION

Background

As a uniquely American institution of higher education, community colleges experienced great growth during the 1960s and 1970s. During the 1960s, much of this increase in growth and expansion of community colleges was fueled by the high birthrates of the 1940s (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2013). With more college-age people than in the previous years, more individuals were going to college. By the late 1960s, the surge in establishing community colleges peaked and administrators, including faculty, within the community colleges became a very stable workforce (Romero, 2004). However, the administrators and faculty who were hired during this period of growth and were instrumental in helping community colleges become one of the foremost institutions of higher education and training are retiring and will need replacements in coming years (Shults, 2001).

As longtime leaders begin to retire, a substantial loss of institutional memory, experience, and commitment to college mission stands to leave a void among the leadership ranks and suggests that the leadership pipeline is facing a crisis that requires swift attention (Duree & Ebbers, 2012; Shults, 2001). Years of knowledge and experience of aging leaders are going with them into their retirement while those in the leadership pipeline struggle to capture this knowledge before it is lost (Kiyonaga, 2004). Acknowledging that lost knowledge may present a real threat to overall performance of an institution is essential, as well as developing necessary solutions that provide a thorough understanding of the potentially distressing effects of lost knowledge (DeLong, 2004). Likewise, knowledge of institutional purpose, policy, functions, and programs
should be readily accessible for use by those in line to assume leadership responsibilities (Fincher, 1987). Due to the projected turnover of leadership in community colleges, there are challenges in preparing those in the leadership pipeline in understanding the mission and values of the community college and developing the necessary skills in order to effectively lead in the community college (Boggs, 2011). Effective leadership requires leaders to realize that their institution has unique needs within its organizational structure and culture (Bensimon & Neumann, 1992; Chaffee & Tierney, 1988). The organizational culture or identity of the institution helps those in leadership, especially, to reflect on the values, beliefs, traditions, and histories of their institution and develop an understanding of how they interact with others in the organization (Rhoades & Tierney, 1992). Therefore, it will be paramount that individuals in the leadership pipeline become proactive in their awareness of the value, function, and culture of the community college and the important role that community colleges play within higher education (Boggs, 2011).

The impending shortage of leadership in community colleges is well documented (Cooper & Pagotto, 2003; Eddy, 2013; Garza Mitchell & Eddy, 2008; McNair, 2010; Shults, 2001; Wallin, 2006). Likewise, the pipeline for potential leaders is also affected, with retirements projected to be higher than normal (Boggs, 2003). The literature reports that retirements among college faculty will rise considerably, with many faculty traditionally retiring at the age of sixty-five (Vega, Yglesia, & Murray, 2010). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) conducted the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (2004) and noted that over 55% of current full-time faculty expected to retire by 2019. In addition, finding qualified replacements for the vast
number of administrators and faculty through 2020 presents itself as a formidable and challenging task with the aim of meeting the diverse needs and landscape of community colleges (Ebbers, Conover, & Samuels, 2010; Strom, Sanchez, & Downey-Schilling, 2011; Vega et al., 2010).

While the literature on leadership focuses on pathways to senior level administration (e.g., presidency), the mid-level leadership roles are disregarded, as well as the career path progression to these roles (Amey, VanDerLinden, & Brown, 2002). Moreover, prior studies have shown the route to leadership roles as typically being conceived from faculty positions and concluding with a presidency (Shults, 2001; Weisman & Vaughn, 2007). For example, during their career, community college faculty may become involved in leadership roles such as department chairperson, representatives of the faculty senate, or dean, which over time may lead to upper-level administrative ranks (Shults, 2001).

As community colleges are faced with the challenge of obtaining qualified leaders to take on the roles left behind by those who have retired, little attention is being focused on where these new leaders will be found, and how the experiences and talents of these new leaders will be acknowledged, developed and valued (Ebbers et al., 2010, Eddy 2012). In order to meet the demands for new leaders in the community college, it is crucial for current leaders to begin to identify and “grow their own” (Ebbers et al., 2010). However, the experiences of community college leaders in the leadership pipeline linger as unknown (Garza Mitchell & Eddy, 2008). In contrast to other types of higher education, the community college environment requires specific leadership skills (McNair, 2010). Hockaday and Puyear (2000) recognized a few characteristics of an
effective community college leader as some that could be learned and developed, including having integrity, technical knowledge, persistence, courage, having confidence, and a desire to be a leader.

In general, grow your own (GYOL) leadership development programs have emerged as a means to target particular leadership skills needed for the community college setting. Prior research findings have also suggested that many GYOL programs have surfaced as a useful and proactive strategy in addressing the projected leadership crisis (AACC, 2005). With the large number of retirees comes the formidable issue of losing an immense pool of knowledge, experience, history, and organizational culture among many highly skilled individuals who had specialized positions as administrators and staff members in the community college. The leadership skills that individuals gain through GYOL training programs are expected to eventually be put to use in the context of their working environment, where appropriate. More importantly, the GYOL program content, delivery, and effectiveness must be evaluated to determine how participants really are prepared to implement specific objectives, as a result. This study is designed to move beyond participant reactions and satisfaction with training to learn more about what is actually done with the knowledge and skills gained once the program has been completed.

Leadership Challenges

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) identified the increasing turnover of leadership as a major burden for community colleges (Haynes, 2009). There is a growing need to prepare potential leaders who really understand, value, and respect the mission and institutional memory of the community college. Likewise,
there is a need to prepare individuals who have the skills required to be dynamic leaders who are poised to meet the demands of a challenging environment. Shults (2001) noted that the increased growth and diversification within community colleges has become an even greater challenge due to the vast turnover of administrators, faculty, and staff. For community colleges, a period of increased growth and organizational diversification is becoming even more challenging because of significant faculty, staff, and administrative turnover (Shults, 2001). The increasing number of retirees and turnover of leaders presents the opportunity to welcome in new energy and diversity into the leadership ranks. According to Vega et al., (2010), employee diversity is “socially responsible” and a vital means of tackling the pending shortage in which community colleges will need to “seriously address hiring, retaining, and facilitating the upward mobility of faculty members” (p. 50). Shults (2001) further indicated, “In order to gain the skills and traits that are vital to becoming effective leaders, individuals in the leadership pipeline will need access to appropriate professional development” (p. 4). Throughout its history, the community college has proven to be resilient and capable of responding to societal and economic challenges (O’Banion, 2006).

In 2016, the AACC led a survey of community college presidents. Findings from the 2016 survey indicated over half of all current presidents would retire from their position within the next seven years. In terms of deciding how soon they would retire, 12% of current presidents estimated that they would retire in less than 3 years, 22% planned to retire within three to four years, and 24% reported plans to retire within five to seven years (Phillippe, 2016). According to a 2012 survey conducted by the AACC, it was reported that about 75% of presidents intended to retire within 10 years (Tekle,
2012). This equates to a deficit of more than 500 college presidents by the year 2022. In addition, the “graying” of presidents and administrative leaders is mirrored even within the faculty ranks. Beyond the presidency, community colleges are faced with the loss of faculty and other administrators because individuals in the traditional leadership pipeline are aging or deciding to retire, which creates some uncertainty about the availability of well-prepared leaders and their essential role in helping ensure the community college and the populations they serve continue to thrive (Haynes, 2009). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) conducted the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF:04) during the 2003-2004 school term in which faculty indicated the years until their retirement, with nearly 56% of all full-time faculty reporting that they would retire by 2018. According to their study of community college faculty (Berry, Hammons, & Denny, 2010), 84% of faculty indicated that they would retire by the year 2020.

Leadership Competencies

Throughout its history, the mission of the AACC has proactively focused on leadership development at all levels of the community college (AACC, 2005). The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) serves as the primary advocate for community colleges nationwide in developing integral components for preparing and supporting future community college leaders. In 2000, the AACC Board of Directors created a Leadership Task Force initiative to include efforts focusing on highlighting their mission for leadership development (Jeandron, 2006). A major focus on leadership development has become more imperative as institutions and states are seeing an increase in the overall number of retirements at all levels, and challenges in finding new, qualified
leaders that are ready to step in the roles left behind by those retiring (Ebbers, Conover, & Samuels, 2010).

As the national voice of community colleges, the AACC has been pivotal in addressing the looming shortage of leaders. In summer 2003, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation endowed the AACC with the Leading Forward grant for the purpose of focusing on the need for future community college leaders. The Leading Forward grant initiative brought together experts in the field and various affiliates across the nation for a series of leadership summits (AACC, 2005). Participants at the summits included various AACC member affiliates and representatives, including, presidents, leadership program directors, and representatives from various local and state GYOL programs (Jeandron, 2006). Summit participants met between November 2003 and March 2004 to focus on building a consensus around the fundamental knowledge, values, and skills community college leaders need and address the challenges of how to best develop and sustain leaders for community colleges. The Leading Forward initiative also supported the preliminary stages of a leadership development framework that would focus on addressing the growing leadership gap (Hassan, 2008; Hassan, Dellow, & Jackson, 2009). In July 2004, the AACC commissioned a report to be prepared and submitted by the American College Testing (ACT) titled, A Qualitative Analysis of Community College Leadership from the Leading Forward Summits. This report provided AACC with a broad view of the competencies through the transfer of qualitative data gathered from Leading Forward participants into contextualized accounts that fit closely with the community college environment. This qualitative analysis generated the competency framework for community college leaders. Vincent (2004) emphasized that, “the primary
accomplishment of this study is that a large amount of diverse opinions were collected and categorized into descriptions that were used to assist AACC in continuing its Leading Forward initiative” (p.20). By 2005, the AACC Board of Directors unanimously approved the Competencies for Community College Leaders document and encouraged the field of community college leadership development to use this document in their respective practices (AACC, 2005). Likewise, several researchers have supported the use of the AACC leadership competencies as the primary framework to help pinpoint key skills community college leaders need (McNair, 2010; Hassan et al., 2009; Eddy, 2013).

Table 1 AACC Leadership Competencies for Community College Leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency Domain</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational strategy</td>
<td>“An effective community college leader strategically improves the quality of the institution, protects the long-term health of the organization, promotes the success of all students, and sustains the community college mission, based on knowledge of the organization, its environment, and future trends.” (AACC, 2005, p.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Management</td>
<td>“An effective community college leader equitably and ethically sustains people, processes, and information as well as physical and financial assets to fulfill the mission, vision, and goals of the community college.” (AACC, 2005, p. 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>“An effective community college leader uses clear listening, speaking and writing skills to engage in honest, open dialogue at all levels of the college and its surrounding community, to promote the success of all students, and to sustain the community college mission.” (AACC, 2005, p. 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>“An effective community college leader develops and maintains responsive, cooperative, mutually beneficial, and ethical internal and external relationships that nurture diversity, promote the success of all students, and sustain the community college mission.” (AACC, 2005, p. 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community College Advocacy</td>
<td>“An effective community college leader understands, commits to, and advocates for the mission, vision, and goals of the community college.” (AACC, 2005, p. 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>“An effective community college leader works ethically to set high standards for self and others, continuously improve self and surroundings, demonstrate accountability to and for the institution, and ensure the long-term viability of the college and community.” (AACC, 2005, p.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The six leadership competency domains, as shown in table 1, are made up of general categories along with specific illustrations to help describe the actions, behaviors,
and attitudes for each individual area: “organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, community college advocacy, professionalism” (AACC, 2005, pp. 4 - 6). Taken together, these six competencies have a wide utility for leadership development efforts among leaders, boards of trustees, leadership program developers, and institutions. This competency framework is research-based and was intended to assist emerging leaders to outline their professional development and offer curricular guidelines for leadership development programs (Hassan et al., 2009). Furthermore, the competency framework was created to be a “living document” that evolves in order to face the challenges and ongoing needs of community colleges (AACC, 2005).

Leadership Development

The development, skills, and readiness of well-equipped leaders are vital components to sustaining the continual success of community colleges (Boggs, 2003). Therefore, leadership development is critical to making sure that current and potential future leaders in the community college enter their respective roles with proper training and preparation (Price, 2012). The AACC defined leadership development as a proactive effort and process in which individuals are provided with opportunities and experiences which focus on positioning them to become efficient and effective leaders in the community college (Jeandron, 2006). Historically, leadership development in the community college setting has consisted of a combination of on-the-job training experiences, graduate degree education programs, and disjointed, short-term leadership training in the form of various workshops (Piland & Wolfe, 2003). Furthermore, Piland and Wolfe (2003) asserted that colleges needed to become proactive in developing
individuals for leadership roles in the community college. McDade (2005) conducted a qualitative study of community college presidents and their protégés, and noted that many of these leaders viewed the process of supporting the leadership development for potential, future community college leaders to be more of a professional duty and responsibility in order to build self-confidence in their protégés’ ability to handle new, challenging learning experiences.

Community college leadership development occurs through various avenues, some formal and some informal (Eddy, 2010). Formal leadership development may involve enrolling in a doctoral leadership program, participation in short-term workshops to develop specific skills such as improving communication and negotiating skills, or attending a leadership training program or fellowship (Eddy, 2010). Formal leadership development programs such as the AACC John E. Roueche Future Leaders Institute, the Executive Leadership Institute hosted by the League for Innovation in Community Colleges, and the Chair Academy run by the Maricopa Community Colleges all exist to prepare mid-level and upper-level leaders for their leadership roles. Some community colleges have taken it upon themselves to develop and coordinate in-house leadership development programs for the purpose of meeting the individualized needs of their institution. Doctoral programs also provide formal leadership development. Increasingly, the doctorate is viewed as a requirement for individuals aspiring to hold upper-level leadership positions at community colleges. Eddy (2010) highlighted that almost 80% of current community college presidents have earned a Ph.D., often in education, or an Ed.D. in educational leadership, and indicated that all nine community college presidents in her study earned a doctorate.
Since the literature suggests that community college leaders will be chosen and hired based on their proven knowledge and abilities, opportunities such as internships, simulations, and mentorships are needed in order for them to learn, develop, and practice these skills (Boggs, 2003). McDade (1997) hypothesized that individuals aspiring to move to upper-level leadership positions might intentionally construct their administrative careers and experiences by purposefully selecting, planning, and timing specific types of work, structured learning, and leadership development opportunities. Those who seek to engage in career decisions in a more deliberate manner are referred to as “intentional administrators” (McDade, 1997). Since administrative positions are often influenced by and dependent upon the institution where they originate, it is paramount that leadership development become an institutional concern to build a cooperative initiative between individuals and institutions for the benefit of everyone involved (VanDerLinden, 2005). In addition, senior level administrators are examining their institution’s succession plan and identifying potential successors for leadership positions by allowing them to have an opportunity to understand and become involved in leadership experiences (Ebbers et al., 2010).

Current community college leaders have long understood the importance of preparing future leaders and the role of fostering mentoring relationships (Boggs, 2011). Several higher education researchers have noted the importance of mentoring relationships and how it impacts the career advancement and ongoing leadership development of college administrators (Merriam & Thomas, 1986; McDade, 1997; VanDerLinden, 2005; McDade, 2005). According to Moore and Salimbene (1981), the traditional mentoring model is defined as a continuous, professionally focused
relationship between two people, whereby an experienced individual provides appropriate
guidance and support to the lesser experienced individual in various ways. Eddy (2010)
noted that mentors played essential roles to the participants in her study by helping them
to “navigate their leadership career pathways, most often through opening the doors to
particular opportunities and taking advantage of teachable moments” (p. 150). Also,
participants pointed out negative role models, in which community college leaders took
note of how not to lead from their predecessors. Likewise, developing mentorship
opportunities into daily life at the institution is also important as a way of transferring
institutional history and knowledge to the next generation (Eddy, 2010).

Mentors are important in helping individuals with networking and encouraging
them to strive for the next level. In their study, Weisman & Vaughan (2002) indicated
that 50% of community college presidents reported that they had mentors. Amey &
VanDerLinden (2002) also studied the career paths of senior level community college
administrators (n = 918) and found that over 56% reported that they had a mentor. In
addition, research has indicated that mentoring can significantly influence the learning
process and career paths of individuals who wish to advance in the administrative ranks
of higher education, and play a role in their overall cognitive leadership development
(McDade, 2005; VanDerLinden, 2005).

