DEVELOPING PRESIDENTS IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION:

PERSPECTIVES FROM PAST PRESIDENTS OF PUBLIC, DOCTORATE-

GRANTING RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

_____

A Capstone Project

Presented to

The Faculty of the Curry School of Education

University of Virginia

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

_____

by

Edgar Halcott Turner II

May 2016

DEVELOPING PRESIDENTS IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

DEVELOPING PRESIDENTS IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

Advisor: Dr. David Breneman

The stability of higher education institutions is largely dependent upon the quality of leadership in the president's office. Previous studies on the responsibilities and time commitments of university presidents suggest a heightened focus towards external responsibilities (i.e., fundraising, budgeting) in recent history due to decreasing state support, heightened performance expectations, and the growing complexity of higher education institutions. The hypothesis of this study is as follows: The amount of time required by presidents to address external university affairs has superseded traditional academic responsibilities to an extent where previous traditional career paths are no longer adequate in preparing presidential hopefuls for the position of chief executive officer. Using theories of human capital, cultural capital, and transformational leadership as a framework, this study examines presidential career paths and presidential duties through the perspective of 12 past presidents of public, doctorate-granting research institutions. Past presidents expressed the highest levels of agreement with statements about the strong preparation that serving as an academic dean provided in preparing for the demands of the presidency and the need for dedication to external responsibilities such as fundraising and budgeting.

DEDICATION

For Eugenie Funda Obst.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEVELOPING PRESIDENTS IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Research universities throughout the United States have gained attention due to their direct role in educating students, performing research, and providing valuable contributions to the American economy (Cole, 2009; Thompson, 2012). Today's university presidents lead these complex, multifaceted institutions in an environment made increasingly competitive by dwindling resources and skeptical stakeholders (Skinner, 2010). Fulfilling the mission of these research universities requires, in part, consistent attainment and employment of qualified and competent presidents (Walseth, 2009), which, in recent history, has become difficult due to the rise in performance expectations and the advancing age of university presidents throughout higher education (Stanley & Betts, 2004).

According to a 2012 report released by the American Council on Education (ACE), the average age of current university presidents was 60.7, which is a nine-year increase over the past two decades. Given the average age of university presidents and the likelihood of a significant number of retirements in the near future, colleges and universities may face the daunting challenge of replacing their current presidents with qualified leaders (Gmelch, 2004; Hartley & Godin, 2009; Skinner, 2010). Furthermore, the pressure to deliver results in a highly competitive system has added to the uncertainty of each chief administrator's time in office (Stanley & Betts, 2004). Between 2010 and 2012, 13 out of 34 public university presidents in the Association of American

Universities left their jobs because of dismissal or early resignation (Rawlings, 2012).

These losses signal greater instability in American higher education in regard to financial

pressures, ideological pressures, disorganization, and intra-competitiveness within

flagship universities (Rawlings, 2012).

According to Rawlings (2012), in 2011, 46 states cut funding to higher education,

many for consecutive years. Twenty-five years ago, states provided two-thirds of the

funds necessary for running public institutions; this ratio has reversed, with significant

shortcomings falling upon parent-student support. For example, since 2002, ten states

have shown a per-student support drop of more than 30 percent according to the National

Science Board (Rawlings, 2012). These dwindling subsidies do not bode well for public

research institutions that produce more than 60 percent of the nation's academic research

and seventy percent of doctors, scientists, and academic professionals (NASULGC,

2009). Dwindling resources have also placed additional pressure on public, doctorate-

granting research institutions to increase debt to maintain continued production of

degrees. From 2002 to 2011, public research university debt tripled, standing at

approximately 88 billion dollars (Belkin & Thurm, 2012). Consequently, these financial

pressures fall to the responsibility of university presidents. While state funding to higher

education institutions has stabilized somewhat over the past few years (SHEEO, 2014),

the negative impact that insufficient resources can have on higher education institutions

has caused to place heightened focus on financial stability, particularly during times of

economic recession.

Recent data regarding the shift in presidential responsibilities suggest that universities may need to take on a non-traditional approach when recruiting future executive leaders to their institutions (Skinner, 2010). During the last decade, university presidents have assumed more external responsibilities as expectations about fundraising, enrollment, and institutional reputations have increased. Yet despite this growing demand for expertise in financial planning, fundraising and external relations, universities continue to select a majority of their new presidents from a position that entails little external responsibility—chief academic officer (i.e., provost) (ACE, 2007; ACE, 2012; Thompson, 2012). Succession is further compromised by the reluctance of high ranking administrators and faculty such as provosts, vice provosts, and deans to pursue presidential positions because of increased demands, thus posing significant questions about career paths to the presidency and the future of higher education leadership (Hartley & Godin, 2010). Additionally, a flaw within the hierarchical system of education exists in that those who assume higher levels of responsibility such as the presidency are often regarded as "accidental administrators"[1] because of the absence of succession planning and leadership training (Lorden, 2009). If this trend of "accidental administrators" continues, higher education may undergo a period of instability and turmoil due to the lack of developed and experienced leadership.

With scarce subsidies and looming presidential retirements, public, doctorate-granting research institutions need to ensure that the talent pool for qualified head

---

[1] The term "accidental administrators" refers to individuals who assume a higher position within higher education with no previous experience or professional training in that particular field.

administrators is diverse and plentiful so that future leadership is prepared to take on the

full responsibilities of a university president. If institutions and associations of higher

education do not have succession planning in place to respond to the imminent retirement

of university presidents, university constituents (faculty, staff, students, and prospective

students) will suffer. For the purposes of this study, "succession planning" refers to

methods that higher education institutions currently employ to identify and develop

leadership. These methods include presidential search processes as well as internal and

external leadership development practices and training. Therefore, investigation is needed

into the professional paths that qualified administrators have taken to become leaders of

public, doctorate-granting research institutions. In addition, further exploration into the

demands facing presidents of public, doctorate-granting research institutions, the

professional skill sets needed to effectively meet the demands of the presidents, and

current leadership development practices that exist throughout these institutions is

warranted.

Recent research performed by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* on presidential

succession suggests that a quarter of college presidents (as of 2013) were promoted from

within their respective institutions as compared to 19 percent in 2005 (Selingo, 2013).

Further, only 41 percent of college presidents felt "very well prepared" for their first

presidency (Selingo, 2013). According to Thompson's (2012) research on the challenges

of leadership succession within the presidency, a majority of senior administrators within

higher education "(i.e., chief academic officer, chief student affairs officer, chief

operating officer, chief technology officer, and others who might report to a president)"

(Thompson, 2012, p. 2) do not pursue careers as university presidents. Thompson (2012)

notes that this expressed lack of interest in the presidency by higher education

administrators is the result of a varying level of appeal to the responsibilities the president

must oversee and the percentage of his or her time that is dedicated to areas such as

fundraising, budget management, external relations, setting academic priorities,

communication with media, and oversight of university related fields such as the hospital,

state legislature appropriation, and athletics. Of these areas, Thompson's (2012) research

indicates that the responsibilities of current presidents in the areas of external relations

and fundraising have increased significantly from their predecessors during recent

decades to a level where provosts, deans, and other academic leaders have begun to see

the presidency as a role "poorly aligned with their professional preparation and

aspirations" (p. 146). Thompson's (2012) research is complemented by a survey of four-

year college presidents performed by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Selingo, 2013)

entitled, "What Presidents Think," which indicates that current presidents are

increasingly "worried about budgets, planning for the future, enrollment, and

fundraising" (p. 6).

    The goal of this study, therefore, is to examine the professional progression of

presidents of public, doctorate-granting research institutions to gain insight into the

resources, support systems, and barriers that exist within higher education for reaching

the presidency. Further, While recent studies performed by ACE (2007), *The Chronicle*

of Higher Education (2013), and Thompson (2012) have identified issues related to

presidential succession and preparation amongst senior administrators (i.e., provosts and

deans, etc.) as well as the skills and time demands of current university presidents, this study retrospectively examines how past presidents of public, doctorate-granting research institutions viewed their progression to the presidency, highlighting their experiences in particular administrative and academic positions and the way these roles prepared them for the demands of the presidency. Further, this study examines the perceptions of past presidents as they relate to the challenges and responsibilities of the presidency and the way those perceptions align (or misalign) with current (or non existent) development/preparatory practices designed for presidential hopefuls.

In order to address these questions, the researcher employed a quantitative emerging theme study, consisting of structured one-on-one interviews to gather information from past presidents at public, doctorate-granting research institutions. These interviews collected perspectives from university presidents regarding the best individual and institutional practices for preparing presidential hopefuls for the role of chief executive officer. Interviews consisted of either phone conversations or one-on-one personal conversations.

Research Question

The primary research question addressed in this study is, what perceptions do past presidents of public, doctoral-granting research institutions identify as key challenges in the pathway to becoming a president? A secondary question that will be addressed is, what recommendations for practice emerge from an analysis of the perceptions of key challenges in the pathway to becoming a president?

This proposal highlights various elements of the professional tracks past presidents of public, doctorate-granting research institutions went through in order to reach the presidency with a particular focus on the demands facing higher education administrators, specifically the president, and the necessary skill sets required of the chief executive officer of public, doctorate-granting research institutions in order to have an immediate impact once assuming a position of authority. Furthermore, this proposal creates a profile of the current state of presidents at public, doctorate-granting research institutions through literature and theory that addresses the current and future needs of public, doctorate-granting research institutions when seeking the next generation of university presidents. These two aspects serve as a basis from which to judge the sentiments of former presidents of public, doctorate-granting research institutions in regards to the effectiveness of current career tracks and presidential succession practices within higher education.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review addresses presidential characteristics (demographics/age, career paths), duties of university presidents, and professional skill sets. Additionally, this review examines current leadership development programs designed for high-ranking administrators (vice president, provost, chief financial officer, chief student affairs officer) in higher education. The literature review addresses available presidential leadership development programs, particularly those related to developing future and newly elected presidents of higher education institutions.

Theoretical Framework

In this section, the theoretical point of view that shapes the proposed quantitative methods study of presidential succession trends in higher education is presented and justified. Although the role of the president is often associated with leadership in some form or capacity, this research requires a specific theoretical lens when analyzing the impact of leadership, especially with regard to the role of the university's chief administrator (president). Therefore, the proposed study draws upon three bodies of literature—transformational leadership theory, social and cultural capital theory, and succession planning—to describe the changing field of higher education and the presidential leadership skills required to oversee successfully collegiate institutions successfully in the future.