Furthermore, mentors have been found to act as a role model, encourage
individuals to further their education, share information, and encourage participation in
learning opportunities. VanDerLinden’s (2005) study consisted of 135 community
college administrators in the state of Michigan, consisting of various administrative roles
such as presidents, chancellors, chief academic officers, student affairs officers, business
office administrators, occupational education directors, financial aid directors, directors of distance education, human resource directors, and directors of continuing education. Over 56% of the participants in the study reported that during their time as an administrator they had a mentor. In addition, VanDerLinden (2005) found that over 52% of the administrators in the study indicated that their mentor was pivotal in helping them acquire their current position, and explained how their mentor assisted them in their career. VanDerLinden (2005) provided a summary of the various ways in which mentors helped the career progression of administrators in her study. The themes that emerged included the following statements about mentors (VanDerLinden, 2005):

1. Mentors provided encouragement and advice.
2. Mentors provided specific help with aspects of one’s career – such as serving as a reference.
3. Mentors provided exposure to certain activities, including opportunities to take on additional responsibilities and other professional growth opportunities.
4. Mentors specifically encouraged the mentee to participate in professional development of additional education.
5. Mentors helped the mentee to develop professional networks.
6. Mentors provided training on a specific skill or provided information/answers to a particular problem or issue.
7. Mentors helped with the political aspects of the job.
8. Mentors helped mentee to see the “bigger picture” (p. 737).
Researchers have noted the benefits mentoring has for protégés, including quick assimilation to organizational culture, higher career satisfaction, higher likelihood of successful career outcomes, and development of leadership potential (Luna & Cullen, 1995; Murray, 2001). In order for current, internal employees to become interested in moving into future leadership roles, cultivating mentoring relationships between them and other administrators within the institution may provide the greatest benefit and source of motivation (Boggs, 2003; Zellers et al., 2008; Strom et al., 2011).

Statewide and nationally recognized programs, such as the AACC, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Future Leaders Institute, the League for Innovation’s Executive Leadership program, the American Council on Education, and higher education institutes provide aspiring community college leaders with several opportunities to enhance their skills and develop mentoring relationships by networking with other individuals in the field (Hassan et al., 2009). While these elite programs tend to offer more formal training and networking opportunities to participants, they can be quite expensive. On the other hand, some colleges offer small, institutional programs to grow their own leaders for their institution through various professional development and in-house activities, which often lack funding and are not clearly organized (Piland & Wolf, 2003).

GYOL programs have become one such strategy that community colleges have used to increase their pool of candidates in the leadership pipeline. A GYOL program is understood to be a type of leadership development, often offered through an institution or organization, that is designed to provide employees with training to prepare them for future leadership roles at the institution (Reille & Kezar, 2010). Prior to the year 2000, only one college GYOL program and one state GYOL program existed nationwide.
(Jeandron, 2006). There has been a growing demand for institutions to examine themselves and look internally in order to further develop future leaders (Boggs, 2003). Several leadership programs tend to stress the importance of management strategies that are campus-specific and offer preparation for individuals to progress from among mid-level to upper-level administrative positions. In contrast, GYOL programs promote a more holistic approach with a focus on personal growth by attaining leadership skills which may assist participants address ways to enhance their present and future performance besides simply focusing on mastering basic management practices (Jeandron, 2006). Governing boards have initiated the development of state-based GYOL programs to target concerns due to the growing number of retirements and vacancies among upper-level administrative positions. As statewide GYOL programs have grown, their emphasis has remained on growing and developing community college leaders by focusing on the improvement of leadership skills, management abilities, upgrading practices, and enlarging perspectives (Jeandron, 2006). Likewise, statewide GYOL programs often focus on reinforcing and enhancing the fundamental organizational practices and leadership abilities that are useful to employees in their current role.

In addition to the position of president, community colleges must remain aware of the wide range of positions and careers, (e.g., administrators and faculty) that often flow directly into the leadership pipeline (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002). The administrators, faculty, and staff members who are promoted and take on new leadership positions will leave vacancies in their current positions, which will eventually need to be filled (Shults, 2001). By the same token, a core value of the AACC is to fully develop leaders at every
level in order to advance the work of community colleges nationwide (Wallin, 2012). The current circumstances are compelling community colleges to look within themselves to enhance the leadership skills of individuals in the leadership pipeline. Furthermore, community colleges need to take an active role to foster the development of new leadership development opportunities or refining current initiatives which include affiliated professional associations and organizations and other institutions of higher learning (Piland and Wolf, 2003).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to further extend prior research conducted on the AACC leadership competencies through an examination of participants’ perspectives of their level of preparation to perform the competencies and examine their perspectives about the importance of the AACC competencies, outlined as essential to effective leadership at various levels within the community college. In addition, this study is designed to help assess how participants rate their leadership experiences and what experiences they identify as beneficial to their development of the leadership competencies in their current role in the community college. This study is based on the premise that there are specific leadership competencies and skills that are essential for individuals in mid-level and upper-level administrative roles to develop, which are necessary to their progression and growth of their administrative roles. While it is not expected that this study will show that all participants are highly skilled in all six of the AACC competencies, it is understood that leadership skills are vital to effectively manage any higher education institution or organization. According to the literature, the six leadership competencies are ranked as being vital to upper-level administrators.
Likewise, research focused on the leadership competencies suggests broad support for their application within the community college (Hassan et al., 2009; McNair, 2010; McNair, Duree, & Ebbers, 2011).

Furthermore, this study will provide an avenue to gain an understanding of participants’ self-assessment of their knowledge of the AACC competencies and gain knowledge of the extent to which participants develop the AACC competencies in the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy program. An overview of characteristics of the MCCLA program that participants thought were beneficial to their development of the AACC competencies will also be addressed. According to Reille and Kezar (2010), researchers have not conducted a formal assessment of the effectiveness of GYOL programs and their content. In the past, program developers have asked participants to provide feedback at the end of each individual session on aspects of the program and at the conclusion of the program Jeandron (2006). Typically, these are designed to measure participants’ satisfaction with the program.

**Research Questions**

The research questions that will help guide this study are:

1. Is there a significant difference between mid-level leader and upper-level leader participants’ rating of the level of importance of the AACC leadership competencies?

2. Is there a significant difference between mid-level leader and upper-level leader participants’ rating of their level of professional preparation to perform the AACC competencies?
3. Is there a significant difference between the veteran MCCLA program participants’ and new MCCLA program participants’ rating of their level of professional preparation to perform the AACC competencies?

4. Is there a significant difference between the veteran MCCLA program participants’ and new MCCLA program participants’ rating of the level of importance of the AACC leadership competencies?

5. What leadership development experiences do participants perceive as important to their development of the AACC leadership competencies?

6. To what degree are the AACC competencies demonstrated as important within the curriculum of the Mississippi Community College Leadership academy?

Significance of the Study

This study may add to the literature on the practice of utilizing the AACC leadership competencies and community college leadership development programs and the role they play in addressing the leadership crisis. With the diminishing pool of college leaders comes the drastic loss of systemic knowledge and institutional history, which may have a dire outlook on the leadership of the community college setting. However, the forthcoming leadership turnover offers opportunities to welcome new momentum and increased diversity into the leadership ranks of the community colleges setting (Boggs, 2011). Therefore, it would be beneficial to examine the perspectives of participants in local and state-based GYOL programs beyond their ratings of satisfaction. GYOL program developers and participants would also benefit in finding ways to enhance their current and future programs in order to meet the needs and challenges of leadership in the community college. While the community college context may vary,
these GYOL programs can help target specific, localized needs from one region of the state to another.

According to reports from the AACC 2004 pilot study, data showed that existing leadership programs “minimally” to “moderately” prepared individuals to implement and practice the six leadership competencies (Hassan et al., 2009). This study hopes to shed light on the kinds of leadership development experiences participants report as being beneficial in helping them acquire the AACC competencies, as well as offer some insight into how one particular leadership development program can address various institutional leadership needs. It also offers an approach to assist leadership development program developers at the collegiate and state level in making assessments of their specific program to determine areas of growth and areas in need of improvement, so that their efforts yield intended outcomes. Furthermore, this study will benefit program administrators to develop strategic plans for continuing support for implementing the AACC competency framework for aligning their program curricula.

Definition of Terms

AACC – Founded in 1920, the American Association of Community Colleges is the leading, national supporter and voice for community colleges. AACC is a nonprofit organization and represents almost 1,200 associate degree granting, two-year institutions whose overriding mission is to “Build a Nation of Learners by Advancing America’s Community Colleges”. (AACC, 2014)

AACC competencies – The six competencies for community college leaders outlined by the AACC are: “organizational strategy, resource management,
communication, collaboration, community college advocacy, and professionalism” (AACC, 2005, pp.4 - 6).

Community College- For the purpose of this study, a community college is any public, two-year associate degree granting institution affiliated with the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB 2016).

GYOL – A grow - your - own leadership program is a leadership development program provided by an institution or district with the purpose of preparing employees for future leadership roles within the institution. (Reille & Kezar, 2010)

IHL – The Institutions of Higher Learning consist of Mississippi’s eight public universities: Alcorn State University, Delta State University, Jackson State University, Mississippi State University, Mississippi University for Women, Mississippi Valley State University, University of Mississippi, and University of Southern Mississippi

Junior college – For the purpose of this study, a junior college is any not-for-profit regionally accredited institution awarding the two-year associates degree.

MCCLA – the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy, which focuses on addressing the projected demand for leaders in community colleges (MCCFMS, 2016).

Mid-level administrators – For the intent of this study, a mid-level administrator is an individual who functions in a managerial/supervisory role in their current position (e.g., Chairs, Director, Associate Deans, Associate Director, Assistant Director, Assistant Dean)
Upper-level administrator – For the intent of this study, an upper-level administrator is an individual who functions in a position with direct authority over a division or department, such as a chief academic officer, vice president, or president.

Veteran participants – For the intent of this study, a veteran participant is an individual who has fully completed, graduated, and no longer enrolled in the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy.

New participants – For the intent of this study, a new participant is an individual who has not fully completed, not graduated, and currently enrolled as a participant in the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy.

Delimitations

Only MCCLA participants from Mississippi’s community/junior colleges and IHL affiliated institutions will be taken into consideration for this study. Only participants who provide informed consent will be utilized to conduct this research study. Only participants who are currently employed as faculty, staff, lower-level, mid-level, or upper-level administrators at community/junior colleges and IHL affiliated institutions in Mississippi will be considered. This research study will not be utilized to assess the job performance of MCCLA participants. The participants’ responses will be gathered using survey methods.

Assumptions

First, participants have an understanding of what a competency is and how it relates to their leadership development. A second assumption is that participants are familiar with the American Association of Community Colleges. Participants will provide responses that are thorough and honest concerning their current knowledge of the
six AACC competencies and perspectives in regards to their current development of the six AACC competencies. All community/junior colleges and IHL affiliated institutions have an up-to-date listing of current faculty, staff, and administrators available on their respective webpage. All faculty, staff, and administrators participating in the MCCLA have similar roles and responsibilities at their respective institutions. The researcher also assumes that the AACC’s six leadership competencies are essential and important to leadership development. Also, the researcher assumes that participants’ self-reported demographic information (gender, age, and the time served in current position) is free from error.

Justification

This study may add to the body of literature on leadership preparation and competencies relevant for emerging community college leaders. Therefore, it can be justified that an in-depth look at the perspectives of program participants is warranted to gain knowledge of their leadership competencies. With the increasing number of retirements among veteran leaders, it is worth noting the importance of ensuring that prospective community college leaders are well-prepared to assume these new roles. The literature suggests that while many leadership roles are assumed by individuals who are currently in the traditional leadership pipeline, community colleges may face difficulty in identifying future, qualified leaders (Fulton-Calkins & Milling, 2005). Wallin (2006) noted that there exists a critical need to provide leadership preparation to mid-level administrators, e.g., deans, directors, vice-presidents, who will move on to assume upper level leadership roles in community colleges. Leadership development workshops, seminars, programs, and academies have bloomed in response to the growing concern
about the shortage of leadership and the leadership pipeline. Eddy (2010) noted that leadership development programs that have a focus on mid-level leaders are particularly vital in the community college due to its dependence on promotion from within. Therefore, there is a need to understand what skills and knowledge are essential for effective community college leadership development (Wallin, 2006). Individuals who work within a specific profession are expected to acquire and possess a certain body of fundamental knowledge. Likewise, community college administrators, who often come from a variety of academic disciplines and backgrounds, are expected to possess at least minimal knowledge upon entry into their leadership roles.

Studies have shown that little research exists regarding the leadership development experiences of individuals in mid-level leadership roles in the community college (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker 2013; Garza Mitchell & Eddy, 2008; Townsend & Bassoppo-Moyo, 1997) which suggests a need to address their preparation for actual leadership. Institutional transformation is not possible without continuous development and improvement of an institution’s leadership (AACC, 2005).

Campbell, Syed, & Morris (2010) noted the need for partnerships with professional organizations, community colleges, and university-based leadership development programs to provide initiatives specifically targeted at expanding necessary skills for specialized administrative positions (e.g., registrar, financial aid director). An understanding of the shortages that currently exist and the requisite skills for these respective leadership positions presents a focal task for leadership academies. Data for this study will be collected from veteran and current participants in the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy. The reason for doing so is two-fold. First, the
MCCLA is composed individuals representing each of Mississippi’s fifteen community/junior colleges along with individuals from the eight public institutions of higher learning within the state of Mississippi. This provides a unique and ample cross-section of individuals representing the various higher education institutions in Mississippi, making it quite a rich and suitable environment for investigation.

Mississippi was selected for the purposes of this study due to its significant historical mark as being one of the nation’s first community/junior college systems and the ongoing emphasis on the major role that community colleges have in higher education. The reason for focusing on Mississippi is because the community college system is unique in having on-campus housing and sports. Another justification for this study is Mississippi’s strong need for education, literacy, job preparation, and employment. Mississippi community colleges continue to lead the way in helping to meet the educational and credential needs of a dynamic, knowledge-based economy (Mississippi Lifetracks, 2012). Likewise, there is a need to prepare emerging leaders within the Mississippi community college system who are able to handle the challenges of the demand-response nature of the community college. In August 2015, Mississippi’s community colleges were recognized as the best in the nation with the top national ranking for cost, classroom experience, education outcomes, and career outcomes (WalletHub, 2015).

In 2008, the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government ranked Mississippi as one out four states that led the national average among all five measurements that were used in its study titled “The States and Their Community College” (Shaffer, 2008). The five measurements for this study were: 1) community colleges’ portion of all higher
education enrollments within a state, 2) the portion of a state’s total population aged 18 and above that were enrolled either full-time or part-time in a community college, 3) the portion of a state’s total population for ages 18 and above that is denoted by full-time equivalent enrollment in community colleges, 4) the growth rate of community college enrollment within a five-year period, and 5) the quantity in which the enrollment growth in community colleges is either outperforming (or underperforming) the enrollment growth within public, four-year institutions (Shaffer, 2008). Of the nearly 18 million undergraduates in the United States, over 40 percent attend a community college (NCES, 2017).

Theoretical Perspectives and Conceptual Framework

The theoretical framework/models that help to guide this study include the transformational leadership theory and situated learning theory.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership theory was developed by Burns (1978) and later studied and extended by Bass (1985, 1998). Following Burns’ (1978) seminal work, transformational leadership theory is described as a process by which “leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (p. 20). Burns (1978) identified transforming leadership as a type of leadership in which leaders recognize and makes use of an “existing need or demand of a potential follower, looks for potential motives of followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower” (p.4). Bass (1985) extended the theory of transformational leadership by explaining how transformational leadership could be measured, as well as examined how
it influences followers’ performance and motivation. The four main components of Bass’ (1985) transformational leadership theory emphasize how individuals lead.

Northouse (2013) described these components as idealized influence (leaders who operate as keen role models for followers with whom followers have deep respect and trust), inspirational motivation (high expectations are communicated between leaders and followers in order to inspire followers to embrace a commitment to a shared vision for the organization), intellectual stimulation (support for followers’ creative and innovative approaches to dealing with organizational issues), and individualized consideration (supportive climate to listen to individual needs of followers). Bass and Avolio (1990) indicated that transformational leadership can be taught at all levels to all individuals in an organization.