While Skinner (2010) argues that boards will need to recruit a new breed of presidents with skill sets (i.e., fundraising, budget management, external relations) different from their predecessors due to the changing demands of higher education, recent research shows that, with respect to the selection of future presidential candidates, succession planning has remained rather traditional insofar as candidates are often those who have served as chief academic officers (provosts) (ACE, 2007). This traditional approach to succession poses a potential gap in administrative ability and institutional need since declines in state support coupled with increasing demands for revenue have "spurred presidents to dedicate larger shares of their time and effort to revenue-seeking activities such as fundraising, making the case for state appropriations and federal research support" (Thompson, 2012, p. 3). Further, Wenger's (1998) stage theory stresses the importance of properly including new inbound administrators during the departure of a former presidential leadership team, noting that in order for new executives (i.e., presidents, officers, etc.) to form a strong administration, the "formation of a community whose members can engage with one another and thus acknowledge each other as participants" (p. 149) is essential.

Human Capital Theory. The investment in presidents with high social and cultural capital, however, may not prove effective if an individual lacks the necessary credentials to improve his or her overall human capital. Human capital, in this sense, refers to one's accumulation of specialized knowledge and skill sets (i.e., fundraising, budget management, communication, teamwork, delegation, etc.) that increase overall productivity and self worth (Becker, 1993). Human capital theory is used to focus the

literature towards specific skill sets that lead to effective educational leaders. More

specifically, this framework employs an analysis of the skill sets required of a university

president and correlates those necessary skills to a president's overall responsibilities.

This framework helps to identify which skill sets are viewed as essential for presidential

success as administrators continue seeking professional advancement.

  Cultural Capital Theory. Bourdieu's (1977) theory of cultural and social

reproduction focuses on the argument of cultural capital as the root cause of "persistent

inequalities in educational stratification despite state efforts at educational expansion

cross-nationally" (Tzanakis, 2011, p. 76). Bourdieu expands his argument by stating that

the reproduction of these inequalities is further aggravated by "pedagogic actions" (p. 76)

of teachers who reward those of higher social capital. Although Bourdieu's theory (1977)

is directed toward the parent-child relationship in regard to transference of cultural

capital, the idea of rewarding elitism and favoring the social and culturally privileged

bears resemblance to the goal of universities in selecting future presidents insofar as

presidential search committees focus on finding individuals with high social and cultural

clout who can implement meaningful change throughout their organization.

  Transformational Leadership Theory. Research on transformational leadership

asserts that attainment of administrative skill sets, in this case those specific to higher

education, does not necessarily guarantee a successful university (Amey, 2006). As chief

administrators, presidents are placed at the forefront of universities on both an external

and internal level. If they are unable to motivate and delegate in a way that improves the

overall performance of those around them (i.e., higher ranking administrators, students,

donors, etc.), the university will fail to move forward. In other words, presidents with

strong aptitude in skills such as budgeting, finance, communication, delegation, etc. are

not guaranteed success in higher education. According to Amey (2006), effective

leadership is achieved through understanding a university's cultural environment and

through promoting collaboration at multiple levels. This ability is accomplished by

creating "learning environments that include cultural awareness, acceptance of multiple

intelligences and ways of knowing, strategic thinking, engagement, and a sense of

collective identity as collaborators" (p. 56). While transactional leadership theory refers

to the process of managing exchanges absent of significant change (Astin & Astin, 2000),

transformational leadership theory promotes the motivation of oneself and others to the

fullest potential by establishing strong collaborative cultural environments (Amey, 2006).

This theory incorporates literature that addresses how presidents use intangible skills (i.e.,

communication, motivation, delegation) in conjunction with concrete administrative skill

sets (i.e., budgeting, financial management, fundraising) to lead their respective

institutions effectively.

Taken together, these three bodies of literature provide a theoretical framework

for understanding the needs of future presidential leaders as well as the professional

development programs that exist to increase future leaders' overall human capital at an

accelerated pace. The theoretical framework assists in concentrating questions directed

towards past presidents regarding necessary skill sets required of successful leaders

throughout public, doctorate-granting research institutions.

Modern Day College President Demographics and Career Paths

The advancing age of university presidents has become a potential concern in higher education due to the prospect of a high number of vacancies in the office of the president created by retirements estimated to take place in the future. According to Cook (2012), 58 percent of college presidents are over the age of 60, compared to 13 percent in 1986 (p. 3). Another study revealed that of the 61 presidents within the Association of American Universities (AAU), 25 percent have served terms of over eight years (Stripling, 2011). Moreover, the path to the presidency is typically long and arduous, consisting of full-time faculty service and the gradual assumption of additional administrative responsibilities (Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001). According to Thompson (2012), 65 percent of newly hired presidents at public, doctorate-granting research institutions were either chief academic officers or presidents at other universities in previous roles.

Much of the literature on presidential careers has focused on the age and professional trajectory of university presidents. In this section of the literature review, specific findings about presidential demographics, age, and professional career paths are discussed.

Demographics/Age. Over the past two decades, the demographic profile of the typical university president has remained practically unchanged. According to the first cumulative ACE study which occurred in 1986, white males in their fifties represented the typical college president (Cook, 2012) with an average presidential tenure of six years. In 2011, the average age of college and university presidents was 61 (compared to

52 in 1986), representing a nine-year increase over the course of 25 years. According to

Cook (2012), this increase in age of college and university presidents can be attributed to

the increasingly complex environment of higher education and the challenges associated

with leading colleges and universities. This complex environment, in turn, demands a

higher level of experience that older administrators tend to possess. Contributing to this

trend is the fact that 54 percent of presidents matriculated from presidential positions at

previous institutions, compared to 40 percent in 1986. As challenges increase for

institutions throughout higher education, governing boards and search committees are

likely to enlist the services of more experienced leaders in education (i.e., current

presidents from outside universities) (Cook, 2012).

Professional Path to the Presidency. According to Cohen and March's (1986)

study of 42 college presidents, movement through the higher education hierarchy begins

with faculty member, progresses to department chair, dean, provost, and then the

presidency. A 2011 ACE report noted that this administrative progression has gone

relatively unchanged since 1986. In addition, as of 2011, 70 percent (compared to 75

percent in 1986) of current presidents have served as full-time faculty members (p. 4).

Although a majority of university presidents matriculate from prior positions

within the field of academia, there has been a recent increase in the percentage of

presidents who have matriculated from outside higher education. In order to provide

further clarification regarding the path to the presidency, Birnbaum and Umbach (2001)

analyzed 1995 ACE presidential survey data and divided respondents into two categories,

traditional and non-traditional paths, with the traditional path subdivided into "scholars"

and "stewards" (p. 205). Scholar presidents were defined as those who proceeded down the Cohen and March (1986) track, which consists of a faculty appointment followed by "successive administrative positions of increasing responsibility" (Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001, p. 206). Stewards were defined as individuals who assumed the presidency after primarily administrative careers with no full-time faculty status (2001, p. 206). Examples of such cases could be those who have worked primarily in higher education administration (i.e., admissions, development, student affairs) and worked their way to primary dean positions and are consequently selected as presidents. Of the 214 presidents from doctoral granting institutions who responded to the ACE (1995) survey, 79.6 percent were identified as scholars and 12.6 percent were identified as stewards. This trend of stewards assuming the presidency has continued to progress, albeit at a moderate pace. Since 2006, presidents whose prior positions were outside of higher education rose from 13 percent to 20 percent (Cook, 2012, p. 4).

Duties of a College President

The role of the university president has undergone significant transformation during the last few decades. As competition for resources and prestige increase and organizational structures grow more complex, the range of responsibilities requiring presidential oversight has become vast and time-consuming (Skinner, 2010). In addition to supervising and managing faculty, staff and students, presidents must collaborate with external constituencies and stakeholders (p. 12). In this section of the literature, specific findings about presidential duties and allocation of their time and efforts will be discussed.

Fundraising. Fischer and Koch's (1996) research on newly appointed college

presidents identified fundraising as one of the greatest challenges in higher education.

While presidents have been traditionally selected from the academic ranks based on their

academic merit and stature, recent history has shown a slight increase in non-traditional

presidential appointments (individuals with non-higher education backgrounds) (ACE,

2007; ACE 2012). While a majority of universities still hire primarily from academia,

institutions are seeking leaders with a wide range of experience and abilities in addition

to traditional scholarly knowledge, in order to stay competitive among peer institutions.

This increased competition is often complicated by external economic imperatives and

fluctuations that have resulted in strict fiscal budgets, ultimately forcing presidents to "do

more with less." For example, the U.S economic recession of the 1990s forced

unequalled fiscal cuts in higher education state support since World War II, shortly

followed by additional cuts brought on by the recession at the turn of the new century

(Zusman, 2005). Furthermore, "state dollars per student in public institutions were 12

percent lower in fiscal year 2004 than they were 15 years earlier" (Zusman, 2005, p. 2).

In addition to serving as an institution's chief fundraiser (Muller, 2004),

presidents note various other professional areas that require their attention. When asked

to articulate which areas of higher education occupied most of their time, presidents

overseeing public, doctorate-granting research universities in Thompson's (2012) study

indicated:

Table 1

Time Dedicated to Presidential Responsibilities by Public, Doctorate-Granting Research Institution Presidents

Area of Oversight	Percentage of Respondents
Fundraising	53.3% of respondents
Budget/financial management	36.5% of respondents
Governmental relations	26.3% of respondents
Community relations	17.5% of respondents
Strategic planning	13.9% of respondents
Academic issues	12.4% of respondents
Media	11.7% of respondents
Public relations and athletics	11.7% of respondents

Although the degree to which presidents allocate their time to these issues may vary

depending upon a particular university's size, mission, structure, and demographics,

presidents are generally viewed as leaders, managers, liaisons, community spokespeople,

and academic overseers (Thompson, 2012).

Faculty Relations. As a primary leader of an institution, the president must

establish strong relationships with a broad range of constituents throughout the university

in order to be accepted, and ultimately, successful. One of the potential downfalls of

university presidents is their inability to establish, or failure to prioritize, relationships

with faculty and other external contingencies (Fain, 2006; Turner, 2012). Over time,

faculty relations have become an increasingly important aspect of presidential administrations. According to Fischer (1984), "faculty members are the body and the heart of a college or university" (p. 101). Both Flawn (1990) and Fischer (1984) agree, writing, "A university can be no better than its faculty. If [a] president can leave the faculty stronger than [he or she] found it, [he or she] will have served the institution well" (Flawn, p. 67). In order to improve administrative-faculty relations, presidents must institute rigorous academic standards (i.e., student GPAs, graduation success rates) for incoming faculty while simultaneously applying "rigorous standards for promotion and the awarding of tenure" (Flawn, 1990, p. 67). Moreover, the expectation of establishing and promoting strong relationships with faculty is additionally important since faculty "comprise a strategic constituency within the shared governance structure of American colleges and universities" (Fleming, 2010, p. 254). Therefore, their vocal and professional influence regarding academic matters makes faculty a vital player in a president's administrative decision-making process (Fleming).

Immediately upon arrival, a president's value is constantly examined and measured by various parties such as the board of trustees, fellow administrators, faculty, the student body, and the university community. According to Sanaghan, Goldstein, & Gaval (2008), incoming presidents are greeted with a metaphorical bucket of "goodwill coins." With every presidential action or decision that meets disapproval from an "unrelenting faculty contingent" (Turner, 2012, p. 13), the president's metaphoric monetary value starts to depreciate. Less identifiable are the presidential actions or

decisions that lead to an accumulation of additional "goodwill coins" in their buckets

(Sanaghan, Goldstein, & Gaval, 2008). As Sanaghan et al. explain,

> [M]any decisions involve personnel, and some faculty members almost always
> care about every personnel decision. As a result, any negative personnel decision
> produces unhappy faculty. Unhappy faculty stay unhappy. They do not leave or
> find alternative employment and the president cannot fire them (p. 42).

Once a president depletes the supply of "goodwill coins," early retirement or forced

removal from the university may be imminent (Sanaghan, Goldstein, & Gaval, 2008).

This trend of rapid depreciation has affected presidential tenures in public, doctorate-

granting research institutions throughout higher education. According to Monks (2009),

public university presidents are serving 20 percent shorter terms and are 52 percent more

likely than private university presidents to leave office within a five-year period.

Concurrent with the trend of aging presidents and future retirements, this

literature provides additional framework for interview questions regarding the

responsibilities both within and outside of the university that new presidents will face, as

well as the training current presidents wish they had received prior to assuming their

leadership roles. Additionally, this literature will serve as a basis for comparison between

the demands of future presidents within higher education and the structure and topics that

current presidential leadership development programs address. Due to the relatively new

nature of these programs, little to no quantitative data exists on the long-term effects of

these programs (i.e., extended presidential tenures, greater levels of

administrative/faculty relations).

Professional Skill Sets

The role of the president grows more challenging as the modern day university becomes increasingly more complex and state financial support continues to fall (Vitullo & Johnson, 2010, p. 475). As such, future presidents will require different skill sets from their predecessors (Skinner, 2010). Presidents must have a firm grasp on budgetary and financial planning, be able to establish strong entrepreneurial support through resource development and fundraising, and become increasingly proficient in the art of communication and collaboration, whether it be with the student body, the board of visitors, or the general public (Skinner, 2010). The goal of any university president is to use these skills effectively to develop an academically and financially sound institution that is capable of fulfilling its mission (Fisher, Tack & Wheeler, 1988). As such, presidents in today's higher education system not only serve as the overseers of their respective institutions but also encourage innovation and positive change whenever possible.

In order for public universities to incorporate this change and innovation effectively within higher education, experienced leadership must be present throughout the administration, especially in the role of the president (Skinner, 2010). What defines effective presidential leadership, however, is by no means uniform and is often shrouded in ambiguity (Thompson, 2012, p. 19). This section of the literature will discuss two prevalent forms of leadership theory at work within higher education.

Transactional/Transformational Leadership. Fischer and Koch (2004) articulate two forms of thought regarding the topic of educational leadership for

presidents: transactional leadership and transformative leadership. Transactional leadership maintains the current institutional environment and administrative structure of past regimes without implementing significant change. "These are leaders who strive to avoid crises and make midcourse adjustments but do not impose grand personal visions on their institutions" (Fischer & Koch, 2004, p.16). Transformational leadership directly contrasts this approach by incorporating change as its central tenet. (Harrison, 2011; Astin & Astin, 2000). These leaders possess a "strong and captivating vision" and "visionary intelligence" (Fischer & Koch, 2004, p.17), exercising their power to bring about change that is calculated and feasible. Transformational presidents lead by example through appropriate uses of power while simultaneously promoting fellow administrators and faculty within their institution (Harrison, 2011).

Summary

Available literature on college and university presidents provides valuable insight into presidential career paths, presidential responsibilities, administrative skill sets/abilities, and presidential demographics. Most of the literature on college and university presidents used longitudinal quantitative surveys (ACE, 2007; Cook, 2012, Hartley & Godin, 2009) on a national scale but lacked in-depth perspective when addressing the personal views of current and past presidents. While some research asserts that the skill sets of future presidents will have to be different from those of their predecessors in terms of financial planning, resource management, and collaboration (Skinner, 2010), there is a significant gap in data as to how to incorporate or develop these skills in future leaders.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

Methodological Approach

The primary goal of the methodology for this study of presidential succession and preparation throughout higher education is to gather personal perspectives from former presidents at public, doctorate-granting research institutions. This research highlights significant elements pertaining to presidential responsibilities and desired leadership skill sets (i.e., fundraising, budget management, communication & collaboration, faculty recruitment) and evaluates the most constructive channels that presidential hopefuls should pursue in order to be adequately prepared for the challenges that face the president in today's higher education environment.

Research Question

This research seeks to answer the following question: ***What perceptions do past presidents of public, doctoral-granting research institutions identify as key challenges in the pathway to becoming a university president?***

In light of the fact that little to no research exists on presidential succession through the view of recently retired or transitioned presidents of public, doctorate-granting research institutions, an examination of their experiences, sentiments, and recommendations for improving preparation for the position of the president is warranted. Further, since the role of the college president has become increasingly complex (Skinner, 2010) with increased vacancies occurring in the coming years due to retirement,

inquiry into potential venues to strengthen administrative leadership and preparedness among higher education's top workforce could prove beneficial in the future.

Structured Interview

Structured interviews were used for data collection to address the primary research question. Broadly speaking, the interviews gathered information about the sample population's perceptions of beneficial roles in preparing for the presidency, the challenges of the presidency and the responsibilities the position entails, and the current state of succession planning in public, doctorate-granting research institutions. Each structured interview consisted of three sections (Appendix A) with a total of nine sub-questions that were asked in the same order for each interview participant. Each interview lasted approximately 30-45 minutes in length with opportunities for questions from the study participant throughout the interview. Given that the goal of the research study was to assess the responses of past presidents on topics surrounding the presidency-professional pathways to the presidency, the challenges of specific presidential responsibilities, and the role that age and professional development play in the presidency; the researcher utilized structured interview questions to confine study participant's responses to these presidential themes. Due to the varying academic and administrative backgrounds and presidential experiences that made up the study's sample, the potential for study participants to provide a wide range of sentiments on their experiences in the presidency was quite high. Therefore, utilizing structured interview questions allowed the researcher to ask targeted questions, in a uniform order, on the aforementioned themes that were derived from previous literature on the presidency.

Further, utilizing structured interviews allowed the researcher to create start codes that were directly correlated to the interview questions and sub-questions, thus allowing the researcher to identify specific responses to each question and quantify the frequency in which these responses occurred. For example, the first set of questions focused on identifying previous roles that prepared study participants for the demands of the chief executive office. Study participants were asked to identify specific roles they had previously held that were beneficial in reaching the presidency and provide an explanation as to why this was the case.

In order to provide study participants with additional background as to the purpose of the study, the researcher provided each study participant with an electronic copy of the study's introduction (Chapter 1) via email approximately one week in advance of the phone interview. Prior to the start of each structured interview, the researcher attempted to build rapport with the participant by providing the participant with personal background information about the researcher, asking questions regarding the participant's current work and employment, and allowing the study participant to ask any questions about the nature of the study itself. Throughout the course of the interview, the researcher provided a brief descriptive summary of current literature on the presidency and its relevance to the theme of the three main interview sections (Appendix A). For example, when asked to elaborate on the responsibilities of the chief executive officer position in the second series of questions, the researcher provided a prompt of Thompson's (2012) research findings around the levels of reluctance expressed by high-level administrators for the responsibilities of the presidency. This provided the

participants with an initial framework for how to address the responsibilities of the

presidency and to what extent they agreed or disagreed with pre-existing literature

(Murphy, 1980). The researcher also provided encouraging prompts throughout each

participant's responses (e.g., "uh-huh," "yes," "interesting," "continue") to promote

elaboration as well as allow participants time to think and clarify responses upon further,

uninterrupted, reflection (Brenner, 2006).

Data Collection

Data collection occurred through the use of structured interviews, which took

place within a three-month span in 2014. An initial pool of 34 public, doctorate-granting

research institutions was utilized for recruitment of potential study participants. Past

presidents of these 34 institutions were contacted via direct email notification (Appendix

B) from the researcher's personal email account. Due to the limited time available to past

presidents, a certain level of non-responsiveness was expected. Potential participants who

did not respond were sent one follow-up email notification within a two to three week

time period with a sample-size goal of one third of the initial potential data pool (this

sample size was determined by the researcher and his advisor due to the limited

availability of participants). Confirmation of study participants and their respective

interview times were established on a rolling basis. Participant confirmation and

interviews were performed in this manner based on the limited availability of potential

participants. Each participant was given prior notice of the nature of the study in the

form of a condensed purpose statement that was included in the initial contact email.

Emails were customized to each participant and any administrative support staff involved

in organizing the interview process. All participants who agreed to participate in

interviews were provided IRB consent forms via email, which afforded participants

information about how the data would be used throughout the course of the study.

Individuals participating in phone or one-on-one (one participant) interviews signed IRB

consent forms prior to the start of their interviews that were sent back to the researcher

via electronic scan or by hardcopy through messenger mail with return postage (provided

by the researcher).

One interview protocol was used for all study participants (Appendix A). A copy

of the interview protocol was sent to each participant upon receipt of his or her

confirmation to participate in the study in order to allow for any follow up questions or

clarifications prior to the live interview.

Projected time periods for preferred interview dates were provided by the

researcher and then formally arranged with participants either directly through email

communication with each participant or through an administrative assistant. Each

interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim through the use of an audio recorder

operated by the researcher with the given consent of each participant prior to the

researcher asking the pre-determined interview questions. Upon completion of each

interview, all electronic audio files were stored on a secure hard-drive and then provided

to a third party transcriber service for verbatim transcription which was sent to the

researcher in the form of a electronic word document.