Researchers have defined transformational leadership as a process that focuses on enhancing followers’ performance in order to develop them to their full potential (Bass & Avolio, 1990; Avolio, 1999). A review of the literature (Bass, 1995; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Boggs, 2011; Ladyshewsky & Flavell, 2011; Piland and Wolf, 2003; Roueche, Baker, & Rose, 1989) indicated a critical need for future community college and university leaders to have a transformational leadership style and shared vision, based on the current issues and challenges community colleges and higher education will face. Undoubtedly, it is vital that followers in the institution not only actively participate but feel that their contributions are met in a supportive manner to further develop the shared vision of the institution and what it strives to achieve (Roueche et al., 1989). The AACC’s Competencies for Community College Leaders have drawn from transformational leadership theory and have been acknowledged as relevant and vital for
developing the future generation of community college leaders (Duree, 2007; Amey, 2005; Duree & Ebbers, 2012). The AACC competencies embody many aspects of transformational leadership, which surfaced and gave direction for this study. The use of transformational leadership theory and the AACC core competencies has been well-documented in the literature as being relevant to community college leadership development (AACC, 2005; McPhail, Robinson, & Scott, 2008; Wiessner & Sullivan, 2007; Bechtel, 2010). According to Kouzes & Posner (2008),

> It is our collective task to liberate the leader in each and every one of us. Rather than view leadership as an innate set of character traits – a self-fulfilling prophecy that dooms society to having only a few good leaders- it’s far healthier and more productive to assume that it’s possible for everyone to learn to lead. (p. 341)

The literature holds that vision is the most distinguishing characteristic of a transformational leader (Hockaday & Puyear, 2000, Kouzes & Posner, 2008; Rouche et al. 1989). While it is important for leaders to have a vision of what the institution should be, it is equally important for followers to be informed and to share in that vision. Likewise, preparing leaders who show true commitment to the values and mission of the institution is one of the most significant challenges facing community colleges (Boggs, 2003). Leadership involves the creation of a larger vision and providing opportunities for individuals to engage their thoughts and ideas with one another as they pursue such vision (Bennis and Nanus, 1985). Rouche et al. (1989) pointed out that transformational leaders add depth and breadth to the overall perception of the future of the community college and their plans are communicated with constituents with the purpose of making sure their vision is shared. It is also important that followers within the institution
understand that their participation is valued, and they feel that their contributions support the development of the shared mission and vision of what the institution as a whole is aiming to achieve. Fulton-Calkins & Milling (2005) suggested that if an organization seeks to create a vision statement that is acceptable and implemented by most of the people in the organization, a distinct approach is needed. Kouzes and Posner (2003) and Hockaday and Puyear (2000) agreed that it is most important that leaders make their own vision clear first, and have a sense of where the college is headed and what it should look like in the future. Essentially, vision focuses on how things can be. Likewise, Rouche et al. (1989) and Boggs (2003) supported the idea that in order to be successful, leaders must create ways to involve people in the decisions that are made and be a catalyst for exploring ways to make positive things happen for the institution and its people. Based on findings by Rouche, Baker, and Rose (1989),

Community college leaders who are most successful are those who are committed to actions necessary to bring about appropriate change. They understand that changing the institution necessitates a process of changing people by influencing their values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.” (p. 1)

Situated Learning Theory

According to the situated learning approach, learners become directly involved in a community of practice, which involves a group of individuals joined together by a shared expertise or interest for a joint effort to address concerns they share and interacting to further develop an organization’s core competencies (Lave & Wenger, 1991, Wenger & Snyder, 2000). Communities of practice may be formed by individuals in response to changes originating outside the organization or inside (Wenger & Snyder,
Experiences and knowledge shared by individuals in communities of practice help to generate new, creative ways to approach problems and encourage the use of best practices, develop individuals’ professional skills, and assist with recruiting and retaining talent (Wenger & Snyder, 2000).

In this study, the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy (MCCLA) can be viewed as a community of practice. Through situated learning, learners are engaged in the activity with an emphasis on involving the whole person rather than simply receiving a body of facts or knowledge. As the beginner gradually advances from the periphery of an organization to its center, the individual becomes actively involved and engaged in the culture and in time, transitions into the role of an expert (Lave and Wenger, 1991). By participating in communities of practitioners, novice practitioners become more competent and acquire the necessary skills to become full participants in the practices of the community.

Legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991) concerns the manner in which newcomers learn through immersion in the community of practice and absorb the actions and activities that are part of the process towards becoming a member of the community. Through legitimate peripheral participation, particularly, learning situated within the context of a community of practice, the novice acknowledges the practice that moves that community closely together whereby the individual eventually grows to become an experienced participant and acquires strategies to develop their ability to apply their knowledge and skills. This provides a means through which the newcomers and veterans can engage with one another and speak about the activities, identities, history, and communities of knowledge. Similarly, an understanding of the MCCLA
community of practice, AACC competencies, and participants’ leadership development experiences is central to this study.
CHAPTER II- REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter discusses the importance of the community/junior college system, the exodus of leadership in community colleges, mid-level leadership in community colleges, the AACC competencies, and current research on the six AACC leadership competencies for community college leaders.

Importance of the Community/Junior College System

By the early twentieth century, community colleges became a modest establishment of American higher education. However, the American community and junior colleges witnessed an impressive amount of growth during the 20th century, especially during the 1920s, the late 1930s and 1940s and again during the 1960s (Beach, 2011). Beginning in 1901, Joliet Junior College was founded in Illinois as America’s first public community college (Beach, 2011). Joliet’s initial enrollment was six students and now serves more than 35,000 students (Joliet Junior College, 2017). By 1910, there were 25 junior college institutions in the United States which grew to an impressive 325 colleges in 39 states with over 35,000 students by 1927 (Beach, 2011).

Starting with the late 1910s to the 1930s, as junior/community colleges began to expand and grow, university presidents, university professors, and new, junior college administrators who were newly trained and certified, arose and associated themselves with the national junior college movement (Beach, 2011). Organizationally, several early community colleges began as ongoing expansions of secondary school (Cohen et al., 2013). Cohen & Brawer (2003) stated that,
Community colleges flourished as a result of the need for workers trained to operate the nation’s expanding industries; the lengthened period of adolescence, which mandated custodial care of the young for a longer time; and the drive for social equality, which supposedly would be enhanced if more people had access to higher education. (p.1)

By 1947, the impetus to institute comprehensive community colleges found support from the federal government under President Truman’s Commission on Higher Education (Cohen et al., 2003; Cohen et al., 2013; Mellow & Heelan, 2015). Riding the wave of public support for education and changing demographics during the 1960s and 1970s, national factors fueled the development of community colleges from a few startup campuses to a sprawling of colleges nationwide (Mellow & Heelan, 2015). By the early 1970s, it is estimated that a new community college was being introduced every month in the United States with 34% of all students in higher education enrolled at a community college (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Mellow & Heelan, 2015).

The uniqueness and success of community colleges can be attributed to their democratic ideals and enduring values of community responsiveness and resourcefulness. Historically, the junior college began as the idea of being a two-year university preparatory institution housed in high schools or separate facilities near or on university campuses (Beach, 2011). As a major sector of higher education, community colleges have been and continue to be imbued in processes, traditions, and institutional culture (Phelan, 2005). Over the years, community colleges have received an abundance of attention and recognition due to their unique mission and responsiveness to local needs of its students and communities, among other sectors of American higher education (Boggs,
Community colleges and the communities they serve are wide-ranging, with their diverse student demographics, institutional history and traditions that are reflected in their mission, local industry and economies, and unique variety of academic and technical programs (Aspen Institute, 2013). Community colleges play a critical role within higher education, through their open access policy and relatively low tuition (Ma & Baum, 2016). Often referred to as the “people’s college,’’ community colleges are also equally important to the communities they serve. For example, community colleges continue to be a crucial pathway to gaining a postsecondary education for many first-generation students, those from low-income and economically disadvantaged families, and non-traditional students who return to earn a credential. In fall 2014, community colleges made up 42% of all undergraduate enrollment and also made up 25% of all full-time undergraduate student enrollment (NCES, IPEDS, 2014). Community colleges are considered as homogenous mainly because they have never wavered from their primary mission of serving the needs of the individuals and communities they serve, and share a commitment to continue to provide individuals with access to higher education, and afford opportunities that improves the lives of one of the most diverse student bodies ever known (Brown et al., 2002; Boggs, 2003; Fulton-Calkins & Milling, 2005).

Community colleges have historically relied on state funding, local-based funding, tuition and fees as its three main funding sources, with state funding making up the largest portion of revenue (Provasnik & Planty 2008; AACC, 2017a). However, state
funding, as a percent of all revenue generated, decreased from a high of about 36% in 2008-09 to about 30% in 2014-15, leaving community colleges to become more heavily dependent on tuition dollars (IPEDS, 2017; AACC, 2016). The AACC 2010 report, *Doing More with Less: The Inequitable Funding of Community Colleges* highlights that even though community colleges serve over 40% of all undergraduate and over 50% of all undergraduates students enrolled in public higher education, they only receive almost 30% of total local, state, and federal higher education revenue that are generated.

Despite diminishing revenues and funding in recent years, community colleges lead the way in educating the most at-risk students, with the least amount of support (Boggs, 2011). With the severe economic debacle of the late 2000s, community colleges were thrust into the national spotlight as a myriad of layoffs and factory closures sent a multitude of displaced workers who were hoping to gain the workplace place skills they needed for new jobs into the community colleges. The economic recession during the late 2000s created massive problems, and the aftermath still lingers on for college leaders who have endured the hardship of having to respond to the pressures of increased enrollment with considerably less funding (Boggs, 2011). In tough economic times, community colleges have continued to step up to the challenge by reflecting on its mission and commitment to providing equitable access and opportunity to its students, community and educating the underserved.

A 2013 study by the Aspen Institute indicated that community colleges matter deeply and that there is a connection between community college student outcomes and the need for strong leadership within the community college. Some of the facts from the report (Aspen Institute, 2013) include: 1) community colleges educate over seven million
degree-seeking student, equivalent to over 40% of the U.S. college student population, 2) the growth of community colleges in recent years has quadrupled the rate of four-year colleges, and 3) community colleges enroll a disproportionately vast share of minorities and the quickly growing number of first-generation students. The nature of the community college landscape, their role as an important constituent within the nation’s higher education system, and the diversity among its student body, all contribute to making community colleges pivotal and unique higher education institutions (Piland & Wolf, 2003; Price, 2012). Cohen and Brawer (2008); Campbell, Syed, and Morris (2010); and Fulton-Calkins and Milling (2005) agreed with the fact that community colleges have witnessed challenges for much of its existence during the twentieth and early twenty-first century mainly as a result of their continued success. Two of the most significant trends that have continued to drive the expanding leadership challenges are growth in student enrollments and the demand for more job training to meet employers’ needs for skilled workers (Romero, 2004).

Departure of Existing Community College Leaders

According to Duree & Ebbers (2012), community colleges face the challenge of making sure there are individuals equipped with the necessary traits and leadership skills, who are dedicated to upholding the mission, values, and goals of the community college. The presidents, upper-level administrators, and faculty who served during the onset of the community college expansion in the 1960s and 1970s have reached the ending of their careers (Duree & Ebbers, 2012; Fulton-Calkins & Milling, 2005; Hassan et al., 2009; Shults, 2001). Boggs (2003) and Duree & Ebbers (2012) agree that one of the most significant challenges confronting community colleges is preparing new leaders who are
dedicated to preserving the essential values and mission of community colleges. Duree & Ebbers (2012) further noted that “the amount of history, experience, and commitment to the community college mission that will be lost with their retirement is immeasurable” (p. 41).

AACC survey findings indicated that an estimated 84% of current presidents planned to enter retirement by 2016 (Weisman & Vaughan, 2007), with over 40% of all current community college presidents planning to retire by 2017 (Tekle, 2012). The American College President Study (ACPS) 2017 was directed by the American Council on Education (ACE) with support from the TIAA Institute. This comprehensive report of college presidents from various avenues in higher education provides information concerning presidents’ educational background, career trajectory, years of service, and presidential perspectives on general issues affecting the landscape of their institutions such as diversity, their state’s political condition and state funding. In this study, overseen by the American Council on Education and the TIAA Institute, over 50% of college presidents serving at institutions offering the associates degree indicated that they would be stepping down from their position within the next five years (Gagliardi, Espinosa, Turk, & Taylor, 2017). Wiessner and Sullivan (2007) noted that leadership development is critical to addressing the growing demands of the community college setting in the midst of looming retirements and the mounting roles that community colleges play in meeting the demands of 21st century learners. In addition, the potential for a void in the leadership ranks is happening all while the nation has placed even greater expectations on community colleges in an effort to raise the overall college graduate rate by 2020 (Eddy, 2013).
With the looming shortage of administrators in community colleges around the U.S., the demand to develop and prepare a new group of community college leaders for the 21st century has been met with questions about how to respond and what actions should be taken. Several formal leadership development opportunities including the League for Innovation in the Community College, the American Council on Education, the AACC, the Chair Academy, Future Leaders Institute, in-house and GYOL programs have been developed and expanded over the years to include mid-level leaders due to rising concerns over replacing current upper-level and senior leadership (Hull & Keim, 2007; Jeandron, 2006). Shults (2001) indicated that “mid-level administrators, such as department chairs and deans, often become upper level administrators and presidents” (p. 6).

The literature suggests that along with the turnover and retirements of senior level administrators there is an identified shortage of potential candidates in the community college leadership pipeline who are qualified and ready to fill these vacant positions (Duree & Ebbers, 2012; Ebbers, Connover, & Samuels, 2010; VanDerLinden, 2004; Wallin, 2006). As a result, community colleges cannot meet the expectations of the nation or find solutions to its challenges without highly-qualified and skilled leaders (O’Banion, 2015). It has been observed that “Leadership in the community colleges has suffered from benign neglect. There is little conscious attention paid to questions of where community college leaders will come from, how their talents will be developed and their experience valued” (Community College Leadership Initiative, 2001, p. 8). While the projected turnover in upper-level and senior administrative positions poses an opportunity to introduce “new blood” in the system, it seems to be occurring during a
period in which community colleges have faced growing demands and challenges to help rebuild the nation’s economy and future (Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006; Smith, 2016). Duree & Ebbers posited (2012) that future leaders must be equipped with the skill set to “competently face issues related to funding, governance, economic and workforce development, and legislative advocacy” (p.50). Therefore, “leaders should not only be able to formulate plans that works within the context of the organization, but they must be able to implement this plan within a distinctly social context, marshaling support, communicating a vision, guiding subordinates, and motivating others” (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs, and Fleishman, 2000, p.19).

Mid-level Community College Leaders

Mid-level leaders are considered as vital components of higher education organizations and considered to comprise a significant portion of the academic as well as non-academic personnel in higher education institutions (Gillet-Karam, 1999; Rosser, 2000; Wallin, 2006). Wallin (2006) examined the leadership development needs faced by mid-level community college administrators who desired to move on to upper-level leadership positions. Findings of the study indicated that developing high quality, short-term leadership experiences on the local, regional, and national level would ensure that the next generation of emerging community college leaders would be ready to face new challenges (Wallin, 2006).

Gillett-Karam et al. (1999) conducted interviews with presidents at community colleges in order to gather and understanding of their perceptions of the role of mid-level managers at their respective institutions. The findings from the interviews indicated that mid-level management positions and chairs were deemed as crucial “front-line positions”
at the college. None of the presidents in the interviews could grasp the idea of having a system without these very important positions in the organizational hierarchy of their institutions. It is expected that upper-level administration have the duty to affirm the vision and mission of the college. However, without the ongoing cooperation between upper-level administrators and mid-level administrators, such as chairs who work in close proximity with other faculty and students, the mission of the community college would not be well represented (Gillett-Karam et al., 1999). Amey and VanDerLinden (2002) and Garza-Mitchell and Eddy (2008) noted that the typical pathway to an upper-level or senior-level leadership position starts with emerging leaders in the middle with most community college presidents originating from within these ranks.

In their study of mid-level community college leadership, Amey and VanDerLinden (2002) found that over 20% of the current presidents were found within the institution, over half of the participants reported having a mentor, and the career pathway of presidents progressed along the traditional academic trajectory of promotion via the hierarchy. Eddy (2010) also noted that the traditional pathway for community college leaders has flowed through the academic ranks, which is supported by the literature (Duree, 2007; Shults, 2001; Weisman & Vaughn, 2007). Garza-Mitchell et al. (2008) studied the career pathway of mid-level academic leaders (e.g., directors, deans, department chairs) at a rural, medium-size community college. The study consisted of interviews with six lead faculty and three individuals in director/dean roles, since the college did not hire chairs. Findings of the research showed that mid-level administrators at the community college were still heavily involved in the classroom and had not planned to move into their current position or to an upper-level position, and that other
college administrators and mentors often initiated the idea of moving into administration. Garza-Mitchell et al. (2008) reported that of the three directors/deans in their study, neither of them pursued their leadership positions, but were either placed in the position or asked by someone else to move into the position. One academic dean noted (Garza-Mitchell et al., 2008, p.799),

“Our dean left, and I really wasn’t interested. I liked teaching. I liked having the summers off. . . and then the upper management came to me and said, “Would you consider steppin in as interim? And I said, “I really don’t want this. I’m getting to the point where I’m looking at the retirement picture, and they’re looking at making me work harder. So I tell them “Okay.” I’m taking it as an interim for six months while they looked around. And, gee, I kind of liked it.”