Sample

The sample for this study consisted of 12 past presidents, 11 of whom served as president of public, doctorate-granting research institutions within the Association of American Universities (AAU), and one who served as president of a non-AAU large public, doctorate-granting research institution[2]. Each participant's institution performed high levels of research and employed residential undergraduate admission programs. The sample consisted of 11 men and one woman who served an average of 10.92 years as president (shortest tenure: four years; longest tenure: 20 years). The range of time that had passed since participants had served in the role of president ranged from one year to 19 years. Each past president in this study had previously been a faculty member in some capacity, four having taught at the institution where they later went on to become the president. Five had served as presidents at a prior institution while four had previously served as provosts. Several past presidents were noteworthy for their expertise and accomplishments in fundraising, having significantly increased the endowment of their respective institutions during times of significant economic recession. Several participants also accrued high levels of academic distinction, having garnered numerous accolades and administrative responsibilities through various national academies. Several past presidents also oversaw significant student enrollment initiatives during their time in office as well as the establishment of new academic departments. Some past presidents in the study also endured some form of controversy, either at the institutional

---

[2] Three of the 12 study participants held the title of "chancellor" while serving in chief executive office. For the purpose of consistency, all participants in this study are referred to as "past presidents."

or individual level, with one past president being asked to resign prior to the completion

of his or her contract.

Data from these respondents is important because higher education scholarship

reveals that public, doctorate-granting research universities could see significant turnover

during the next decade in the office of the presidency due to the average age (63) of

public, doctorate-granting research institution presidents (ACE, 2012). This could have

significant implications for practice. Public, doctorate-granting research institutions serve

a vital role in the production of human capital and research since they perform more than

60 percent of federally funded research, educate 70 percent of the United States

undergraduate population, and produce close to 60 percent of Ph.D.'s (NASULGC,

2009).

Data Analysis

Data analysis was guided by the primary research question which addressed the

perceptions of past presidents from public, doctorate-granting research institutions on the

challenges of presidential succession. Further, the researcher used the primary research

question and existing literature to craft interview questions (refer to Appendix A) that

addressed traditional presidential succession practices, perceived challenges that

accompany presidential responsibilities, the age of the college presidency, and

institutional practices for presidential succession.

Using the research and interview questions and conceptual model as a base for

data analysis, the researcher created an initial list of start codes (Appendix C) that sought

to identify patterns and confirm/disconfirm preexisting literature on the aforementioned

areas related to the presidency. These codes were split into three primary sections that

were directly related to the interview questions (Appendix A). The first set of codes (1a:

Previous Traditional Role (PTR), Previous Non-Traditional Role (PNTR), Emerging

Theme (ETO)) was created to identify if participants valued traditional or non-traditional

previous roles as valued experiences in preparing for the presidency. This was an

important distinction given that previous literature identified high levels of lack of appeal

for the responsibilities of the presidency and called for more externally focused skill sets

required of future presidents in order to be successful in the chief executive officer

position (Selingo, 2013; Skinner, 2010; Thompson, 2012). If an interview participant

identified a traditional role as beneficial, the response would be noted with a "PTR:

previous traditional role" in the researcher's personal notes as to the time when the

participant made this statement for future hand coding followed by placement into the

assigned node in NVIVO (the same applied if a participant identified a non-traditional

position which would be codified as "PNTR" and later placed in NVIVO). If participants

identified a previous experience that was not a professional position (i.e. mentorship,

professional development program, etc.), his or her response was placed in an emerging

theme category (ETO). The second set of codes (TS, NTS, and ETN) was created to

assess whether or not the previous roles that participants identified at the beginning of the

interview were properly emphasized in current presidential search processes. The third

set of codes (CA, CT, CP, CM, ETC) was created to identify the root cause of the

perceived challenges around the responsibilities of the president. The responsibilities

listed in the interview question were chosen based upon Thompson's (2012) study that

identified the amount of time current presidents indicated they devoted to specific

responsibilities (i.e. fundraising, budget management, strategic planning). The researcher

asked participants to elaborate on the challenges they faced with each responsibility listed

in the interview question and noted which code their answer corresponded with (appeal,

magnitude, preparation, time, emerging theme). For example, if a president addressed the

challenge of appeal for fundraising, the researcher made a notation (CA- challenge of

appeal) on his interview sheet as a reminder for later hand and NVIVO coding. The

researcher created an additional code (ETC) that was used to note unforeseen responses

from participants regarding the challenges of presidential responsibilities. These

responses were then further categorized through hand and NVIVO coding based on their

frequency and relevance to the interview question. The third set of codes (NET, AVA1,

AVA2, EPD, ETP) was created to assess each participant's level of agreement with

preexisting literature that identified the growing age of the presidency as an issue, and if

professional development was needed in order to expedite the path to the presidency. In

addition, the third set of codes was created to assess what types of skills past presidents

felt would be required of future presidents in order to be successful (Skinner, 2010;

Stripling, 2011). Similar to the first two sets, the researcher created an additional code

(ETP) for responses that identified a factor that did not align with either the traditional

succession track or professional development codes.

     In order to determine the effectiveness of the initial codes and the structured

interview protocol, the researcher performed an in-person practice interview with a past

president of a small (approximately 3,500 students) public, doctorate-granting research

institution. Following the interview, the researcher expanded the third section of codes

(addition of code- AVA3) that allowed for the categorization of responses that addressed

the combination of academic and administrative skill sets that were considered necessary

in preparation for the presidency. After further review of the initial interview with the

advisor, the researcher included an additional code (DAC) that categorized specifically

for responses that disclaimed the presence of beneficial succession planning practices in

higher education.

Upon creation of the updated start codes (Appendix D), the researcher began

implementing the structured interviews on a rolling basis as participants' schedules

permitted. Upon receiving the verbatim transcript (word format) from the third-party

transcription service, the researcher printed hard copies of each interview transcript and

performed an initial read through of the interview text, using the interview notes to mark

any potential responses that aligned with the start codes. The researcher then read through

the transcript a second time, utilizing the start codes as a guide, and highlighted sections

that aligned with the codes. The researcher pre-assigned colors and code abbreviations

(i.e. PTR, PNTR) to each code and highlighted each sentence or paragraph that directly

aligned with the corresponding code and noted the abbreviation code next to it. For

example, if the pre-assigned color for the code (PTR- a participant identified a provost,

chief academic officer, or academic dean as having an impactful role in preparing for the

presidency) was orange and a participant stated that the provost position was beneficial in

preparing him or her for the role of the president, the researcher highlighted the

corresponding statement in orange highlighter and wrote (PTR) in the side margin. This

process was used for each of the 12 interviews that took place.

Upon completion of the hand coding process, the researcher utilized NVIVO to

further sort and organize the interview data into themes based upon frequency and

relevance to the interview questions. The researcher created a list of primary nodes and

sub nodes that were identical to the revised start codes that were used in the interviews.

For example, a primary node was used to reflect the subject of an interview question

topic (i.e. Previous Roles Preparing for the Presidency) while a sub node consisted of

each code listed for that particular section of interview questions (i.e. Previous traditional

role: PTR, previous non-traditional role: PNTR; emerging theme: ETO). The researcher

followed the same process of highlighting each section of the interview and placing it

into each respective sub node. Once this was completed for each of the interviews, the

researcher examined the contents of each sub node and counted the number of statements

that correlated to each sub node. The researcher then separated the coded material within

each sub node based on the type of answer provided in the response. For example, if one

participant identified the provost position as a beneficial role in preparing for the

presidency and another participant identified the academic dean position as beneficial,

they were both placed in the same sub node (PTR) as they were pre-identified traditional

positions whereas service on a committee/board was placed in the non-traditional sub

node (PNTR) because it did not fall under the definition of a traditional position as

outlined by Cohen & March (1986). The same process was used if a participant identified

the provost or academic dean position as a non-impactful role in preparing for the

presidency, the response was placed in the traditional role sub node and the researcher

quantified the number of participants who identified traditional roles as either positive or

negative positions. The researcher then tallied the number of participants who identified

certain positions as positive or negative in preparing for the presidency and relayed these

frequencies in the findings. If a particular number of participants identified the provost

position as a positive role in preparing for the presidency, this did not mean the remaining

eight participants disagreed unless explicitly noted. The number of respondents who

articulated a particular point in a particular node comprised only the respondents who

directly commented on said node (i.e. the provost position as an impactful role in

preparing for the presidency) while the remaining respondents either provided a different

response or did not address the subject in question.

Researcher as Instrument

As a researcher interested in administration and professional development within

the field of higher education, I do not view myself as removed from this topic, or from

the process associated with analyzing the collected data. My interest in professional

development and succession in the presidency is a direct outgrowth of my previous

examination of the presidencies of John Casteen and Teresa Sullivan at the University of

Virginia and my graduate internship with the Office of Faculty Development. In this

capacity, I have been researching best practices for retaining prominent faculty to prepare

for anticipated faculty and staff retirements.

Trustworthiness. In order to establish trustworthiness, the researcher provided a

general synopsis of the study's research goals and structured interview questions to each

study participant prior to the interview. All participants were given the assurance of

confidentiality and allowed the opportunity to prevent their interview responses from

being directly quoted without attribution.[3] Further, all interviews were arranged and data

was collected in the same manner through direct communication with each respective

presidential office and the use of the same interview protocol. Additionally, data coding

and quality checks were made to account for personal bias. For example, during the data

analysis process, the researcher calculated the frequency with which the respondents

addressed each code and then organized and articulated these frequencies into specific

themes as they related to the interview questions. For example, when addressing previous

roles that prepared the past presidents for their responsibilities in chief executive office,

the researcher identified positions with the highest frequency responses and cited specific

characteristics about each position that were deemed beneficial by the study participants.

In addition, the researcher was careful to avoid duplication of his prior research and

notation systems on the changing role of the presidency. Further, the researcher viewed

all responses from presidents with a broad lens for coding and analysis and made no prior

assumptions about study participant's potential responses based on their professional

backgrounds (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

     Reflexivity and Transferability. Throughout the course of each structured

interview, the researcher made notations on his interview sheet that highlighted any

frequently reoccurring responses or notable themes provided by the study participants

that addressed the primary research question. These notations were then added into a

---

[3] One study participant chose to not be directly quoted.

reflexive journal that the researcher kept throughout the interview process. In this journal, the researcher hypothesized explanations as to why study participants articulated certain options (i.e. past experiences prior to the presidency, successes or failures while serving as president) and how they affected his views on the presidency and the primary research question. In addition, as interview transcripts were received from the third-party transcription service, the researcher added direct quotations from study participants to the reflexive journal in order to provide an additional layer of context and description to the emerging themes.

In order for the findings of this study to be transferable to a larger contingent of public higher education institutions, the researcher provided thick description of each major finding and theme through the use of direct quotations from the study participant transcripts (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher identified quotations that most closely identified with the start codes that were created as well as those that provided the most clarity, detail, and relevance to the interview and research questions. In addition to reporting the frequency with which study participants' responses aligned with the researcher's start codes, providing direct quotations allowed the researcher to highlight each past president's personal experiences with reaching the presidency, the challenges they faced, and how these perceptions related across public, doctorate-granting research institutions.

Limitations

The experiences and perspectives of the presidents within this study may not represent those of all public, doctorate-granting research institution presidents (all study

participants, with the exception of one, served as past presidents of public, doctorate-granting research AAU institutions).

In addition to the relatively small sample size of this study, the analysis of the role of the president and presidential succession practices may produce varied results due to the disparity in each participant's administrative training, past administrative experiences, relative success while in office, and time away from the presidency. For example, a president's reflections as to the necessary leadership skills required at the beginning of his or her tenure as president may be different from that of a president who has recently assumed his or her current position as in contrast to one who has been in office for a longer period of time or has, in this case, been out of office for a number of years. Moreover, each individual's level of success in office may also affect the way participants view current paths (traditional and non-traditional) to the presidency, the preparation they received (or did not receive) prior to assuming the presidency, and the challenges they experienced while in office. For example, a study participant who reaches the presidency through the traditional academic route and experiences a successful term in office may have little issue with the path and responsibilities of the presidency whereas a study participant who experiences a less successful tenure as president after traveling through the academic ranks may be more critical in their reflection on the presidency. As noted above, the sample for this study includes presidents who, with the exception of one, were not forced out of office. Therefore, the responses they provide may not be reflective of all public, doctorate-granting research institutions within the AAU, let alone public institutions across higher education. In addition, time away from the presidency may also

affect how participants view their ascension to, and time in, the chief executive officer position. For example, a study participant who has recently left the presidency (whether successful or not) may have a very distinct recollection of the challenges they endured to reach the presidency as well as the challenges they faced in office whereas a study participant who has been removed from the presidency for several years may have a less vivid and/or stressful recollection of the presidency. Given that the span of time study participants had been removed from office ranged from one to nineteen years, some variation was expected.

Finally, the changing state of higher education and the role of public, doctorate-granting research institution presidents across the country is another factor that may influence the responses of study participants and cannot be controlled in the scope of this study. The skill sets and responsibilities required of presidents twenty years ago may be vastly different from those who served as chief executive officer as little as a year ago. Further, the role and focus of presidents may also have changed over time depending on the fluctuations in the economy as well as federal and state legislative actions during their time in office. Similarly, the changing needs of higher education institutions may also be a developing area that requires chief executive officers to attain new academic skill sets and specializations (i.e. new technologies, globalization, etc.) in order to be effective leaders in the future. This study, therefore, may only provide a snapshot of presidential pathways and the challenges of the presidency during a two-decade span and may not provide a completely accurate projection of the ideal pathways to the presidency and the skills required to be successful chief executive officers in the future.

The strength of this study lies in the direct accounts of past presidents on the necessary skill sets that are required of presidents within higher education as well as the professional pathways that enabled them to achieve success. These direct accounts from executive leaders throughout higher education present a powerful image of the needs, demands, and role of the university president in today's higher education system.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The pathway to the presidency of a public, doctorate-granting research institution is a challenging undertaking for those who seek to pursue it. Once in the position, presidents are faced with the complex task of delivering tangible results and enacting positive change with minimal state resources (Skinner, 2010). In the field of higher education, the pathway to the presidency is primarily dominated by long tenures in traditional academic positions (i.e., department chair, academic dean, provost) in order to gain the perceived necessary academic and administrative credibility and experience needed to be a successful university president. Once arriving in the presidency, many chief executive officers have reached a senior age which respondents viewed as both a positive and negative: positive in that age often brings experience, and negative in that lengthy tenures and the energy and commitment needed to perform the various external duties of the presidency dwindle at more senior ages, potentially contributing to the abbreviated tenures of university presidents in recent history. Another potential reason for the shortened tenures of university presidents can be attributed to the growing responsibilities and pressures of the presidency itself, the instability of governing boards, and the perceived lack of proper succession planning processes for presidents in higher education. The following chapter provides a detailed description of how past presidents of public, doctorate-granting research institutions perceived the challenges of reaching the presidency as well as the challenges that come with the position of chief executive officer. Additionally, throughout this chapter, insight as to which roles, positions, and

skill sets presidents believe best prepare high-level administrators for the presidency,

what specific responsibilities within the presidency are the most challenging and why, as

well as what potential role professional development plays in the preparation of future

university presidents is presented.

Previous Traditional Roles Leading to the Presidency

In order to examine the challenges of the pathway to the presidency, the

researcher first asked respondents to discuss previous roles they had held prior to

reaching chief executive office. Respondents were then asked to compare how these

positions (traditional, non-traditional) were aligned with current presidential search

processes to identify any gaps that may or may not exist within the field of higher

education for finding future leaders of colleges and universities. Through the interviews,

two traditional positions (Cohen & March, 1986) emerged as the most decisive roles in

preparing for the presidency: academic dean and provost.

Provost. Presidents who identified the provost position as a crucial step to

reaching the presidency cited the wide range of responsibilities included in the position

(i.e., budgeting, development, academic research, recruitment, retention, student affairs,

etc.) as advantageous in preparing for the responsibilities of the chief executive officer.

This multifaceted role correlated well with another emerging theme - the importance of

presidential hopefuls gaining "university-wide experience," a term used by many of the

respondents when addressing the range of academic and administrative skill sets needed

to be an effective president. One past president expanded upon this notion by stating:

> I think it's an essential role because you obviously deal with serious issues of recruitment, retention, you deal with the budget, you deal with academic freedom issues, you deal with a whole range of issues that are in the ultimate responsibility of a president as well. – Participant 5

In regards to the academic issues facing public universities, past presidents who identified the provost position as key in preparing for the presidency also cited the importance of gaining knowledge of different departments and professionals across their respective institution as beneficial in one's preparation for the presidency. One past president stated:

> I never was a dean, and then I became provost and then eventually the president and sort of the grounding in the academic values of the institution, the understanding the breadth of the academic enterprise that you oversee as provost, getting to know people from across the institution, getting appreciation for the quality and issues of the various departments and colleges in the campus, I mean that was absolutely invaluable and there is no place better than the provost position to gain those perspectives. – Participant 4

> While five respondents stated that the provost position was a positive step towards preparing for the demands of the presidency as a result of the wide range of institutional responsibilities it entails, five other respondents stated that the provost position was not ideal in preparing for the presidency because of its lack of focus on external responsibilities. Respondents also noted the lack of exposure to the public as a challenge when preparing for the presidency. One past president observed:

> I think the downside is that the provost is very inward looking and what I think most people who come up the traditional route are not quite prepared for is that on the day you become president you become the public face of the institution…whereas 99 percent of your focus and attention and visibility is inside the institution as provost, suddenly at least half of it is external to the university, and I think that is an adjustment that is underappreciated in the preparation of people to become a president. And it in many ways I think it makes it very difficult to, when you choose a president through the traditional mode, I think it

makes it very difficult to know if that person is going to be successful when they
have never been a president. – Participant 4

Academic Dean. While there was no consensus among participants as to the

importance of the provost position, a majority of respondents (nine) indicated that the

academic dean position within higher education provided strong foundational experience

for the demands of the presidency. Respondents stated that the academic dean position

provided a good mix of internal responsibilities (i.e., faculty and staff reporting, strategic

planning, budget management, research, and academics) as well as external

responsibilities (i.e., fundraising). Some respondents also noted that these external

responsibilities included working with the legislature. In discussing these external

responsibilities, one respondent asserted:

> [Y]our span of management is much broader and much deeper, and at that level
> you start to work on fundraising much more than you do at the departmental level.
> And so that's a big part of the Dean's portfolio today. And so all of those
> experiences I think were really good for me. And, they, at different stages, kind of
> shape your thinking and give you different strategic opportunities, including
> opportunities for budgeting, strategic planning, personnel management, external
> relations. – Participant 5

One respondent noted that being a dean of a major academic school within a university

served as a dry run for the presidency but on a smaller scale. The respondent stated:

> You can look at the same thing for a college if you want to talk about the dean.
> The dean does the president's job but for a college. So in fact the dean's job and
> the president's job are very similar in many ways except the dean's domain is
> smaller and so forth. But in thinking about how they work and what they do they
> are similar in that regard. – Participant 11

While reactions to the benefits of the provost position were somewhat mixed, the

academic dean position was universally met with positive praise by those who indicated

it as a key role in preparing for the presidency. One theme that arose, however, was the

observation that a majority of provosts have previously served as deans, thus calling into

question the worth of the provost position, since the dean's position was frequently cited

as being a role comparable to that of the president. In assessing the progression from dean

to provost, one respondent indicated that the two positions complement one another, as

the academic dean position consists of running all aspects of a particular school while the

provost position provides overarching understanding of the university and is not limited

to academics. The respondent posited:

> There are two kinds of jobs that are particularly valuable in preparing you to be
> president. One is a dean, where for some unit, whether it's law or engineering or
> life sciences, social sciences, you have responsibility for everything in the school,
> for the research, the teaching, the service, for faculty, for facilities, for everything.
> You're like running a division of the company, and you really get to learn how
> you run an academic unit. That's what a dean does. Then as provost, if you
> become provost, you get to appreciate and understand better the whole university.
> The multiple aspects of it, which go beyond now your academic field, but also
> different kinds of responsibilities and extension programs, grounds keeping, the
> medical enterprise if you were previously in engineering. It's your time to get
> experience across the entire range of activities at the university, but the two are
> valuable. – Participant 9

Previous Non-traditional Roles Leading to the Presidency

While traditional roles such as provost and academic dean garnered frequent

attention from respondents, seven respondents noted several non-traditional roles, albeit

supplementary roles at times, as decisive in their preparation for the presidency. This may

reflect the slowly increasing trend of presidents being selected for their non-traditional

experiences (i.e. fundraising, budgeting, strategic planning) and nontraditional roles

(ACE, 2007, 2012) such as membership in national research academies, leadership in

state and federal government, and service on education or corporate boards and committees. While there was no consensus among respondents on the type of non-traditional position that was essential, one non-traditional experience was noted by six respondents as particularly effective in preparing an individual for the demands of the presidency: service on committees and boards.