Similarly, Eddy (2010) found that many of the community college leaders in her study had accidentally found their way to their respective positions. Both Garza-Mitchell & Eddy (2008) and Eddy (2010) found that the pathway to leadership followed by individuals in their studies shared commonalities such as having a mentor, learning on the job, and through participation in leadership development opportunities.

Mid-level administrators are vital to the institution’s spirit and liveliness as the officers, advisors, and specialists that students and faculty have come to depend on and trust (Rosser, 2000). While they do not have career pathways that are often well-defined as the majority of upper-level administrators, the positions that mid-level administrators hold are essential to the effective day-to-day operations of their organizations. For example, mid-level leaders often communicate and collaborate across levels of leadership in the institution, and are essential to holding the institution’s strategy together (Oesch,
Likewise, mid-level leaders aspiring to move on to upper-level leadership are in a position that will require them to become more knowledgeable of how to efficiently manage the daily operations of their institution across various functions and leadership ranks. Wallin (2006) asserted that in order for leadership development programs to have a meaningful influence on the preparation of future senior-level leadership, they must proactively respond to the needs and concerns of mid-level leaders and the daily issues they face.

Current research on AACC Competencies for Community College Leaders

Before the development of the AACC competencies, researchers questioned how to best prepare individuals to become effective community college leaders and what skills and knowledge one would need to become a successful leader (Hockaday & Puyear, 2000; Amey, Vanderlinden & Brown, 2002; Brown, Martinez & Daniel, 2002; Boggs, 2003; Cooper & Pagotto, 2003; Fulton-Calkins & Milling, 2005). Wallin further (2006) noted more specifically that leaders in community colleges lack a specific framework of knowledge that individuals entering into the field of leadership must have and know. However, research studies on the AACC competencies have indicated that many sitting presidents and board of trustees widely support the use of the AACC competencies as a skill set to be applied in the field and also as an essential framework for leadership development (Duree, 2007; Eddy, 2009; Hassan et al., 2009; McNair, 2010). In addition, recent studies have emphasized that there is agreement in regards to the attention needed to develop a skill set for individuals to become effective community college leaders (Duree & Ebbers, 2012; Fulton-Calkins & Milling, 2005; Hockaday & Puyear, 2000).
Given the concerns about finding replacements for retiring leaders, professional associations such as the AACC have been highly motivated to boost leadership development opportunities and to enhance training that addresses the learning needs of emerging mid-level leaders (Ebbers, Conover, & Samuels, 2010; Eddy, 2013). In particular, the AACC has worked extensively to identify and approve a framework of relevant leadership competencies specifically for community college leaders, and provide guidelines for middle managers to cultivate their skills and expertise (Ebbers et al., 2010). Beginning with the AACC board of directors’ approval of the *Competencies for Community College Leaders*, more attention has been devoted to the set of six competencies outlined as a framework to use for leadership development as well as attention to what competencies receive the most and least prominence in practice (AACC, 2005; Duree & Ebbers, 2012). More specifically, the AACC expected emerging leaders to make use of the framework to measure their own development and preparation for upper level leadership positions in the community college (Eddy, 2010). To fully promote the use of these competencies, the following principles must also be considered (AACC, 2005):

1. Leadership can be learned. Even though leadership can be developed by individual aptitude and experience, it is essential that leaders be supported through their exposure to theory, concepts, guided experiences, practical information, and learning methodologies.

2. Many individuals within the community college can lead. Competencies will shift in their overall importance given the leader’s level of leadership.
3. Effective leadership is composed of effective management and vision. In most instances, these skill sets are often developed together.

4. The lifelong process of learning leadership is often influenced by both personal and career maturity along with other developmental processes.

5. The leadership gap can be addressed through various strategies, including college grow-your-own programs, university and AACC council programs, state system programs, residential institutes, mentoring, and coaching to sustain current leaders and develop emerging leaders. (p. 3)

While the majority of research tends to focus mainly on the leadership preparation for the position of president (Duree, 2007; Hassan, 2009; Weisman & Vaughn, 2002, 2007), there are many other leadership positions in the community college that warrant some attention. Hassan et al. (2009) investigated how a group of presidents and board of trustees at community colleges viewed the competencies outlined by the AACC as essential for effective leadership. The results of the study showed that the college presidents and board trustee chairpersons were in agreement in terms of their views of the AACC leadership competencies and their relative importance. Trettel (2011) studied the levels of perceived leadership skills among mid-level administrators in Pennsylvania community colleges and how they aligned with the AACC competencies. The findings indicated that mid-level administrators’ levels of leadership skills were somewhat below what was desired for their respective positions. Price (2012) extended research on the AACC competencies by investigating the manner in which community college academic affairs officers’ perceived their levels of preparation to implement the competencies. The AACC 2004 Pilot study data showed variations in existing leadership programs,
from those that minimally prepared to moderately prepared participants to implement and use the six AACC competencies (Hassan et al., 2009). In addition, Hassan et al. (2009) noted that although the AACC competencies possess logical appeal there is still a need for “further vetting” of specific competencies among a larger community college audience (p. 182).

Emerging research studies focused on the leadership competencies for community college leaders suggests wide support for their use and examines the leadership experiences and activities deemed as pivotal to the development of the competencies (McNair et al., 2011). Prior research also shows support for the use of the AACC leadership competencies as an essential framework for identifying the necessary skills for community college leaders and also takes into consideration how these skills are developed (Hassan, 2008; Eddy, 2010; Hassan et al., 2009; McNair, 2010). McNair (2010) conducted a study of community college leadership in California using the AACC core competencies to identify skills that were relevant and necessary for effective leadership in community colleges and described ways that the essential skills for leadership could be obtained, such as through doctoral programs. In their study, Hassan et al., (2009) examined the degree of agreement in how board of trustees and college presidents in New York and Florida rated the importance of the AACC core competencies, and which leadership development experiences community college presidents deemed as being important to their personal development of the core competencies. The findings of their study indicated that there was consistent agreement among respondents and their consideration of the AACC leadership competencies as being essential to effective leadership.
Research has shown that there is extensive support for the AACC leadership competencies and agreement that the AACC competencies serve as a foundation for effectively preparing leaders for community colleges. However, both Eddy (2013) and Cejda and Jolley (2013) indicated that few studies have been able to show how these leadership skills are actually learned. The research literature has shown agreement that leadership competencies can be acquired through multiple avenues such as, on-the-job experiences, graduate degree programs, mentoring relationships, networking, and through various informal and formal professional development experiences (Amey & Vanderlinden, 2002; Duree, & Ebbers, 2012; Ebbers et al., 2010; McNair, 2010). Since the initial publication of the leadership competency framework, several studies have been done that focus on importance of the AACC leadership competencies of current and emerging community college leaders, with three of these studies focusing on the position of the president (Bechtel, 2010; Duree, 2007; Hassan, 2008; Kools, 2010; Price, 2012; Ross, 2017; Trettel, 2011.) Duree (2007) studied how different leadership experiences helped to prepare community college leaders acquire the transformational leadership skills that are embedded within the AACC leadership competencies. Among the 415 community college presidents responding to the survey, Duree (2007) noted that 82% had experience in another senior level administrative position, with 47% previously serving as academic administrators, 11% serving as campus provosts, and 24% serving in central office administrative roles, prior to assuming their first presidency. These findings are similar to the findings indicated in previous studies (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002; Shults, 2001; Weisman & Vaughan, 2007).
Cejda and Jolley (2013) conducted a study of senior-level community college leaders in rural areas to examine their perceptions concerning the importance of various professional development experiences in fostering the six AACC leadership competencies. The respondents in the study were asked to identify in which internal and external professional development activities they had participated along with how they rank their perception of how the activity was important and beneficial to developing the AACC competencies. Cejda and Jolley (2013) found that their study also supported the literature concerning various ways in which the AACC leadership competencies can be developed. Their findings revealed that respondents rated local activities as important to their development of the AACC competencies. Moreover, 8 of the 10 professional development activities perceived as important by the highest percentage of participants were internal to the community college or local community activities. State-based or regional leadership development programs were ranked third among the activities perceived as being important to the development of the AACC competencies. This is supportive of the significance that the literature has put on these types of leadership development experiences.

Similarly, Eddy (2013) conducted a study to understand how rural community college leaders developed leadership skills noted in the AACC competencies. Findings from her study indicated that rural community college leaders found that they were able to learn best from internal activities on the job, obtaining skills while gaining experience in various leadership positions along their career path. Participants also noted that they sought leadership training at the regional or state level. Duree (2007) suggested that leadership programs should be targeted for further examination to be certain that the
competencies are being successfully developed. From his study of presidents (n =415), Duree (2007) found that 56.9% of community college presidents indicated that they had been involved in a leadership program before their first presidency.

Trettel (2011) conducted a study of mid-level community college administrators in Pennsylvania to examine how leadership competency levels aligned with the recommended AACC leadership competencies. Similar to findings of prior studies, Trettel (2011) found that participants valued all six of the AACC competency categories of skills as important to their position, with collaboration being ranked as the most important category. Of the 114 survey participants, all indicated the content that they believed to be important in leadership training programs. Overall, Trettel (2011) indicated that some of the highly recommended content areas participants listed were: leadership training, team building, communication, conflict resolution, learning to lead by example, empowering staff, and interpersonal skills.

Hassan (2008) and Kools (2010) had similar results with their studies. They both found that of the six leadership competencies, organizational strategy, communication, and community college advocacy were rated as the most important, followed by professionalism then resource management and collaboration. When looking at specific leadership competency areas, Duree (2007) had similar findings for the communication and organizational strategy categories in his study. Price (2012) studied how academic affairs officers in community colleges perceived the overall importance of the AACC competencies including their level of perceived preparation in the leadership competencies. Price (2012) found that of the six leadership competencies, academic affairs officers rated communication and organizational strategy to be the two most
important areas for effective leadership, followed by community college advocacy. These findings of Price’s (2012) study further supported the results of Duree’s (2007), Hassan’s (2008), and Kools’ (2010) studies. However, Eddy & Drake (2008) found that professionalism, collaboration, and resource management were the competencies enacted the most in rural settings.

Ross (2017) examined the leadership competencies of community college division chairs (n = 83) and his findings were consistent with other prior studies, in which all six leadership competencies were found to be equally important to their job performance (Duree, 2007; Hassan et al., 2010; Trettel, 2011; Price 2012). Similarly, Ross (2017) indicated that participants’ rankings of the importance of each AACC leadership competency to their current position were also consistent with previous studies using different populations, with organizational strategy and communication ranked in the top three as most important leadership competencies.

Summary

This chapter provided a brief overview of the importance of the community college system, the exodus of leaders in community colleges, and current research related to the AACC leadership competencies. In addition, the leadership preparation of mid-level administrators was also discussed as well as the important role they play in maintaining the vitality of the institutions they serve.
CHAPTER III - METHOD

Introduction

This chapter will address the study’s design, participants, research instrument, data collection procedures, and data analysis. The competencies outlined by the American Association of Community Colleges have been recognized as essential to community college leadership (AACC, 2005). This study investigates six main objectives.

The first objective is two-fold, and seeks to examine how mid-level and upper level leader participants in the MCCLA rate the importance of the AACC leadership competencies, and determine if there is a significant difference between mid-level and upper-level leader participants’ rating of importance of the AACC competencies. The second objective is two-fold and seeks to examine how MCCLA participants rate their level of preparation to perform the AACC competencies, and determine if there is a significant difference between the mid-level and upper-level leader participants’ rating of their level of preparation to perform the AACC competencies. The third objective is to determine if any significant differences exist between new MCCLA participants and veteran MCCLA participants in how they rated their level of preparation to perform the AACC competencies. The fourth objective was to determine if any significant differences exist between new MCCLA participants and veteran MCCLA participants in their rating of the importance of the leadership competencies. The fifth objective was to identify leadership experiences that participants noted as most beneficial in helping them develop the six AACC Competencies for Community College Leaders. The sixth

49
objective was to examine the extent to which the AACC competencies were emphasized within the MCCLA curriculum.

There are six research questions guiding this study:

Research Question 1: Is there a significant difference between mid-level leader and upper-level leader participants’ rating of the level of importance of the AACC leadership competencies?

Research Question 2: Is there a significant difference between mid-level leader and upper-level leader participants’ rating of their professional preparation to perform the AACC competencies?

Research Question 3: Is there a significant difference between the veteran MCCLA program participants’ and new MCCLA program participants’ rating of their level of professional preparation to perform the AACC competencies?

Research Question 4: Is there a significant difference between the veteran MCCLA program participants’ and new MCCLA program participants’ rating of the level of importance of the AACC leadership competencies?

Research Question 5: What leadership development experiences do participants consider as important to their development of the AACC leadership competencies?

Research Question 6: To what degree of importance are the AACC competencies emphasized within the curriculum of the Mississippi Community College Leadership academy?

Research Design

Descriptive, survey research design was considered to be the most appropriate to use to address this study’s proposed research questions as they relate to leadership
competencies essential for community college leaders. Descriptive studies involve describing and summarizing what is shown by the empirical data that is made available in an organized and meaningful way (Mertler, 2016). Survey research offers a quantitative description of the attitudes, perspectives, or trends of a given population by means of studying a sample of the particular population (Creswell, 2009). The use of inferential statistics focuses on reaching conclusions about a particular population from a sample. Following in line with Duree (2007), who used a survey questionnaire instrument to examine and study the rating of the six AACC leadership competencies as rated by community college presidents, this study will use a survey questionnaire to examine and address the six research questions.

According to Antonakis, Schriesheim, Donovan, & Gopalakrishna-Pillai (2004), researchers employ survey research methods when there is a need to determine certain characteristics of a population so that inferences about the chosen population can be made. Survey research is practical and applicable to almost any field or discipline and is used to better understand the attitudes, opinions, beliefs, values, and behaviors of participants. Yukl (2006) commented that survey research using questionnaires is the most common means of studying leadership. Survey methods have usually been employed to answer numerous types of research questions that stem from a wide variety of leadership perspectives (Antonakis et al., 2004).

Participants

Participants in the study consisted of individuals in the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy, which includes various mid-level administrators, upper-level administrators, faculty, and staff from Mississippi’s community and junior colleges.
and the Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) consisting of Mississippi’s eight public universities. Since there can be differences in the institutional research requirements, the researcher followed IRB protocol and request permission to conduct this research study from all required individuals and committees prior to the distribution of the survey.

The study examined the ratings of level of importance and ratings of level of professional leadership preparation in the six AACC leadership competency domains among participants in the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy (MCCLA). The MCCLA is a state-based leadership program. Participants in the study were asked to rate their level of preparation and rate the importance of each AACC competency in their current position. In addition, participants were asked to rank leadership experiences they perceived as beneficial in helping to develop the AACC competencies for community college leadership.

The MCCLA was formed in 2009 by the Mississippi Community College Foundation (MCCF). The main goals of the MCCLA are to address the anticipated need for upper level community college leaders, provide a venue to grow internal leadership potential, and draw upon the wisdom and expertise of current college leaders. In addition, the study used participants’ feedback concerning specific activities within the MCCLA that they felt were beneficial to their overall development of the six AACC leadership competencies. Since 2009, the MCCLA cohorts have assembled in various locations across the state to learn ways to enhance leadership skills in their respective roles to meet the needs of their institutions, both individually and collectively.

In an effort to obtain maximum survey participation, a request for permission to conduct research was submitted through the University of Southern Mississippi’s
Institutional Review Board (IRB), the Council on Institutional Research and Effectiveness, which is a group associated with the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges, and appropriate institutional research affiliates with the Institutions of Higher Learning. In addition, the researcher requested permission to conduct research from the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy director (MCCLA), Mr. Howell Garner (appendix B).