Board and Committee Service. Respondents who indicated serving on committees and boards as learning experiences in preparing for the presidency cited the overall development of skill sets and competencies that those commitments provide. Respondents also indicated that serving on boards and committees provides a broader perspective outside of one's own specific area of concentration and helps to develop management skill and interactive ability with faculty. For example, one respondent stated:

> I think that the preparation came through my positions as Department Chair, Dean, and Provost, and also through service within the university on various committees, and task forces, and the collaborative efforts. It was important, for example, before becoming Dean of Arts and Sciences that I had some committee experiences that took me out of my own discipline in History and put me in contact with the growing university. So I would credit, within my preparation, I would credit committee service that gave me, and it's not just committee service, it's task forces, it's opportunities of one kind or another that gave me a perspective on the whole broad university not just on my own department. But, back to the main story line, those opportunities, those committee opportunities, as I'll call them, really came as part and parcel with the general academic track that I found myself on. But they were important in their own right in addition to the positions that I was holding at whatever time it was. – Participant 12

Service on boards and committees was also not limited to academia. Several respondents indicated that they gained a great deal from service on corporate boards as well as academic boards within their institutions either during or prior to reaching the presidency.

One area of caution that respondents noted when serving on boards/committees is the

danger of over commitment, particularly once an individual has reached the position of

president. Service on too many boards/committees can lead to poor execution of one's

primary responsibilities. One respondent addressed the challenge of balancing time by

noting:

> Well, I think it's a two-way street. I think the more experience you have
> externally with boards and committees, the more it informs you in ways that are
> helpful to your institution because you get a broader perspective, you see what
> works and what doesn't work at other universities, but at the same time you may
> reach a point where you're so in demand for the external roles that you're not
> paying enough attention to your own job and you have to be careful about that.
> Some of the things that you get invited to do externally of course are related to
> how you're perceived and how good you are at what you do, but a lot of it is also
> related to what institution you're leading. – Participant 7

Succession Planning

Recently the length of presidential tenures has shortened. In 2006 the average

tenure of university presidents was 8.5 years. By 2011, the average tenure of university

presidents was 7.0 years. (ACE, 2007, 2012). This shift calls for an exploration into the

efforts of higher education institutions to improve succession planning from one

presidential regime to the next. While four respondents indicated satisfaction with

succession planning processes for university presidents, seven respondents expressed

some level of concern with the current level of discontinuity of succession planning in

higher education.

Presidential Searches

When studying the pathway to the presidency, a majority of university presidents

still come from within higher education, having moved up through the traditional ranks of

faculty member, department chair, academic dean, and provost. This path to the presidency has remained relatively unchanged over the past three decades, yet there has been a slowly growing trend of appointing presidents with primarily administrative or non-academic backgrounds (ACE, 2012). When questioned about what roles or factors presidential searches should pay close attention to, six themes emerged: general approval with the current state of presidential searches, unwarranted emphasis on external candidates, lack of appreciation of non-traditional competencies (fundraising, budgeting, strategic planning, etc.), increasing trends in non-academic presidential appointments, emphasis on "university wide experience," and mixed reviews of presidential search firms.

   Satisfaction with Traditional Search Methods. Four respondents indicated general satisfaction with the current presidential search process. Reasoning behind this approval with the search process was varied, some noting that there was no set pathway to the presidency, thus allowing for both those with academic and those with administrative backgrounds to find success in the presidential search process, while others indicated their own "traditional" route through academia was beneficial in preparing themselves for the presidency. Respondents did, however, note that candidates with no administrative experience could find themselves ill prepared for the demands of high-level administrative positions such as dean, provost, or president.

   One respondent in particular disagreed with the notion that higher education will face a potential leadership crisis in the chief executive office due to the increased age and decreasing length of the tenures of college and university presidents and noted that the

presidential search process continues to produce qualified leaders. The respondent

described the state of the presidential search process by stating the following:

> It can always be improved, but I don't think we're facing a crisis. It is true that, I mean there's a lot that's changed about higher education that aren't so much crisis of leadership… I don't see something fundamentally wrong about the search.
> – Participant 9

It should be noted that of the four who stated that they were satisfied with

current/traditional presidential search practices, two came from traditional academic

backgrounds, which may have directly influenced their responses. One respondent

acknowledged his or her own professional progression as an influence on his or her

viewpoint by stating:

> I came up the traditional academic ladder. I know that some Presidents were generals in the Army and some have been United States senators, and some that's been Fortune 500 CEOs. And I'm sure that those are all good routes to the presidency. But, I don't know much about them because I didn't follow any of them. I ended up following the traditional academic route, which is the way that most presidents come up. And frankly, I think it serves them well. – Participant 12

Internal vs. External Candidates. Five respondents indicated discontent with

the lack of emphasis on internal candidates during the presidential search process.

Respondents noted concern with the tendency of presidential search committees and

institutions to look outside of the institution for potential candidates out of habit rather

than cultivating from within, thus leading to an underdeveloped succession planning

agenda. One respondent expressed the desire to see greater consideration of internal

candidates at institutions with current or future presidential vacancies due to the greater

levels of preparation that could come from selecting presidents with previous experience

(either academic or administrative) at the institution they are selected to lead. The

respondent expanded on this notion by stating:

> I would like to see more presidents come from inside, by the way. I think the idea
> is some way or the other that the only way to get a good president is to go outside
> is really ... a big corporate board thinks they haven't done their job if they haven't
> at least got one person, if not two people, trained up to possibly be the CEO, but
> in university we kind of make an assumption that (an) inside person should not
> get the job…. think the best way to [conduct a search] would probably be for
> institutions to begin to expect to recruit the next president internally and at least
> that ought to be an option that at least fifty percent or so of the presidents came
> from. If you did that, then universities would take it upon themselves, current
> leadership would take it upon themselves, and boards would expect it, for them to
> train up people to succeed. I'm not quite sure ... I think that's the most important
> step that could be taken. I know it hasn't happened yet and I don't have the
> figures, but I'm under the impression that at least a little more of that is occurring.
> If it does, you'd find a lot better-prepared presidents. Institutions are too
> complicated to just move in and expect to hit the ground running. – Participant 10

Coupled with this lack of consideration for internal candidates, five respondents

expressed a need for higher education institutions to increase their internal grooming and

development practices for potential leaders within their own institutions in order to create

a better-prepared group of future presidential candidates and higher education leaders at

earlier stages of their professional careers. While respondents noted positive aspects of

participating in professional development programs provided by organizations or schools,

such as the American Council on Education and Harvard University[4], they also expressed

the importance of internal training and preparation for those within their own institutions.

One respondent expanded upon this by stating:

> Now, again, you'll have training programs like ACE has and so forth, yes, I think
> they can, but there's nothing like ... if schools were all developing successors,

---

[4] Harvard Seminar for New Presidents, ACE Institute for New Presidents.

you'd find that some of those would go other places and…you'd have a better trained group. – Participant 10

The same respondent also noted that this gradual development of skill sets for qualified

leaders could be achieved through a variety of means by stating:

I think that if the university were to say…well, we've got to train up. We've got to train somebody or a couple of people to step in to be president, then there are ways that you could do it. There'd be assignments that you could give to people that would have more external roles. They could give more speeches. They could testify more. They could deal more with constituency groups. They could do projects, but inasmuch as nobody trains anybody to be president to their own institution, then any training you do is sort of training for the commons. I think…institutions need to become more willing to promote internally. In a Fortune 500 corporation or let's not go that big. In a billion-dollar-a-year entity, which all the big institutions are these days if not much more, depending on whether they have a medical school, if it were a private sector entity you would always say who, you would always think part of the job was to get some people ready. – Participant 10

Non-traditional Responsibilities. Four respondents stressed the importance of

non-academic responsibilities and experience during the presidential search process (i.e.,

fundraising, budgeting, and external relations) (Skinner, 2010). Further, respondents

indicated experience with athletic programs, medical centers, leadership, and strategic

planning as beneficial for preparing for the demands of the presidency. One respondent

stated:

I think when people look for the experience, they look into the experience and sort of skillset of presidents, I think they don't look, they'll look at fundraising but they won't look at sufficiently and in-depth at budgeting, the management of conflict, and the setting of, you know, development of strategic, really effective strategic planning strategies, and the management of those processes. And of course, and many times, you mentioned medical centers and athletic departments. – Subject 5

Three respondents, however, indicated that these non-traditional skill sets are not

properly emphasized or prioritized in the presidential search process and that certain

academic positions within higher education (i.e., provost) can limit a candidate's

opportunity for non-traditional skill development. One respondent expressed his/her

concern with the conservative, traditional approach that search consultants currently

employ during the presidential search process. The respondent stated:

> I think it depends on the search consultants because more and more of these
> places are using consultants. I think two or three that I know are pretty well
> sensitive to the options that are out there, and then I think there are some of them,
> without naming names, that are still fairly traditional in approach and in what
> they're looking for. I also think, frankly, there are a good many search
> committees that are stacked in a way that make it pretty difficult for the non-
> traditional person to get a good hearing. I think a lot of it has to do with whether
> or not the university itself is really open to looking at people of all kinds and all
> stripes. – Participant 6

Increasing Non-Traditional Presidential Appointments. While some

respondents indicated concern for the lack of emphasis on non-traditional experience and

responsibilities during presidential searches, three respondents acknowledged a growing

trend of non-traditional, presidential appointments. Respondents said that the reasoning

for this warming towards non-traditional appointments came from governing boards' and

search committees' recognition of the importance of academic experience and the

growing emphasis on the external responsibilities and demands of the presidency.

Respondents indicated institutions had pulled from, but not limited themselves to, non-

traditional areas such as national science academies, health and human services

departments, as well as state and federal government agencies. One respondent described

this growing, albeit slow, trend of non-traditional presidential appointments by stating:

> Well, because I think that the governing boards recognize that strong academic grounding and traditions and values are very, very important there are other aspects of the position that are also increasingly important as the public face of the institution, the responsibilities for fundraising or building of stronger base of external support for the institution politically in terms of philanthropy. So I think that boards are becoming more willing to [look] at alternatives…there are signs that the boards and institutions are willing to broaden the net, so to speak, in seeking presidents. – Participant 4

University Wide Experience. Four respondents emphasized the need for presidential search committees and consultants to focus on a candidate's overall experience, both academic and administrative, as well as each individual's personal character and overall style when making their selections. Additionally, four respondents indicated the importance of examining a candidate's overall track record as opposed to his or her current position. One respondent described the analysis of a candidate's potential by concluding:

> When hiring a president and if you're on a search committee for a president you should see in that person's record everything you want to get from that president, every characteristic, every ethical standard, principle, every evaluation of academic quality… You should see all of that in their record. You should only expect to get things that are in their record. You should not expect to get something that's not in their record. In fact, I would say if you find yourself trying to explain why the record is not correct, in other words, why is there record deficiency, you start to explain why the record is deficient in some way you are in trouble. At that point you are on very thin ice. – Participant 11

Presidential Search Firms. When addressing methods of finding new presidents, three respondents stated that search consultants served as poor conduits for finding an institution's next qualified leader. Respondents indicated a disconnect between what institutions wanted and what search consultants could produce in terms of qualified candidates. The depth and breadth of a search firm's ability to identify an appropriate

candidate was also called into question, on the presumption that search firms utilize

predetermined lists of presidential hopefuls who have previously applied for presidential

positions rather than matching the needs of a specific institution with the appropriate

experience, background, and skill sets of a particular individual. One respondent

elaborated on this point by stating:

> I find the use of consultants for recruitment to be almost useless, myself.
> Consultants have a Rolodex of people who have applied for jobs so they know
> who has applied for jobs. So they can give you names of people and maybe
> somebody to look at and so forth but they can't really decide for you what you're
> doing. You should never rely on a consultant to pick your president for you
> because the consultant really doesn't understand what you're trying to do.
> – Participant 11

The public nature of some presidential searches was coupled with respondents' concerns

about search firms. Four respondents expressed concern about the negative effects public

searches can have on the quality of candidates universities are able to identify as well as a

potential candidates' willingness to participate in a presidential search due to the

heightened potential for public scrutiny. Moreover, respondents noted that individuals

who participate in public presidential searches run the risk of exposing themselves to

scrutiny at the institution where they are under consideration, as well as from the

institution where they are currently employed.