Instrument

The Demographics and Leadership Preparation Factors survey (DLPFS) instrument used for this study contains three main sections. In the first section of the survey instrument, participants were asked to complete demographic questions, which included age, gender, highest degree earned, current position held, if they participated in the MCCLA, and if they desired to seek a future community college presidency. The second part of the survey instrument was developed based primarily on the AACC leadership competency framework introduced by Duree (2007), using the 45 leadership competency illustrations summarized into the six AACC leadership competency domains recommended for community college leaders (AACC, 2004). Table 2 shows each of the six competency domains and the number of illustrations. The second part of the survey instrument used two numerical scales to gather data about the participants’ rating of the importance of the leadership competencies and their own perceived level of preparation in the competencies. Included in this section of the survey instrument, participants were asked to rate the extent to which the MCCLA curriculum emphasized the importance of each of the leadership competency domains.
Table 2 AACC Competency Domains and Illustrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain/Construct</th>
<th>Illustrations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational strategy</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource management</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community college advocacy</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The instrument for this study also used the same wording sited in the AACC Competencies for Community College Leaders (2005) document (appendix A). This numerical rating scale is the same scale used in the AACC 2004 Pilot study. Participants responded to the instrument questions using the ratings “1- not important”, “2- somewhat important”, “3- important”, and “4 - highly important” to indicate the perceived importance of the competencies and “1 -not prepared, “2 - somewhat prepared”, “3 -prepared”, “4 -highly prepared” to note their perceived level of professional preparation. The third part of the survey instrument also asked MCCLA participants to rank a variety of leadership development experiences they perceived as being the most beneficial and important to their development of the AACC competencies, including graduate degree leadership programs, in-house leadership programs, on-the-job training, mentoring, formal leadership development training/workshops, progressive administrative responsibilities, learning on the job from someone else in a similar position, challenging job assignments, other(specify), or none. Participants were asked
to rank their experiences with 1 representing the most important and 10 representing the least important. In addition, participants were asked to list experiences or activities within the MCCLLA program that they identified as beneficial to their development of the AACC competencies. The researcher will not collect any personally identifying data.

Data Collection Procedures

When developing procedures for the collection of data, care must be taken to ensure that the data collected will “match” or “align with” the research questions (Mertler, 2016, p. 15). The researcher submitted the survey instrument, the consent form, and procedures to the University of Mississippi Institutional Review Board in order to get approval to conduct research before any data are collected. The researcher used the following procedures: The researcher received approval to conduct research from two comprehensive community colleges in Alabama before any data are collected for the pilot study. In addition, the researcher received approval from the Council on Institutional Research and Effectiveness (CIRE), the affiliated group with the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges. This is the initial approval granting committee before getting approval from each individual community college.

The pilot study was completed using two comprehensive community college campuses located out of state, in Alabama. The pilot study was used to test data collection and data analysis procedures. Reliability statistics were analyzed before the survey is sent statewide. The researcher created a master listing of contacts from the Mississippi Community & Junior College CIRE Sub-committee on external research of mid-level administrators and upper-level administrators at all fifteen community and junior colleges in Mississippi. This listing was created using information posted on
college webpages, via personal contacts, or from a listing of contacts submitted by the institution. The researcher made personal contact via email with MCCLA director, Mr. Howell Garner.

An invitation was sent via email containing detailed information about the study along with electronic copies of applicable letters of approval to conduct research, a letter from the researcher outlining any risks involved, and a link to the survey. The researcher used Qualtrics for data collection through the University of Southern Mississippi to host the survey and maintain all resulting data and to send follow-up reminder to complete the survey. At no point were the participants’ names made available to the researcher. A reminder email containing the survey link was sent one week after initial email. All resulting data was entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences® SPSS program for analysis.

Validity

The second part of the instrument used exact wording and language from the initial AACC document developed on the competencies, Competencies for Community College Leaders (2005). The survey instrument was examined by three individuals who have served or are currently serving in leadership positions in the community college system: a retired vice president of a community college in Mississippi, a current director for academic & student affairs at the Mississippi Community College Board, and a retired president of a Mississippi community college. Duree (2007) demonstrated the psychometrics of his instrument by conducting a factor analysis on the 45-item AACC competency related survey items and determined that the specific items loaded under the competency themes as assigned in the AACC’s Competencies for Community College
leaders were indeed valid. Cronbach’s alpha (α) was used in order to determine the reliability of the analyses. Factor loadings with an α of 0.55 or greater were not deleted from the principal factors extraction. All factors were consistent and well-defined by the variables with no factors extracted. Duree’s (2007) instrument was externally reviewed and received comments from two leading community college leadership researchers. Also, Duree (2007) administered the survey to a group containing seven community college presidents “in order to receive constructive comments about format, an estimated time to complete the survey and ensure each survey item was understood by a representation of those in the field who would be completing the final survey” (p.50).

Reliability

Reliability was established via the pilot study. The pilot study used both upper level and mid-level administrators from two community colleges in Alabama (n = 33), and was conducted to test data collection and data analysis procedures. In addition, the goal of the pilot study was to access the feasibility of the approach and identify modifications that are needed to the survey instrument. Calculations of the Cronbach’s Alpha for each competency were found as shown in Table 3 and Table 4. Table 3 displays Cronbach’s Alphas for each competency using the preparation factor, and Table 4 displays Cronbach’s Alphas for the importance factor, with α > 0.7. A Cronbach’s Alpha of α > 0.7 indicates good internal consistency.
Table 3  *Cronbach’s Alpha α for each competency – Preparation factor*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational strategy</td>
<td>.909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource management</td>
<td>.912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>.921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>.887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community College advocacy</td>
<td>.935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>.919</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4  *Cronbach’s Alpha α for each competency – Importance factor*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational strategy</td>
<td>.791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource management</td>
<td>.829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>.851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>.829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community College advocacy</td>
<td>.874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>.889</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The administrators were emailed an invitation to participate along with a link for them to complete the survey instrument online. After pilot study survey responses are reviewed for completion, they were exported to a spreadsheet format and imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences® SPSS to test data analysis procedures. The
individuals participating in the pilot study were eliminated from the population involved in the main study conducted as part of the dissertation. Prior to administering the pilot study, the researcher recruited three individuals affiliated with the Mississippi community college system to review the survey instrument for readability.

One former community college president, one former vice-president of a community college, and a current associate executive director for academic & student affairs were selected to review the questionnaire for further validation. These individuals were recruited based on their wide range of characteristics and relevance to the kinds of questions represented in the survey instrument. According to Willis (2009, p.106), “cognitive interviewing is a psychologically oriented method for empirically studying the ways in which individuals mentally process and respond to survey questionnaires.” The purpose of cognitive interviewing is to help enhance the understanding of how respondents follow through with answering survey questions. A major goal of the cognitive interviewing procedure is to identify any sources of response error across a wide range of survey questions, which mainly involves emphasis on the efficient development and evaluation of survey questions and not the survey data collection (Willis, 2006).

Data Analysis

Data analysis procedures used for this study were tailored to each of the research questions. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze participants’ responses. Descriptive statistics such as mean, median, mode, standard deviation, range, skewness, and kurtosis were used. A binary logistic regression was used to determine if there are differences between the reported ratings of mid-level and upper-level
administrators as well as differences between new and veteran MCCLA participants. Descriptive statistics were gathered about the various leadership experiences that participants perceived as beneficial to their development of the AACC competencies. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences® (SPSS) was used to perform statistical analyses for this study. To address research questions one through four, a binary logistic regression was used to determine if any significant differences existed between the mean ranking of participants who identified themselves as mid-level and upper-level administrators and also between veteran MCCLA participants and new MCCLA participants for both the preparation and importance factors. For research questions five and six, descriptive statistics and frequency data for participants’ leadership experiences and importance of AACC competencies identified as beneficial to their development of the competencies were recorded.

Summary

This chapter outlines the format that the researcher used and followed to achieve the objectives of this study and answer each of the research questions. The next chapter provided the analysis of the collected data.
CHAPTER IV - RESULTS

Introduction

The data were collected using a Qualtrics questionnaire. After getting approval from the MACJC Sub-committee on External Research, a request to send out questionnaires was made via email to each of Mississippi’s fifteen community and junior colleges within the Mississippi Community College Board (six institutions did not participate). The participants for this study were mid-level and upper level administrators who were identified by their individual institutions as a new or veteran participant in the MCCLA. There were one hundred five (n = 105) completed survey responses. The data from all participants who indicated that they were new or past leadership academy participants in mid-level or upper-level administrative positions were used for the statistical analysis.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Survey respondents came from various backgrounds within their respective institution. Participants described their current position as shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Survey participants’ current position (frequency and percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Chair</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice-president</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sixteen individuals, or 15.2% of participants, indicated that they currently served in other positions, which included: 1 eLearning Outreach Coordinator, 2 staff, 1 academic
advisor, 2 academic coordinators, 1 associate dean, 1 administrative, 1 staff officer, 1 financial aid assistant, 1 professional staff, 2 assistant directors, 1 program manager, 1 counselor, and 1 coach.

Table 6 Participants’ time served in current position (frequency and percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 2 years</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – 5 years</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10 years</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 years</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 gives a general overview of the number of years participants have served in their current position. Most participants had served in their current position for three to five years and the fewest number of participants had less than one year in their current position.

Survey participants were asked to identify their current place of employment. Table 7 shows the current place of employment that was reported by survey participants. About 90% of all survey participants indicated that they currently worked in a community college setting.

Table 7 Participants’ current place of employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of Employment</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community college</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-year/University</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other higher education agency</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey participants were also asked to identify their highest degree earned. Table 8 includes an overview of participants’ level of degree.
Table 8 Participants’ highest level of degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed.D.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education specialist</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juris doctorate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey participants were also asked to indicate other demographics, including gender. More than half of all survey participants were female, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9 Participants’ gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, participants were asked if they planned to seek a community college presidency in the future. Eight (7.6%) survey participants indicated yes to seeking a community college presidency in the future. Sixty five (61.9%) of the survey participants indicated no to a community college presidency in the future, and thirty two (30.5%) participants indicated that they were not sure about seeking a future community college presidency.

Statistical Analysis

Research Question One

The first research question posed the following: is there a significant difference between mid-level leader and upper-level leader participants’ rating of the level of importance of the AACC leadership competencies? Leadership level, (e.g., mid-level
and upper-level leader), were the dependent variables. The independent variables were represented by each of the six AACC leadership competencies.

A binary logistic regression was used to analyze data for research questions one through four. The reason for using a binary logistic regression was to predict probability of group membership. This statistical test was appropriate since the dependent variables were categorical in nature with independent variables or predictors that were interval. Following an assumption of logistic regression, the dependent variables are mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive, meaning that one can belong to one group or the other. Table 10 displays the naïve model for Block 0 for the first classification table. Block 0 represents the model without any of the predictor variables included in the initial analysis. The classification table gives an estimate of the percentage correctly classified, and gives a way to gauge how well the model is doing. The leadership levels were coded with 1 and 0, for mid-level and upper level respectively. The model correctly classified participants with an accuracy of 84.8%. Eighty nine participants were classified as mid-level leaders and sixteen were classified as upper level.

Table 10 Classification Table: Block 0 Beginning Block(mid-level and upper level)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification Table$^{a,b}$</th>
<th>Predicted</th>
<th>Leadership_level</th>
<th>Percentage Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observed</td>
<td></td>
<td>upper</td>
<td>mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership_level</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>84.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Constant is included in the model.  
b. The cut value is .500
Block 1 represents the model with all predictors included. The predictors consisted of participants’ mean ratings of importance and mean ratings of preparation for each of the six leadership competencies. The results are shown in Table 5. The model correctly classified participants 90.5% of the time. Due to the small sample size for this study (n = 105), a p value of p < .10 was used to establish statistical significance. For Block 1, the omnibus tests of model coefficients indicated that there was a significant chi square \( \chi^2 (13, N = 105) = 31.09, p = .003 \). Since the chi square statistic had a p value of \( p < .10 \), this indicated that the model is a significant fit of the data. The Hosmer and Lemeshow test was not significant with a value of \( p = .13 \), which is a good thing, and is an indicator of how well the observed and predicted are matching each other. There was a significant value of \( p = 0.065 \) for community college advocacy importance rating.

Table 11 *Classification Table: Block 1(mid - level and upper level)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed Leadership_level</th>
<th>Predicted Leadership_level</th>
<th>Percentage Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Observed</td>
<td>predicted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>upper</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td>90.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. The cut value is .500

Based on their level of leadership, participants rated the importance of the AACC leadership competencies. The results of the analysis include the odds ratio represented by Exp(B) and the significance level represented by the p value for each of the independent variables in the model in the following:

Organizational strategy (importance), Exp(B) = 0.030, p = 0.113

65
To answer the first research question, the odds ratio values and p values were analyzed. The odds ratio is an indicator of the change in odds that result from a one unit change in the predictor. If the odds ratio is above one, the dependent variable coded as “1” is interpreted as times greater. If the odds ratio is below one, the dependent variable coded as “1” is interpreted as times less. The dependent variable coded as “1” was mid-level leader. For research question one, this would mean that a one unit increase in the rating of importance of community college advocacy would represent a 27.06 times greater likelihood for a participant who has a mid-level leadership role. Likewise, the odds ratio interpretation for research question one follows with the odds of being a mid-level leader being 27.06 times greater for a participant with a community college advocacy importance rating of 4 compared to a participant with a community college advocacy importance rating of 3.

**Research Question Two**

The second research question focused on: Is there a significant difference between mid-level leader and upper-level leader participants’ rating of their professional preparation to perform the AACC competencies? Based on their current position, participants (n = 105) rated their level of preparation to perform the AACC leadership
competencies. Results for each of the independent variables in the model are represented by each of the six competencies in the following:

- Organizational strategy (preparation), $\exp(B) = 0.182$, $p = 0.181$
- Resource management (preparation), $\exp(B) = 0.371$, $p = 0.542$
- Communication (preparation), $\exp(B) = 0.316$, $p = 0.411$
- Collaboration (preparation), $\exp(B) = 0.122$, $p = 0.227$
- Community college advocacy (preparation), $\exp(B) = 0.465$, $p = 0.531$
- Professionalism (preparation), $\exp(B) = 62.970$, $p = 0.047$

There was one significant value found for mid-level and upper-level participants. In terms of the professionalism competency based on ratings of preparation, there was a significant value of $p = 0.047$. To answer research question two, the odds ratio was examined. The odds ratio interpretation results in the odds of being a mid-level leader are 62.97 times greater for a participant who has a professionalism preparation score of 4 compared to a participant with a professionalism preparation score of 3.

**Research Question Three**

The third research question focused on the following: is there a significant difference between the veteran MCCLA program participants’ and new MCCLA program participants’ rating of their level of professional preparation to perform the AACC competencies? Participants who were veteran and new were coded as 1 and 0, respectively for the analysis. Based on their completion of the leadership academy, participants rate their level of professional preparation in performing the leadership competencies. Table 6 displays the classification table for block 0.
Table 12 Classification Table: Block 0 Beginning Block (new and veteran)

Classification Table$^b$

| Observed          | Predicted   |                  |                |                |
|-------------------|-------------|------------------|----------------|
|                   | completed   | Not completed    |                |
|                   | (new)       | (new)            | Completed (vet)| Percentage Correct |
| Step 0 completed  | 0           | 36               | 69             | 100.0           |
| completed (vet)   | 0           | 69               |                |                |
| Overall Percentage|             |                  |                | 65.7            |

b. The cut value is .500

After all variables (predictors) were entered for analysis, the new model was generated. Table 7 displays block 1 of the analysis, which included all predictors. The model correctly classified participants 67.6% of the time. For Block 1, the omnibus tests of model coefficients results indicated that there was a non-significant chi square $\chi^2 (13, N = 105) = 10.48, p > .10$. This indicates that the model is not a significant fit of the data. The Hosmer and Lemeshow test was not significant with a value of $p = .90$, which is a good thing to have.

Table 13 Classification Table: Block 1(new and veteran)

Classification Table$^a$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Predicted</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>completed</td>
<td>Not completed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(new)</td>
<td>(new)</td>
<td>Completed (vet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1 completed</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>completed (vet)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. The cut value is .500
The results from the analysis for the rating of preparation for veteran and new participants are shown, with \(\text{Exp(B)}\) representing the odds ratio and \(p\) representing the significance level for each independent variable in the model:

- Organizational strategy (preparation), \(\text{Exp(B)} = 1.034, \ p = 0.965\)
- Resource management (preparation), \(\text{Exp(B)} = 4.633, \ p = 0.064\)
- Communication (preparation), \(\text{Exp(B)} = 0.887, \ p = 0.876\)
- Collaboration (preparation), \(\text{Exp(B)} = 0.150, \ p = 0.057\)
- Community college advocacy (preparation), \(\text{Exp(B)} = 0.965, \ p = 0.962\)
- Professionalism (preparation), \(\text{Exp(B)} = 1.661, \ p = 0.594\)

Results of the analysis indicated that there was a significant value for two of the six competencies, resource management \((p = 0.064)\) and collaboration \((p = 0.057)\), each with a value of \(p < .10\). The odds ratio interpretation indicates that a one unit increase in rating of resource management preparation resulted in a 4.63 times greater likelihood for a participant who is a veteran. Likewise, odds of being a veteran participant are 4.63 times greater for an individual with a resource management preparation rating of 4 compared to an individual with a resource management rating of 3. A one unit increase in rating of collaboration preparation results in a 0.15 times less likelihood for a participant who has completed the leadership academy (veteran). Similarly, odds of having completed the leadership academy (veteran) are 0.15 times less for an individual with a collaboration preparation rating of 4 relative to an individual with a collaboration rating of 3.
Research Question Four

The fourth research question introduced the following: is there a significant difference between the veteran MCCLA program participants’ rating and new MCCLA program participants’ rating of the level of importance of the AACC leadership competencies? Survey participants were asked to rate the level of importance of the leadership competencies, based on their participation in the leadership academy. A significant value was not established in terms of the level of importance of each competency. Results of the analysis are as follows:

- Organizational strategy (importance), Exp(B) = 0.835, p = 0.874
- Resource management (importance), Exp(B) = 1.238, p = 0.852
- Communication (importance), Exp(B) = 1.662, p = 0.609
- Collaboration (importance), Exp(B) = 2.386, p = 0.444
- Community college advocacy (importance), Exp(B) = 0.598, p = 0.596
- Professionalism (importance), Exp(B) = 0.827, p = 0.854

There were no significant differences between veteran participants’ and new participants’ ratings of importance of the AACC leadership competencies.

Research Question Five

The fifth research question posed the following: what leadership development experiences do participants perceive as important to their development of the AACC leadership competencies? Participants (n = 105) were asked to identify and rank their leadership experiences. The frequencies for each leadership experience from most important (1) to least important (10) were analyzed.
Methods used to acquire the AACC leadership competencies

Survey participants indicated the importance of various leadership development experiences (e.g., graduate degree leadership programs, in-house leadership programs, on the job training, mentoring, formal leadership development training/workshop, progressive administrative responsibilities, learning from someone else in similar position, challenging job assignment, other, and none) as it related to their overall development of the six AACC leadership competencies. Table 14 displays the results of the analysis including descriptive statistics for each leadership experience. Higher means indicated that participants did not find particular methods to be very important to their overall development of the leadership competencies. Based on the numerical scale (1 – 10) to represent methods from most important(1) to least important(10), lower means indicated methods that participants found to be most helpful to their leadership development. The methods that participants utilized to acquire the AACC leadership competencies in order from most important to least important were: mentoring, on the job training, in-house leadership programs, graduate degree programs, learning from someone else in similar position, progressive administrative responsibilities, formal leadership development training, challenging job assignment, other, and none.
Table 14 *Methods used to acquire AACC leadership competencies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate degree programs</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>-1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-house leadership programs</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>.088</td>
<td>-1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the job training</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>.241</td>
<td>-.994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>.428</td>
<td>-.489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal leadership development training</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>-.244</td>
<td>-1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive administrative responsibilities</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>-.204</td>
<td>-1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning from someone in similar position</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>-.063</td>
<td>-1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging job assignment</td>
<td>5.84</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>-.588</td>
<td>-1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8.88</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>-5.73</td>
<td>34.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>9.87</td>
<td>.899</td>
<td>-9.43</td>
<td>93.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Research Question Six*

The sixth research question asked: to what degree of importance are the AACC competencies emphasized within the curriculum of the Mississippi Community College Leadership academy? Survey participants rated the importance given to the leadership competencies as it related to their participation in the leadership academy. The ratings ranged from (0) not applicable; new and have not participated, (1) not important, (2) somewhat important, (3) important, and (4) very important, with the following means: Organizational strategy ($M = 3.55$), Resource management ($M = 3.68$), Communication ($M = 3.80$), Collaboration ($M = 3.89$), Community college advocacy ($M = 3.86$), and Professionalism ($M = 3.88$). While all of the competencies were rated as being
important in the leadership academy, collaboration, professionalism, and community college advocacy were the top three. The mean results for each competency reported by survey respondents are shown in Table 15.

Table 15 *Mean rating for Leadership Competencies represented in the MCCLA*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Mean (M)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational strategy</td>
<td>3.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource management</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>3.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community college advocacy</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

All six of the AACC leadership competencies were found to be important among the participants in this study, in which 85% of participants served in a mid-level leadership role. For research question one, there was a significant difference between mid-level and upper-level leaders’ rating of importance for the community college advocacy competency. Results of the analysis indicated that mid-level leaders rated community college advocacy as being more important than when rated by upper level leaders. For research question two, there was a significant difference between mid-level and upper-level leaders’ rating of preparation for the professionalism competency. It can be assumed from the results of the analysis that mid-level leaders were more likely than
upper-level leaders to identify professionalism to be more important to their individual preparation.

Research question three results showed that there were significant differences between veteran participants and new participants in terms of their rating of preparation in resource management and collaboration. This would mean that veteran participants were more likely to have higher ratings of preparation in terms of resource management and collaboration than those who were new participants. Results for research question four indicated that the rating of importance among veteran participants was not significantly different from the ratings of importance among new participants. Survey participants indicated that mentoring was the most important method used to develop the AACC leadership competencies, followed by on the job training and in-house leadership programs. The survey participants indicated that all six AACC leadership competencies were acknowledged as being important and emphasized within the leadership academy.
CHAPTER V – DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter discusses findings from the study, conclusions from results of the study, limitations, and personal recommendations for future research.

The findings of this study seem to be consistent with prior research studies on the AACC leadership competencies (Duree, 2007; Hassan et al., 2010; Trettel 2011; Price, 2012; Ross, 2017), in which participants found all six of the leadership competencies to be important in preparing them for the responsibilities of their respective roles.

*Mid-level leaders and Upper Level Leaders*

Mid-level leaders make up a vast majority of administrative roles in community colleges, and are more likely to be involved in positions such as student affairs, department chairs, academic deans, and in other roles which involve frontline interactions with students, faculty, and other administrators (Gillet-Karam, 1999; Rosser, 2000; Garza-Mitchell et al., 2008). The researcher surmised that there might be some competencies that mid-level leaders would find more important than upper level leaders, based on the requirements of their position and the specific role they served. Oesch (2018) concluded that mid-level leaders often communicate and collaborate across various levels of leadership inside and outside of the institution, and are vital to holding the institution’s strategy together. It appears that mid-level leaders in this study would agree with this conclusion. Likewise, it seems that community college advocacy would be of great importance to individuals in these mid-level roles since it heavily relates to being able to manage important tasks and communicate frequently with others (Tyrell, 2014). They seem to view community college advocacy as one of their most important
functions in their role as mid-level leaders. The community college’s unique position within higher education often leaves them faced with larger budget shortfalls, the least amount of support, and increased expectations (Eddy, 2010; Boggs, 2011). Mid-level leaders seem to understand the need to become advocates for their institution, and manage to make the needs of their institution a priority so that it functions at its best. While many members in the community college can lead, it appears that the importance of individual competencies will shift in importance depending on the level of the leader (AACC, 2005).

Community college leaders, regardless of their level of leadership, serve as role models for their institution and seem to make it a priority to represent their institution in a good manner. Rosser (2000) concluded that mid-level leaders are often seen as highly dedicated to the work they do and making meaningful connections with others within the college, as well as serve as an important liaisons with stakeholders who provide support to their respective institution to ensure its vitality. Therefore, it appears that preparation for professionalism would be of great importance to individuals in mid-level leadership roles. Mid-level leaders seem to understand the importance of being prepared for when things go as planned and for times when they do not, and are able to make necessary adjustments. They also appear to understand the importance of building positive relationships with their constituents and other agencies as well, who interact with the institution. Gillett-Karam et al. (1999) and Rosser (2000) concluded that midlevel leaders are an integral component in advocating for their institution’s wellbeing and this study seems to support that notion. It appears that mid-level leaders in this study would agree with this conclusion.
Mid-level leaders demonstrate a great sense of loyalty and accountability to their institution and are often seen and described as being the ones in the trenches, taking care of the difficult tasks on a daily basis, and managing their time to meet deadlines with the impetus to improve their community, the individuals they serve, and advance the mission of their institution (Rosser, 2000). For many mid-level leaders, these roles may have begun while serving as faculty members at the community college. The literature indicates that the pathway to mid-level and upper-level leadership roles is most often conceived within the academic ranks (Shults, 2001; Weisman & Vaughn, 2007). While serving in an academic or faculty role, it seems that they would have gained knowledge of what qualities are needed and expected in someone in a mid-level leadership role, as well as what traits are not needed or needing to be improved. As they transition from faculty to mid-level leadership roles, it appears that these individuals begin to define how a professional should approach new tasks and demonstrate their efficiency in making sure tasks are completed (Tyrell, 2014). For this reason, it would seem that mid-level leaders in this study who may have previously served as a faculty member understand how important professionalism is in their current role, and would agree with these conclusions.

Within their role, it seems that mid-level leaders understand the impact of how they are viewed and perceived by both their colleagues and the general public. Eddy (2010) noted that college leaders are often judged by their actions, attitudes, behaviors, as well as what they say to their constituents on campus, and must be able to frame information in such a way that it makes sense to others. It appears that having characteristics of professionalism would be a priority for individuals currently in mid-
level leadership roles who hope to move up within the ranks to an upper level administrative role at some point. These leaders appear to understand the role they play in giving back to the institution by becoming a mentor for others, participating in leadership development opportunities, and sharing ideas about what they have found to work for them along the way. A need to set high standards for themselves and others, making continuous improvement of self, demonstrating accountability for their institution, and contributing to their roles through participation in professional development opportunities are hallmarks of professionalism for effective community college leadership (AACC, 2005). Both mid-level and upper-level leaders seem to understand that it is their personal duty to thoroughly prepare others who plan to become community college leaders. Similarly, it follows that professionalism is embedded in transformational leadership, which seeks to enhance the performance of others by developing them to their full potential (Eddy, 2010). It appears that participants in this study would agree with these conclusions.

Upper level leaders, like mid-level leaders, are often seen as the front-line liaisons of their institutions who promote positive feelings about their institutions in the community (Gillett-Karam et al., 1999; Eddy, 2010). As a bureaucratic institution, community colleges rely heavily on a hierarchical organizational focus (Birnbaum, 1992). This often means upper level leaders in community colleges typically attain their positions by progressing through a series of promotions within their respective institutions. In this manner, it seems that individuals bring with them to their new positions various knowledge, skills, and abilities about past experiences at their institutions and the dynamics of daily work. Mid-level leaders seem to engage in
professional development learning to gain exposure to training which supports them in their current role and informs them of expectations for leadership. It appears that many mid-level leaders find themselves generally satisfied with their current positions and have very little desire to seek any advancement. Garza-Mitchell et al. (2008) found that mid-level leaders often had no intent to move into an upper level role and were initially encouraged to do so by a mentor or another administrator. Albeit mid-level leaders in this study might agree with this conclusion, there appears to be a need to prepare them to progress into future upper-level leadership roles. Findings from this study appear to support these conclusions.

*New academy participants and Veteran academy participants*

There were no significant differences between new leadership academy participants and veteran leadership academy participants’ ratings of importance of the six AACC leadership competencies. It appears that both new and veteran leadership academy participants understand the value and importance of the leadership competencies, regardless of their prior leadership development experiences or position. While one could surmise that both new and veteran participants have an understanding of the scope, role, and mission of their institution and knowledge of specific areas within their institution, it appears that veteran leaders must be able to inspire and motivate new leaders of their team to support that role and mission. This supports the idea that leadership can be learned and becomes a lifelong process that is directly influenced by personal and career maturity (AACC, 2005). Veteran participants in this study indicated more preparation for resource management. This appears to come with having experience and being directly involved in working with others for the purpose of
planning and budgeting finances to sustain the institution. Resource management involves ensuring accountability in record keeping for the institution and the ability to manage resources, personnel and administrative processes in order to meet institutional goals (AACC, 2005). Despite cuts in funding and decreasing revenues, it appears that optimal resource management would be a priority for all leaders. Veteran leaders seem to understand that the opportunities provided by their institution greatly depend on the overall fiscal fitness of their institution. Duree & Ebbers (2012) indicated that leaders of the future must be competent and ready to face issues concerning funding and legislative advocacy. It appears that the participants in this study would agree with these conclusions.

While many within the community college can lead, leaders tend to bring with them a certain level of expertise to their individual role within the community college (AACC, 2005; Eddy, 2010). One would surmise that for new participants most of their working knowledge of managing resources and collaboration is limited to their specific department or office, such as being responsible for managing line items and budgets and engaging with other colleagues in their department. Resource management also involves implementing strategies to help sustain the processes and financial health of the community college in order to satisfy its mission and goals (AACC, 2005). Also, resource management within the community college can be viewed as learning how to do more with a reduction in resources, such as funding. In an era of shrinking budgets and reduced funding from various local and state agencies, preparation for resource management would seem to be an area that both new and veteran participants need to be fully aware of as it relates to effective community college leadership. A veteran
participant noted, “completing the reduction in force (RIF) assignment as a participant in the MCCLA certainly helped raise my awareness of proper resource management”.

One could surmise that new and veteran academy participants learn to facilitate problem solving and decision making within their respective institutional role based on past experiences, and must think about how it will fit within the full scope of moving their institution forward for the benefit of all involved parties. Eddy (2010) suggested that leaders base the way they lead on the manner in which they learned to lead, and bring with them a lot of past experiences from watching how others lead, mistakes they have made, and learning from mistakes others have made. Similarly, participants appear to understand that each community college is unique and there is a need to have frequent dialogue and group discussions to brainstorm ideas of what works best for them. Collaboration involves negotiating and building trusting relationships, both internal and external to the institution (AACC, 2005). Veteran participants in this study seem to indicate more preparation for collaboration. This appears to be due to their wide range of expertise and involvement with various departments within and outside the college, including local and state legislators, board members, community leaders, organizations, businesses, as well as maintaining commitment from faculty, staff, and students.

Leaders must build networks through these relationships and partnerships and encourage shared decision making to help advance the mission of their institution (AACC, 2005). A veteran participant noted “collaboration, networking and the understanding of departments outside my own…seeing the big picture”. Another participant indicated “networking was the best part of the MCCLA. We were given great instruction and exposed to pertinent information, but working with others in community
college leadership to complete the assignments allowed all students to grow”. A veteran participant further indicated that “MCCLA was great. Networking was the most important issue because all the institutions are very siloed.” Leaders must be able to foster collaborations and build productive relationships with all constituents including those within their department and those external to their department (AACC, 2005). Eddy (2010) noted that the ability to negotiate and build bridges through unique partnerships for mutual benefits is an important hallmark for community college leaders. The findings of this study seem to support these conclusions.

Methods used to acquire leadership competencies

Survey respondents indicated that they used a variety of methods to acquire the AACC leadership competencies. Researchers have also examined the various methods that individuals have employed to enhance their skills and understanding as it relates to the AACC leadership competencies (Hassan et al., 2010; Price, 2012). There were eight methods that were suggested from the literature by which individuals were able to increase their understanding of the AACC leadership competencies: graduate degree leadership programs, in-house leadership programs, on-the-job training, mentoring, formal leadership development training/workshops, progressive administrative responsibilities, learning from someone else in similar position, and challenging job assignments (Duree, 2007; Hull & Keim, 2007; Hassan et al., 2010; McNair, 2010; Price, 2012; Ross, 2017). It seems that individuals in this study understand the importance of the leadership experiences to their personal development, and choose to participate in various methods to develop their leadership skills.
The top three categories or methods ranked by survey respondents were: mentoring, on-the-job-training, and in-house leadership programs. The literature has suggested that mentorships, internships, and simulations will be needed in order for future community college leaders to learn and develop their leadership skills (Boggs, 2003). On average, survey respondents reported mentoring as being the most beneficial in developing the AACC leadership competencies. Survey respondents indicated that having a mentor was important to their overall development of the skills identified as essential to effective community college leadership. There is evidence in the literature that indicates that having professional networks and mentors are sources of significant social support (Piland & Wolf, 2003; VanDerLinden, 2005; Hull & Keim, 2007; McNair et al., 2011). Findings from this study support these conclusions.