Governing Boards

Three respondents stated that inconsistent and poorly functioning governing

boards was a significant contributor to the discontinuity of succession planning within

higher education. Respondents noted that conversations about successors for the

president often start once the current president has retired or been removed from office,

not before, thus preventing long-term succession planning from occurring. One

respondent elaborated by stating:

> There is no succession planning. The whole idea of succession planning doesn't
> exist at the universities. These boards decide every time that it's time for a new
> president at that point they decide what the planning is. What are we going to
> correct that's going wrong currently and what would we like to do next? There's
> no long-term strategy about the presidents they're looking for. Then at that point
> it's all kind of seat of the pants kind of decision-making. – Participant 11

Respondents also noted governing boards' lack of preemptive planning, lack of general

understanding of how to be good board members, and inability to address the needs of

their respective institutions as problematic. Respondents alluded to the fact that when

governing boards are faced with identifying a new chief executive officer, the reaction is

often haphazard and poorly planned. With little consideration given to internal

candidates, a large-scale search is put into motion more out of habit than from formulated

strategy. One respondent described this reaction by stating:

> When the presidency changes, they're kind of like, oh, my God, what do we do
> now? Higher education institutions tend to have a bias of doing national searches
> and going outside. Even if they have someone inside, they'll still usually go
> through the motions of an external search and that's typical. – Participant 7

Modeling Succession Planning After Corporate Boards

Five respondents stated that institutions of higher education could benefit from

modeling their succession planning practices after business corporations, indicating that

many corporations have continuous internal professional development practices in place

and designated candidates to serve as successors for the chief executive officer position.

Respondents noted the benefits of corporate boards engaging in conversations about

succession planning and identifying candidates who fit the needs of the company, which

stood in sharp contrast to practices within higher education which seven respondents

noted were inconsistent and, at times, nonexistent.

One respondent suggested the potential benefits of modeling the succession

practices of large business corporations by stating, "I can't help but repeat myself, but (in

the case of) a CEO of a major corporation the board regularly, not every month, but every

couple years or every year will say, okay, who are your senior people, if something

happened to you, who could take your place?" (Participant 10). Another respondent

addressed the inconsistency of presidential search processes in higher education as

another indication of poor succession planning by stating:

> I don't feel this way just at the presidential level, but I think it is one of those areas
> where we could learn something from the business world. The business world
> knows what their needs are, and they sometimes just go out and find the person to
> fit those needs. Our search processes increasingly lead us to the person who
> offends the most the least. I think if all departments are doing or administrative
> teams are doing is perpetuating mirror images of themselves, I think ultimately
> that's a negative influence on the entire enterprise. – Participant 6

While some respondents highlighted the possible benefits of adopting corporate

succession planning practices into higher education, the extent to which the content of

these corporate practices mirrors the needs of higher education administrators was not

articulated.

Challenges of the Presidency

A goal of this research is to examine former presidents' perceptions of the

necessary experience and skills contemporary candidates need in order to become

effective university presidents. In prior research examining the reluctance of high-level

administrators (deans, provosts, chief academic officers, etc.) to seek presidential office,

concerns about the growing external responsibilities required of the chief executive

officer were identified as primary reasons for the lack of interest in leading institutions of

higher education (Thompson, 2012). While Thompson's (2012) study polled high-level

administrators about their concerns regarding the demands of the presidency, this study

seeks to consider those concerns through the sentiments of past presidents and their

perception of the greatest challenges during their tenures in office. To offer further clarity

to the challenges of the presidency, the researcher asked past presidents to reflect on the

challenges they faced in the following areas: fundraising, budget management,

overseeing medical centers and athletic departments, strategic planning, and dealing with

government officials (i.e., legislature). The researcher then coded the responses into the

following categories (appeal, time, preparation, magnitude, and emerging challenges) to

better identify the basis for the origins of these challenges and to decipher whether or not

these challenges accurately indicate reluctance on the part of high-level administrators

(traditionally academics) considering the presidency.

Appeal. Responses were placed in the appeal (i.e., desire to participate in or

perform a specific task) category if respondents addressed the appeal, or lack of appeal,

of various presidential responsibilities. Three respondents noted that a general lack of

appeal for the role of the presidency exists throughout higher education, primarily due to

the fact that a majority of professors and scholars, individuals who have traditionally

risen the ranks and become presidents, joined higher education to perform research and

teach, not to engage in the external responsibilities of the chief executive officer. Further

articulating the point that professors and scholars' professional goals are not aligned with

the responsibilities of the president, one participant stated:

> It's only a tiny fraction of university presidents who started their career at a university with the idea of becoming a president. They got a Ph.D. They wanted to be a professor. They wanted to be a scholar. They enjoyed teaching and that's what they do. Then they got involved in some of the administrative things. The exceptions are rare that somebody goes to all the trouble of getting a Ph.D. and then getting tenured and all that stuff, which has nothing to do with administration and doesn't like it and does it only because they want to be president of the university. So most of us, not just most, I assume it's more than 90 percent, that's not what we intend to do. – Participant 9

Within the category of appeal, nine respondents addressed fundraising in some

capacity. Six respondents indicated that if a potential presidential candidate has

reservations about participating in fundraising initiatives, he or she should not seek the

presidency, as it is central to the success of an institution. One respondent stated, "I think

if an individual isn't willing to learn how to be a good fundraiser and isn't willing to

bring a commitment to that activity they shouldn't be a president in this day and age"

(Participant 4). Addressing the lack of appeal of fundraising, four respondents indicated

that the biggest challenge of fundraising was the act of asking for money in general.

Some respondents cited their own personal history and hesitations about asking for

money. One respondent articulated this point by stating, "Well, the hardest part was

getting over my personal background of growing up in a poor family and being taught

that you never ask anyone for money. A lot of people grow up with the notion that it's

wrong to ask someone for money" (Participant 7). While these respondents noted the

initial challenges of asking for money, they also stressed the necessity of becoming more

comfortable with fundraising over time and accepting possible rejection from donors as

an inevitable component of fundraising. Past presidents did note that regardless of one's

perception of the task, fundraising was an absolute necessity that all presidents must

prioritize. One respondent expanded upon this by stating:

> You have to also be comfortable asking people for money. Some people love that
> and other people don't find that so great. You have to be comfortable spending a
> lot of time around rich people and enjoy being in their presence. People enjoy it
> more than others. So there's some challenges there. It's not every president's
> favorite duty. It wasn't mine. But you do it. And you do the best you can. –
> Participant 12

While six respondents indicated that individuals who have reservations about

fundraising should not seek the presidency, seven respondents indicated positive personal

experiences with fundraising. While a necessary time commitment, respondents stated

that fundraising allowed the opportunity to form relationships with important people,

build excitement around one's institution, shape ideas about the future of one's

institution, and work with the legislature. One respondent discussed how the role of the

president in fundraising is often misconstrued as someone who solely asks for money.

The respondent asserted:

> First of all, most people have the wrong impression of what a president does in
> fundraising. What a president does in fundraising, if he's really doing it well, is
> not so much asking people for money. It's getting people excited about the
> university, wanting to be associated with it, and eager to support it and then he
> helps. – Participant 9

Similar themes arose when addressing budgetary matters. Three respondents indicated

that if presidential hopefuls did not want to engage in budgetary responsibilities, they

should not pursue the presidency. Respondents indicated that dealing with money was

one of the greatest barriers for potential candidates, particularly faculty, as it was alien to

their original desires to teach and perform research. Two respondents also expressed

reservations about candidates who did not want the responsibilities of managing athletic

departments and medical centers, as they are a significant part of the chief executive

officer's portfolio. One respondent in particular addressed the lack of appeal of

overseeing athletic departments and medical centers by saying:

> [T]he overarching overseeing medical centers and athletic departments, those are
> the two nightmares. There's a joke about that. You've probably heard this joke
> many times I guess at this point. But the two worst things that can ever happen to
> you as a university president is to have a medical center and a football team.
> – Participant 11

Four respondents expressed a lack of appeal in working with the legislature or

elected officials during their time in the chief executive officer position. This lack of

enthusiasm for working with the legislature originated from a variety of factors. In

particular, three respondents noted challenges in dealing with the legislature's differing

agendas from that of the university president's. Further, respondents noted the difficulties

of dealing with particular individuals within the legislature and/or local government, such

as the governor who may have different priorities from that of the university. Another

respondent cited the general political atmosphere that the legislature creates as one of the

more troublesome aspects the chief executive officer has to deal with. The respondent

stated the following:

> [T]hat's probably the part of my job I liked the least. Almost everything else I did
> I loved. When you go into the state legislature, that's not a merit-based
> environment; it's about politics. So you have to do and say things that might be a
> little uncomfortable. You've got to schmooze with people. You have to act like
> every legislature is like a god. You have to give some really strange ideas respect
> even though you may not agree with them. – Participant 7

> You have to give some really strange ideas respect even though you may not agree with them. You've got to go down there and be a diplomat, but it's very different from an academic forum where somebody gets up and says something crazy. Then you get up at the end of their talk and say, look, I think that's crazy and here's why. What about this? What about that? We advance in academe by challenging people's ideas and pushing them to the limit. You know operating with state government is a different set of rules and context than we're used to in academe. – Participant 7

Conversely, two respondents indicated positive experiences working with the state legislature or government officials. Respondents stated that the main objective in working with the legislature was educating legislators about the importance of the university, as there was often a lack of knowledge of the important role the university played in the state. One respondent expanded upon this by observing:

> Most government officials don't know squat about the university. In fact, it's a rare government official that actually knows something about the university. The good news is about it is they don't think they know much about the university either. So, in fact, very often they're interested to hear what you have to say because they realize they don't know anything. Even though they have interest, they still don't know how they work and, therefore, they kind of enjoy listening to you when you go see them in their office and if you're especially a person that's easy to talk to and shows interest in them. – Participant 11

Several respondents emphasized the heightened stress of dealing with elected officials during times of economic recession. As one respondent stated, "it can be very trying, especially in an era when state support for public universities is going down, and down, and down" (Participant 12).