Mentoring serves as an essential avenue for individuals seeking to move into leadership roles and assist with helping to orient them to becoming a leader (Eddy, 2012). It seems that individuals seek out someone who they think will be capable of spending the time to develop a meaningful mentoring relationship, share information with about their own experiences, and help with their professional growth as a leader. Respondents noted that they benefited from having a more experienced leader to share their time, energy, and advice with them and be a supportive colleague who has already “walked in their shoes”. This appears to support the findings in which participants indicated mentoring as the most beneficial approach to developing the leadership competencies. Some participants commented, “learning from others was the most beneficial to me...being able to talk to other leaders from other schools...learning from experienced people in the positions before me” as helpful. At the same time, these findings support
prior research which suggests that a preferred method of development of the leadership competencies comes through a much more organic pathway, including on-the-job training, mentoring, and internal and external professional development experiences (Duree, 2007; McNair, 2010). In addition, findings in the literature support mentoring as beneficial to the development of certain competencies, particularly community college advocacy and professionalism (Duree, 2007; Hassan et al., 2010).

The findings of this study showed that respondents ranked on-the-job training as the second most beneficial method of developing the leadership competencies. This appears to support the literature which suggests that on-the-job training experiences are most often used to hone leadership skills (Hassan et al., 2010; Eddy, 2012). Based on the initial principles set forth by the AACC (2005, p.3), this reflects the idea that “leadership can be learned”, and that “learning leadership is a lifelong process” that is “influenced by the personal and career maturity and development processes of individuals” over a lifetime and not just at one particular moment in time. A veteran participant further noted, “In-house leadership opportunities and on the job training are crucial as it allows you to interact with coworkers and discover the agency culture and values and see if it correlates with your own internal values”. This seems to support the idea that learning to lead does not come through a one-size-fits-all approach, and comes through multiple avenues and not through a linear or prescribed series of formal activities (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002; Ebbers et al., 2010; Cejda & Jolley, 2013).

In-house leadership programs were rated by survey respondents as being the third most beneficial method of acquiring the six leadership competencies for effective community college leadership. The literature supports the use of in-house, or GYOL
programs as a preferred avenue to nurture the development and needs of both mid-level and upper level leaders (Jeandron, 2006; Wallin, 2006; Eddy, 2010). In-house leadership programs tend to focus on the personal growth of participants in order to enhance their current performance in their respective leadership roles by expanding perspectives and encouraging colleague engagement (Hull & Keim, 2007). One such practice that in-house leadership programs implement to encourage the personal growth of participants is networking (Jeandron, 2006). Essentially, networking assists with building support through connections and relationships with individuals, both internal and external to a department or institution by expanding the boundaries of their roles (AACC, 2005). This may include cross-sections of departments such as deans networking with department chairs as well as vice presidents networking with members of the local community.

Hassan et al., (2010) noted that a major goal of networking extends beyond simply knowing what and knowing how, and focuses on knowing who as it relates to locating and connecting with resources needed for problem solving. It appears that participants find networking important to feeling safe, supported and connected to what is going on around them at their institution as well as others. One could surmise that a professional network developed through mentoring and participating in professional development programs such as the MCCLA would also seem to be important to helping support an individual’s learning and professionalism. A veteran academy participant noted,

“My participation in the MCCLA was the motivating factor for my decision to earn a degree in higher education administration…graduate degree leadership program…most beneficial. It seemed most of the activities involved networking
with others. The program was great at giving an overview of how community colleges operate.”

Networking with other professionals provides participants with resources to support their ongoing professional development and a broader perspective of how community colleges work (Eddy, 2010). Participants in this study seem to agree with these findings.

The literature indicates support for the use of in-house leadership programs as an essential method for aspiring community college leaders to learn and gain essential leadership skills towards their development of the AACC leadership competencies (Jeandron, 2006). For institutions faced with shrinking pools of qualified candidates, in-house leadership programs have become a cost effective means to support the preparation and growth of future leaders from within (Wallin, 2006; Hull & Keim, 2007). It appears that these in-house leadership programs are often tailored specifically to the types of issues and concerns that the institution has faced in the past and may face again in the future (Hull & Keim, 2007). Colleagues in these programs get the opportunity to network with one another, often through the use of scenarios or past experiences in order to build capacity to brainstorm ideas for problem solving and decision making. As one survey respondent noted,

Activities that were most beneficial include the interaction with College Presidents that allow an opportunity to hear how they lead. Real life experiences give a clear understanding of how effective leadership skills can enhance the college environment. Additionally, having the opportunity to interact with peers and learn from them provides a network of experience that will last a lifetime.
The survey respondents indicated that graduate degree leadership programs followed behind in-house leadership programs in terms of methods seen as beneficial to the development of the six AACC leadership competencies. However, the literature does not fully support this indication (Hull & Keim, 2007; Price, 2012). Eddy (2010) noted that the leadership competencies might not have been fully incorporated into graduate doctoral programs focusing on community college leadership. It seems that graduate degree programs may assist with the development of some of the leadership competencies more than others. Hassan et al. (2010) found that graduate degree programs were only noted in the top three experiences that were helpful in developing the organizational strategy and professionalism competency in their study of community college presidents and board members, with the other competencies viewed as not being adequately developed in graduate degree programs. Similarly, McNair (2010) supported the implementation of the AACC leadership competencies as a framework within graduate degree programs, and found that the organizational strategy, resource management, and communication were highly ranked in terms of being effectively developed through graduate doctoral programs. This study appears to support the notion that participants enter the leadership academy acknowledging the importance of each of the six leadership competencies to their current position, and make decisions of how best to develop the competencies for their respective role.

Leadership competencies in the academy

Survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of the leadership competencies based on the extent to which they were evident or emphasized as important within the MCCLA. All six competencies were rated as being important by the survey
respondents. Collaboration, professionalism, and community college advocacy
competencies ranked in the top three categories, followed by communication, resource
management, and organizational strategy. Considering that many survey respondents
reported networking experiences and working in groups as important aspects of MCCLA,
it appears that collaboration would be identified as highly emphasized and important
within the leadership academy.

Research has suggested that there is a need to promote the use of the leadership
competencies as an essential framework within the curricula of leadership programs for
aspiring community college leaders (AACC, 2005, Hassan et al., 2010; McNair, 2010;
Eddy, 2010). It seems that an understanding of the competencies that are considered to
be most evident in the leadership academy can help with making assessments of what
other aspects of community college leadership participants view as relevant to being
effective leaders in their current role. One of the main goals of the MCCLA is to focus
on topics and discussions that are “relative to the operation of Mississippi’s community
colleges in particular” (MCCF, 2016). Based on participant feedback, it seems that
some competencies were emphasized more than others and participants felt a need to see
the “big picture”, both good and bad. Although all six leadership competencies were
evident within the leadership academy, collaboration was emphasized as being the most
enacted leadership competency within the leadership academy. It appears that
participants in this study would agree that working in a group as a team was highly
evident and cultivated within the leadership academy. Eddy (2010) noted that
community colleges develop partnerships with others in order to reach mutual goals. One
could conclude that being able to collaborate with internal and external constituents in the
community college is vital to building healthy relationships and partnerships for the
benefit of all involved and to advance the mission of the institution. There seems to be a
need for more awareness of how to approach other aspects of leadership besides what is
commonly addressed within general discussions about leadership in community colleges
in Mississippi. As a leadership academy participant noted, “Every experience and
activity I participated in was beneficial to my development. I did find MCCLA too
oriented to things that go well in community college leadership and administration…
most helpful included the college redesign, group work, and group discussions.”
However, findings in this study appear to indicate that consideration should be given not
only to areas of community college leadership that work well, but also implement
learning experiences to prepare individuals for when things do not work well. This
research seems to support the notion that participants enter the leadership academy
recognizing the value of each method to their development of the leadership
competencies, and may engage in some methods more than others as they relate to their
current role.

Research supports the idea that the competencies can be developed through a
variety of strategies and approaches (AACC, 2005). Based on responses from leadership
academy participants in this study, it seems that emphasis was placed on topics, such as:
being able to work as a team on group assignments, readings, group discussions, role-
play exercises, learning from the experiences of others, networking, problem solving, and
decision making activities. It appears that participants would agree that the structure of
the MCCLA and leadership experiences within the leadership academy were heavily
related to the collaboration competency. However, the specific topics addressed and
competencies themselves would shift in their importance based upon the individual’s level of leadership (AACC, 2005). For example, it would be imperative that an individual who serves in an upper level leadership role (e.g., chief academic officer, vice president, chief financial officer) be effective at communicating with their institution’s board members much more so than for a newly hired staff member. This research appears to support the idea that the AACC leadership competencies are important to preparing community college leaders of all levels, and should serve as a framework within leadership programs, such as the MCCLA, to help provide guidelines for professional development. Findings in this study seem to support this conclusion.

Limitations

Although this study presents important findings that are consistent with prior research, it is not without limitations that one must consider when examining this study:

1. Veteran and new participants in the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy were surveyed. Therefore, the findings can only be generalized to this population.

2. There were six institutions that chose not to participate. This resulted in a small number of participants used for this study. However, there may be differences with a larger sample size.

3. An email link was provided for participants to respond. The researcher made contact via email with CIRE committee member representatives for each community college/department from a publicly available listing. Each CIRE representative was sent the email link to the survey. CIRE representatives at each college/department emailed the survey link themselves.
4. The findings of this study represent the individual self-perceptions of the survey participants. Opinions, evaluations, and feedback from individuals (e.g., colleagues, supervisors) who may have extensive, detailed information about survey participants’ specific leadership abilities and skills were not included in this study.

Recommendations for Practice

After reviewing the findings from this study, there are a few recommendations for practice:

1. There is still concern that the leadership competencies may be perceived as simply a checklist of requisite traits that one can acquire through a series of formal and informal activities. However, those looking to transition into upper level leadership roles need to include self-assessments in order to become more self-aware of their individual leadership styles and performance so that they can address areas of concern using the AACC leadership competencies as a framework to monitor and reflect on their development as a leader.

2. The AACC leadership competency framework would be useful to community college search committees for the purpose of structuring the application process of screening, conducting interviews, and organizing the selection process of future leaders for their institution.

3. The findings of this study can assist with future development and program planning of the Mississippi Community College leadership academy and other in-house leadership programs based on the leadership experiences that
participants identified as most beneficial to their development of the six leadership competencies.

4. The findings of the study can also be beneficial for graduate degree leadership programs and graduate degree program coordinators in making necessary adjustments to include the AACC leadership competency framework within graduate level courses that align with preparing individuals for future roles in community college leadership.

Recommendations for future research

The following are suggested recommendations for future research:

1. Future studies should examine the AACC leadership competencies from a qualitative perspective among individuals who have completed the academy. This would add a depth of knowledge, thick, rich descriptions and understanding of how individuals view the importance of the competencies and the methods they use to develop the competencies in a more practical manner. Interviews with veteran academy participants following a protocol should be developed.

2. Future research should examine how the AACC leadership competencies are developed within specific departments or offices within the community college, e.g., student affairs, chief academic officers, vice presidents, deans. This would provide more of an in depth assessment of which competencies are more evident in certain departments and areas when compared to others, and also identify any potential barriers in developing specific leadership competencies and how to address those barriers.
3. Future research should include a focus on the methods used to develop the leadership competencies for those in various leadership roles. The rationale for why some were used more than others (e.g., graduate degree programs) should be further explored. Also, further examination of which methods are most prevalent among specific leadership roles (e.g., chief academic officers, deans, department chairs) and address how relevant are these methods.

4. Future research should be conducted to see if there are differences among a larger group of participants or if differences exist among genders (e.g., female participants and male participants). This would assist in helping to address any specific needs or concerns for aspiring female community college leaders, and also examine methods used by both female and male participants to acquire each of the six AACC leadership competencies.

5. Future research should examine the extent in which differences in the institutional characteristics, e.g., size (student enrollment), setting (rural or non-rural), structure (multi-campus or single campus) influence the ratings of importance as well as the ratings of preparation in the AACC leadership competencies among program participants. This would assist in determining if factors such as institutional setting where participants were employed during the time they completed the survey influenced how important they rated each competency and how they rated their overall preparation in the competency.
APPENDIX A – Demographics and Leadership Preparation Factors Survey Instrument

For each section, you will be asked to provide a response to several questions.

Please mark one response for each question. All survey responses will be kept confidential.

Part One: Demographics

1. Which of the following best describes your current position (please mark one)?
   _____ Dean
   _____ Director
   _____ Faculty
   _____ Division Chairperson
   _____ Vice President
   _____ President
   _____ Other (please specify)___________________

2. Number of years in your current position.
   ___ less than 1 year
   ___ 1 to 2 years
   ___ 3 to 5 years
   ___ 6 to 10 years
   ___ more than 10 years

94
3. What is the highest degree you have earned?
   ______Ph.D           ______ Master’s
   ______ Ed.D.          ______ Bachelor’s
   ______ Ed. Specialist  ______ J.D.

4. Have you completed the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy?
   _____yes
   _____no
   _____ currently participating

5. Do you plan to seek a community college presidency in the future?
   _____yes
   _____no
   _____ not sure at this time

6. Gender
   _____ Male
   _____ Female

7. Current age ______

8. Which of the following best describes your current place of employment?
   _____ community college
   _____ university
   _____ other higher education/state agency
   _____ other (please specify)
Part Two:

AACC Leadership Competencies for Community College Leaders (modified by Duree, 2007)

This section of questions addresses the six competency domains for community college leaders that have been developed by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). For each part below, please rate how well prepared you are in your current position to perform each competency. Also, you will need to rate how important each competency is to community college leadership. Please use the scale below.

1 – not important/ not prepared

2 – somewhat important/ somewhat prepared

3 – important/ prepared

4 – highly important/ highly prepared
9. Organizational Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th>Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop, implement, and evaluate strategies to improve the quality of education at your institution</td>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use data-driven decision making practices to plan strategically</td>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a systems perspective to assess and respond to the needs of students and the community</td>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a positive environment that supports innovation, teamwork, and successful outcomes</td>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain and grow college personnel, fiscal resources and assets</td>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Align organizational mission, structures, and resources with the college master plan.</td>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 10. Resource Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th>Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure accountability in reporting.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support operational decisions by managing information resources.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and manage resources consistent with the college master plan.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take an entrepreneurial stance in seeking ethical alternative funding sources.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement financial strategies to support programs, services, staff, and facilities.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement a human resources system that fosters the professional development and advancement of all staff</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employ organizational, time management, planning, and delegation skills.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage conflict and change in ways that contribute to the long-term viability of the organization.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th>Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articulate and champion shared mission, vision, and values to internal and external audiences.</td>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disseminate and support policies and strategies.</td>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create and maintain open communication regarding resources, priorities, and expectations.</td>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectively convey ideas and information to all constituents.</td>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen actively to understand, analyze, engage, and act.</td>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project confidence and respond responsibly and tactfully.</td>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>Somewhat prepared</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Highly important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not Prepared</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

99
12. Collaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th>Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embrace and employ the diversity of individuals, cultures, values, ideas, and communication styles.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate cultural competence in a global society.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involving students, faculty, staff, and community members to work for the common good.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work effectively and diplomatically with legislators, board members, business leaders, accreditation organizations, and others.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage conflict and change by building and maintaining productive relationships.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop, enhance, and sustain teamwork and cooperation.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate shared problem solving and decision-making.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>|                                | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Highly important |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not prepared</th>
<th>Somewhat prepared</th>
<th>Prepared</th>
<th>Highly prepared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embrace and employ the diversity of individuals, cultures, values, ideas, and communication styles.</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate cultural competence in a global society.</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involving students, faculty, staff, and community members to work for the common good.</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work effectively and diplomatically with legislators, board members, business leaders, accreditation organizations, and others.</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage conflict and change by building and maintaining productive relationships.</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop, enhance, and sustain teamwork and cooperation.</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate shared problem solving and decision-making.</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. Community College Advocacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Highly important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not prepared</td>
<td>Somewhat prepared</td>
<td>Prepared</td>
<td>Highly prepared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value and promote diversity, inclusion, equity, and academic excellence.</td>
<td><strong>Preparation</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Importance</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate commitment to the mission of community colleges and student success through the scholarship of teaching and learning.</td>
<td><strong>Preparation</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Importance</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote equity, open access, teaching, learning, and innovation as primary goals for the college.</td>
<td><strong>Preparation</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Importance</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocate the community college mission to all constituents and empower them to do the same.</td>
<td><strong>Preparation</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Importance</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance lifelong learning and support a learning-centered environment.</td>
<td><strong>Preparation</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Importance</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Represent the community college in a variety of settings as a model of higher education.</td>
<td><strong>Preparation</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Importance</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14. Professionalism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th>Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate transformational leadership</td>
<td>Not Important</td>
<td>Not Prepared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of the history, philosophy, and culture of the community college.</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly self-assess one’s own performance using feedback, reflection, goal setting, and evaluation.</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support lifelong learning for self and others.</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage stress through self-care, balance, adaptability, flexibility, and humor.</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate the courage to take risks, make difficult decisions, and accept responsibility.</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the impact of perceptions, world views, and emotions on self and others.</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote and maintain high standards for personal and organizational integrity, honesty, and respect for people.</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use influence and power wisely in facilitating the teaching-learning process and the exchange of knowledge.</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight short-term and long-term goals in decision making.</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Importance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part Three: Leadership Development Experiences

Please use the scale below.

0 – not applicable/ I have not participated in the MCCLA.

1 – not important

2 – somewhat important

3 – important

4 - very important

Based on your participation in the MCCLA, to what extent does the leadership academy curriculum emphasize the importance of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contribution</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th>Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contribute to the profession through professional development programs, professional organizational leadership, and research/publications.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Dr. Christopher Duree, Chancellor, Iowa Valley Community College District, and Iowa State University Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, and Office of Community College Research and Policy; Duree, 2007)
For this section, please rank each of the following leadership development experiences in terms of how beneficial they are to the development of the AACC leadership competencies, with 1 being most important and 10 being the least important.

____ graduate degree leadership programs
____ in-house leadership programs
____ on-the-job training
____ mentoring
____ formal leadership development training/workshops
____ progressive administrative responsibilities
____ learning from someone else in similar position
____ challenging job assignments
____ other (specify)
____ none

Based on your participation in the MCCLA, what experiences or specific activities do you identify as beneficial to your development of the AACC competencies? Please list below.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for your participation in this survey. Your responses have been recorded.
APPENDIX B – IRB Approval Letter

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/research/institutional_review_board

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: 18060409
PROJECT TITLE: Learning to Lead: Examining Leadership Competencies in Participants in the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy
PROJECT TYPE: Doctoral Dissertation
RESEARCHER(S): Renyetta Johnson
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: 08/27/2018 to 06/28/2019

Edward L. Goshorn, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board
Application to Conduct Research on MACJC Institutions

Thank you for your interest in the Mississippi community college system (MACJC) and your desire to conduct research within the system. Individuals wishing to conduct research at institutions within the system must seek prior approval through the Council on Institutional Research and Effectiveness (CIRE) subcommittee on External Research Approval.

To request approval, individuals should complete the attached form and submit it and all supporting documentation to the chair of the CIRE subcommittee on External Research Approval, David Case at dcase@cccc.edu. Upon submission of a complete application, the requestor can expect a response within 7 days.

To submit the form electronically, you may use the following format as your signature: first initial, last initial, and 6 digit date of birth. Your research advisor may also use this format.

Remember that submission of a complete application does not imply approval. Please do not begin research or contact individual institutions until given permission to do so.
Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges (MACJC)

Application to Conduct Research on MACJC Institutions

DIRECTIONS: Individuals conducting research on Mississippi’s community and junior colleges must complete this application. Individuals should also review the checklist following this application for more details. Submission of application does not equal approval. Research cannot begin before approval is granted. Applications are typically responded to within 30 days of receipt.

Purpose: Individuals conducting research on Mississippi’s community and junior colleges must complete this application and obtain approval from the CIE Sub-committee on Outside Research prior to conducting any research. This Application serves the following purposes:

1. requires the researcher to summarize the proposed research and provide supporting documentation ensuring that research is performed in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and institutional and federal policies regarding human subjects research,
2. ensures the proposed research has institutional support through IIR approval and the endorsement of a qualified research advisor (i.e. faculty member) who assumes responsibility for the project,
3. provides the applicant with appropriate documentation that the proposed study has been reviewed and approved.

Principal Investigator (PI) Contact Information – The PI for the purposes of this application is the individual who will personally conduct this research study. Under most circumstances, the PI will be the student researcher.

Name: Sherry Johnson
Email: jsherry@usm.edu
Address: 218 Longwood Dr
City: Hattiesburg
State: MS
Zip: 38601

Is the PI a current employee of one of the MCCB or one of the MACJC institutions? Yes
Research Advisor (RA) Contact Information – The RA for the purposes of this application is the individual who will personally supervise and oversee this research study. Under most circumstances, the RA will be the faculty member working with the student researcher.

Name: Dr. Lisa M. Hill
Email: lmhill@usm.edu
Address: 218 Longwood Dr #202
City: Hattiesburg
State: MS
Zip: 38601

Sponsoring Institution or Agency: University of Southern Mississippi
Sponsoring Academic Division/Department: Department of Educational Research and Administration

Source of funding for research:

Start Date of Research: August 27, 2018
End Date of Research: May 31, 2019

Has the study obtained IIR approval from sponsoring institution? Yes
Approval Date: July 30, 2018, if Yes, was study

Format or Expedited (deemed minimal risk to human subjects) or Full Board (deemed greater than minimal risk to work with)

Version 6/9/2013
Page 2 of 6
1. Title. Provide the title of the research study.

Learning to Lead: Examining leadership capacities of participants in the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy.

II. Research Summary. Please answer the questions below and provide a brief, non-technical description of the study.

(a) Purpose. Define the purpose of the research (professional/dissertation/etc.)

☐ Professional, for internal use ☐ Other, please specify:

(b) Nature. Is the research Primary or Secondary? ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary

(c) Mode. How will data be collected?

☐ Survey ☐ Data extraction ☐ Interviews ☐ Focus Groups ☐ Other, for publication:

(d) Rationale. State research questions and/or hypotheses and tell why the study is needed.

In USA, the American Association of Community Colleges identified five essential leadership capacities needed for community college leadership. There is a need to ensure that emerging leaders are qualified and knowledgeable with the essential skills and knowledge to become effective community college administrators. This study seeks to examine the research questions (with the assistance of the proposed framework of the Leadership Center) and evaluate the differences in the perception of leadership capabilities and leadership capacities of the emerging leaders.

(e) Institutional Burden. Provide an estimate of the classroom or individual time and/or institutional resources required to conduct study. Include any institutional resources requested such as faculty/staff, computer/labs, equipment, supplies, and/or administrative support.

Invited participants will be administered an electronic survey using Qualtrics. Participants may use their personal computer to complete the survey. The survey will take about 15 to 25 minutes to complete.

(f) Use of Data/Anonymity. Please answer the following questions about how the data will be presented. Is the data comparative? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, will the included institutions be compared against each other or against institutions outside of the MAGIC? Will the MAGIC be compared against other state systems?

☐ Institutions within MAGIC will be compared against each other.
☐ Institutions will be compared with institutions outside of the MAGIC.
☐ The MAGIC will be compared against other state systems.
☐ The data will be used comparatively in a different manner.

Describe entities to be compared:

☐ The data will not be used as comparative data.
### Will the institutions involved in the research be anonymous in the published result?
- [ ] Anonymous
- [ ] Not Anonymous

Please provide a summary of data security measures to be employed in connection with the research. Data will be password protected. At no time during the study, will participants be asked to identify themselves. Data that are submitted will be used for analysis.

Note: Section III below applies to survey, interview, and other research methods that include direct or indirect contact with human subjects. Researchers using data limited to databases may skip Section III and move on to Section IV.

### III. Participants
Provide a brief, non-technical description of the human subjects of the study. This summary should clearly identify the following:

(a) Participants. Specify number of participants and their gender, ethnicity, race, and age. Clearly state any inclusion/exclusion criteria as well as identify any select populations such as minors, pregnant women, non-English speaking, remedial, elderly, specific major, etc. If any vulnerable populations are included (e.g. minors, adults with cognitive impairment, non-English speaking persons, etc.) identify additional precautions for their protection.

New and veteran participants in the Mississippi Community College leadership academy will make up the population for this study. The study will include about 300 participants. Participants in this study must have been or are currently participating in the MCLA.

(b) Recruitment. Describe how potential subjects will be made aware of the study and outline any recruitment procedures (email, letters, class announcements, newspaper ads, etc.), including any compensation or incentives.

Participants will be recruited via personal contacts and using publicly available information posted on community and junior college webpages. The principal investigator will develop a list of publicly available.

Participants will be invited via email to participate in this study. Individuals who do not respond to the email within one week of it being sent, will be invited again to participate in the study.

No incentives or compensation will be given.

(c) Informed Consent. Identify the process of gaining participant consent. Attach a copy of any consent forms used in the study. Provide any necessary explanation if informed consent is waived or not applicable.

Invited participants will be given a statement regarding the purpose and nature of the study, the time it will take to complete the survey, and the anticipated use of the data. Using Qualtrics, participants will be given the option and must choose the “I give consent to participate in this research. I am 18 years of age or older” link in order to access the survey instrument. Individuals who choose the option “I do not give consent to participate in this research” link will not be allowed to access and take the survey.

(d) Risks and Deception. Describe any immediate or long-term risks to participants that may arise from participation in this study (physical, emotional, social, occupational, financial, legal, etc.). Indicate if these risks are greater than those faced in normal life, and provide justification for any deception of participants.

There are no immediate or long-term risks to participants. There are no immediate or long-term risks associated with participation in this study.
Signatures

Principal Investigator – I certify that the information in this application is complete and correct. As Principal Investigator, I have the ultimate responsibility for protecting the rights and welfare of human participants, secure conduct of the research, and the ethical performance of the project. I will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of participants in human research.

Signature of Principal Investigator: ___________________________ Date: 09/11/2018

If the proposed research is sponsored by an institutional of higher learning, has the proposed research been approved by the IRB of the sponsoring institution?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

If "Yes", please obtain the Research Advisor and Department Chair (if applicable) signature below. If "No" the Research Advisor and Department Chair signatures may be left blank.

Research Advisor – I certify that the information in this application is complete and correct, and that this proposed research has been approved by the IRB of the sponsoring institution. As Research Advisor, I confirm that the student researcher under my guidance is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects, and has sufficient training and experience to conduct the research outlined in this application.

I further agree to regularly meet with the student researcher to monitor his or her progress; and if problems arise, I will become personally available to help the student researcher resolve those problems. As an advisor on this project, I will assure the protection of the rights and welfare of human participants, secure conduct of the research, and the ethical performance of the project. I will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of participants in human research.

Signature of Research Advisor: ___________________________ Date: 01/12/18

Department Chair – I acknowledge that this research is in keeping with the standards set by our department and our institutional IRB or its equivalent. I also certify that the Principal Investigator has met all the departmental and institutional requirements for approval of this research.

Signature of Department Chair: ___________________________ Date: ____________

CIRE subcommittee chair – I acknowledge on behalf of the Council on Institutional Research and Effectiveness (CIRE) that this research has been reviewed and has subsequently received the following recommendation by consensus of the membership:

☐ Approved   ☐ Tabled for Further Review

Version 6/8/2015
☐ Not Approved
☐ Approved with Stipulations:

[Signature of CIRE Subcommittee Chair] 10/24/2018

Date
APPENDIX D – Standard Consent Form

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
STANDARD (SIGNED) INFORMED CONSENT

STANDARD (SIGNED) INFORMED CONSENT PROCEDURES
This completed document must be signed by each consenting research participant.

- The Project Information and Research Description sections of this form should be completed by the Principal investigator before submitting this form for IRB approval.
- Signed copies of the consent form should be provided to all participants.

Today's date:

PROJECT INFORMATION

| Project Title: Learning to Lead. Examining leadership competencies of participants in the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy |
| Principal Investigator: Renyetta Johnson | Phone: 205-397-6968 | Email: renyetta.johnson@usm.edu |
| College: Education and Psychology | Department: Educational Research and Administration |

RESEARCH DESCRIPTION

1. Purpose:

In 2005, the American Association of Community Colleges developed and approved leadership competencies identified as essential for effective community college leadership. Due to a diminishing pool of leadership within the community college ranks, many colleges have looked within their own institutions to grow their own leaders. As a result, there is a need to ensure that these emerging leaders are qualified and equipped with the essential skills and knowledge to become effective community college administrators. The AACC leadership competencies provide a framework for community college leadership. This study seeks to understand the level of preparation and importance rating of these competencies from the perspective of participants in the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy. In addition, this study will examine the most common ways in which participants in the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy acquired the skills indicated within the AACC leadership competencies, and specific leadership experiences that participants noted as beneficial to their development of the AACC competencies. The results of this study may help inform community colleges, MCCCLA officials, and other stakeholders of leadership development and professional development opportunities for development of the AACC competencies.

2. Description of Study:

The researcher has invited community college administrators, faculty, and staff who are new and veteran participants in the Mississippi Community College Leadership to participate in this study. By choosing to participate in this study, you consent to completing a brief online survey using a link provided by the researcher. You should expect to spend approximately 10 - 15 minutes to complete this survey. Also, demographic and descriptive information will be collected as part of the survey. However, no personal identifying information will be collected at any time.

3. Benefits:

There are no direct benefits for participants. However, participants will have the opportunity to review the final results from the study and will have the option of determining how to use the results to help inform their future professional development decisions. Understanding that the AACC competencies for community college leaders are essential to effective leadership, college administrators and stakeholders can strategically plan...
professional development offerings and leadership opportunities that will directly enhance the professional preparation and leadership skills of their mid-level administrators and other emerging leaders within their respective institutions.

This study may add to the literature on the use of AACU competencies and community college leadership development programs and the role they play in addressing the leadership crisis. With the diminishing pool of college leaders comes the drastic loss of systemic knowledge and institutional history, which may have a dire outlook on the leadership of the community college setting. Leadership development initiatives such as the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy would also benefit in finding ways to enhance their current and future program offerings to meet the needs and challenges of leadership in the community college and help prepare future leaders. While the community college context may vary, this study may benefit other grow-your-own leadership programs in their efforts to help target specific, localized needs from one region of the state to another.

4. Risks:

There are no known risks associated with participation in this study. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from participating in this research at any time for any reason. Your choice to not participate in this study involves no penalty or consequences.

5. Confidentiality:

Data that are submitted from the survey will be used for analysis, and all data will be password protected. Although demographic information and descriptive statistics will be used, no personally identifying information will not be collected. At no time during the study, will participants be asked to identify themselves. Participation is voluntary and will not be used in conjunction with participants’ employment status or evaluation. All data will be permanently destroyed two years after the completion of this research study.

6. Alternative Procedures:

None.

7. Participant’s Assurance:

This project has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations.

Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the IRB at 631-266-5997. Participation in this project is completely voluntary and participants may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits.

Any questions about the research should be directed to the Principal Investigator using the contact information provided in Project Information Section above.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Participant’s Name: ____________________________

I hereby consent to participate in this research project. All research procedures and their purpose were explained to me, and I had the opportunity to ask questions about both the procedures and their purpose. I received information about all expected benefits, risks, inconveniences, or discomforts, and I had the opportunity to ask questions about them. I understand my participation in the project is completely voluntary and that I may withdraw from this project at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits. I understand the extent to which my
personal information will be kept confidential. As the research proceeds, I understand that any new information that emerges and that might be relevant to my willingness to continue my participation will be provided to me.

Questions concerning the research, at any time during or after the project, should be directed to the Principal Investigator with the contact information provided above. This project and this consent form have been reviewed by USM’s Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #6116, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, 601-266-5007.

Include the following information only if applicable. Otherwise delete this entire paragraph before submitting for IRB approval. The University of Southern Mississippi has no mechanism to provide compensation for participants who may incur injuries as a result of participation in research projects. However, efforts will be made to make available the facilities and professional skills at the University. Participants may incur charges as a result of treatment related to research injuries. Information regarding treatment or the absence of treatment has been given above.

Research Participant

Person Explaining the Study

Date

Date
REFERENCES


116


https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.119