Time. Time was an issue raised by several of the former presidents. Two respondents directly addressed the amount of time fundraising required. One respondent indicated that the amount of time required for fundraising was due, in part, to the

strategic investment in determining the fit between a donor's goals/desires and the needs

of the institution. The respondent stated:

> [F]undraising is very important, as I've already said. It's also very time
> consuming. It involves, again you have people working with you on this,
> identifying a good fit between a donor's goals and passions with what he or she
> really cares about and the goals of the institution, and then formulating a proposal
> that fits the donor's passion and the intuition's needs, and asking for money to
> achieve that, whatever that purpose is. It's a time consuming process. –
> Participant 12

When addressing the challenge of time required for meeting the demands of the

presidency, three respondents noted the amount of time strategic planning occupied. In

describing the amount of time required of the president to invest in strategic planning,

respondents also noted the danger of a poorly thought out strategic planning process. If

not reviewed annually or on a consistent basis, strategic plans can often fall flat and be a

"colossal dump of time at most institutions" (Participant 7). One respondent noted that

attaching strategic planning goals to the budgetary process boosted investment and follow

through when implementing the strategic plan. The respondent elaborated by stating:

> At *Williams-Sonoma University* our strategic planning process was overseen by
> our provost, who was very good at it, and we made those plans very specific. We
> reviewed them annually. We held people's feet to the fire. We tied them to the
> budgetary process so they actually made a difference and it worked here.
> – Participant 7

Another respondent indicated the challenges of assigning ownership to a strategic plan as

a result of the number of parties involved. Strategic plans implemented solely from the

top down lack ownership while bottom-up initiatives can be "too diffuse to have any

significant impact," (Participant 4) thus requiring a delicate balance between the two that

allows for input from "the larger community so that at the end of the day there is very

strong buy-in with the plan" (Participant 4). Respondents also noted that the challenge of

finding time to dedicate to strategic planning was further complicated by the competing

daily obligations of a university president (fundraising, budgeting, legislature, unforeseen

crises). One respondent put it this way:

> There are two things that go on simultaneously here and this is almost never
> mentioned. One side is a kind of current problem side, how to deal with current
> activities. What's going on, what's going on now, what do we do now, how do
> we handle the student unrest, how do we handle the fire that happened in the
> dormitory and how do we handle the problem with food poisoning in the
> residence halls and so on? How do we handle this and how do we handle that?
> These are constant issues that are popping up out of no place. At the same time
> you have a strategic vision of the long term strategy for the university and where
> it's going and how it's going to get there and what the steps are and what the big
> plays are going to be and so on. Both of those have to be going on in parallel at
> the same time. If you focus on the former part, which can be all consuming, then
> the strategic vision will vanish. When the day is done you will have done nothing
> because when the day is done after you leave your presidency the only thing that
> lasts is the strategic vision. That's the only thing that remains. But on the other
> hand, if you focus only on the strategic vision then you'll have chaos on the
> campus. It will be out of control and you will be sacked in no time…The trick
> here is that you have to play both of these games in parallel simultaneously and
> you don't really learn that in these development courses. – Participant 11

Magnitude. Responses were placed in the magnitude category of presidential

challenges if respondents addressed the increased magnitude or scope of presidential

responsibilities. Eleven respondents noted the demands of increased responsibility for

overseeing medical centers/hospitals and athletic departments. Eight respondents

indicated that governing medical centers/hospitals and athletic departments was

particularly difficult because of the high levels of risk, liability, and expenditures

associated with both areas. With medical centers and hospitals in particular, some

respondents noted a fear of their medical center's budget infiltrating the institution's

central budget. This fear arose from the fact that budgets for medical centers/hospitals

can run in the hundreds of millions for some institutions, if not more, and could easily

derail a fully-functioning institution should an unforeseen medical disaster or crisis occur.

Two respondents expanded upon this notion by stating:

> Your typical academic medical center has a budget in the hundreds of millions.
> And, so if things go wrong, they can go really wrong. I mean if your hospital is
> losing money, it could be losing enough money to seriously damage the rest of the
> institution. You're also dealing with an academic medical center; you're dealing
> with patient's lives. There's a tremendous amount of responsibility there, and
> your hospital or practitioners can have a great deal of liability, both monetary
> liability and the liability of embarrassments that the institution would share. -
> Participant 12

> They're both (medical centers and athletic departments) out of control basically.
> They're always going crazy. Medical center, you never know, medical centers
> have huge budgetary headaches constantly because the university medical centers
> have to take care of a lot of indigent patients. It's their responsibility, their role.
> They don't get paid for it. That is, the monies that are provided through various
> state and federal resources for these patients are always insufficient pay for them
> so therefore they run shortfalls in budgets. The amount of money going in and
> out of these medical centers is enormous. In fact, if the medical center is attached
> directly to a university it could bankrupt the entire university. – Subject 11

When dealing with athletic departments, three respondents noted that large

athletic departments/budgets represented a potential threat to the values of their

respective institution's overall mission. Respondents cited rising salaries of coaches,

increased public interest, swelling athletic budgets, and the use of championships as a

measurement tool for institutional success as growing challenges. One respondent

captured the dilemma facing university presidents when balancing priorities by

questioning whether it was morally right to pay a coach several million dollars when the

money could provide funds to academic departments in high need. The respondent stated:

> Presidents have a hot potato in their hands because on the one hand they are running this enterprise that in my estimation compromises institutional values, you know paying coaches five million dollars and more and spending money at a much greater rate on student athletes and the student body as a whole and making huge investment in academic facilities when some of the educational facilities are in great need of repair. – Participant 4

Presidents noted that an additional challenge to the chief executive officer

position was the lack of control they had at times over athletic departments. This feeling

of unease is the result of a combination of factors involving loyal alumni contributors, a

dedicated fan base, and the sentiment that "the university's operating budgets don't

normally pay for athletic departments" (Participant 11). In some cases, high revenue

sports such as football and basketball normally fund a sizable portion of each institution's

overall athletic budget. One respondent expanded upon this viewpoint by stating,

> So the president is put in a bit of a box. You have a budget situation for athletics, which depends on revenues; it depends on fans supporting the athletic teams. It depends on them raising gifts to support the athletic teams. If you start making changes that disrupt that relationship because people stop coming or stop giving or stop appreciating the base then you create a lot of headaches and also you may create a financial crisis for your athletic program at the same time. – Participant 11

In addition, as athletic programs continue to grow in size, reputation, and public

influence, the odds of negative consequences befalling an institution and its president

from a high-profile scandal are considerably increased, thus potentially shortening the

length of a president's tenure or resulting in immediate dismissal. Concerning the high-

profile nature of big-time athletics and its connection to the media, one respondent stated:

> Athletic departments have their own characteristics, too, especially the big time sports basketball, men's basketball especially, and football. They have a life of their own driven by alumni and driven by the media, television revenues, and so forth. Therefore they're very much out of control of the president. The president

> doesn't have a lot of control over them, as a matter of fact. Yes, they're in the university and, yes, there is theoretically a mechanism of control, but for all intents and purposes there is very little control that's realistic to exercise there.
> – Participant 11

> The other problem with athletic centers and athletic departments is the media just loves to find problems with them… So athletic departments are very susceptive to public display constantly and whatever happens in their recruitments and in the behaviors of players and students and stuff that would not necessarily be so bad for another student but for one of these athletes it turns out to be a big issue.
> – Participant 11

As a result of these issues, several respondents noted the growing challenge of having to dedicate a disproportionate amount of time and energy to athletic departments, even though resources allocated to the athletic department comprised a relatively small percentage of the overall budget. One respondent further articulated the issue of the disproportionate demands from athletics this way:

> At a place like *XYZ University*, intercollegiate athletics is only two percent of the overall institutional budget, but it's probably 10 percent of the president's time, and it's 50 percent of the school's daily visibility to the public. So any little issue that pops up in athletics has a huge possibility or maybe even a probability of causing great challenges for a president. If you're a university that has an academic health center and a major division one athletics program, you've got a big job, in addition to everything else you have. – Participant 7

Seven respondents noted the magnitude of the challenge of implementing strategic plans, stating that while many presidents and institutions engage in strategic planning, the extent to which these plans are understandable, implementable, and measurable varies greatly. Respondents noted that creating buy-in for a strategic plan as well as structuring a plan in a way that could be understood in order to have a lasting impact on an institution was particularly challenging. One respondent elaborated on the challenges of creating buy-in by stating:

> [T]he challenges of the strategic plan are to build institutional ownership of the strategic plan. I think it's a very delicate, difficult process that one has to go to. If it's sort of driven down from the top it won't have ownership. If it percolates entirely up from the bottom it will be too diffuse to have any significant impact. It will be all over the place, so there's kind of a bottom up, top down push/pull aspect to effect strategic planning in the institution. And so it's got to be…It can't be done in a rush. Again, it's an area where the presidents need to be very patient. They have to ensure that the strategic plan captures his or her passions and beliefs for the institution that if that there's a sharp focus to the strategic plan but that the process has to be one of give and take and back and forth with the larger community so that at the end of the day there is very strong buy-in with the plan. – Participant 4

One respondent noted that each new president brings a new vision and a new set of priorities, thus making a continuous strategic plan a daunting task, especially with shortened presidential tenures. Six respondents, however, stated that the primary role of the president is implementing a "strategic vision." This ability to form and implement a strategic vision is, as one respondent stated, "essential, absolutely essential" (Participant 3). Respondents also noted that in order to implement an effective strategic vision, presidents needed to create buy-in from high-level administrators (i.e., chief financial officer and chief development officer) and allocate/reallocate appropriate resources to areas that were tightly aligned with that vision. Without a concrete vision, institutions struggle to move forward. As one respondent stated, "A university can't move without strategic vision and that vision can only come from the president because there is nobody else in the organization that is positioned to lead the university as a whole. It's a very singular responsibility" (Participant 11). Respondents noted the challenges of setting visions for public, doctorate-granting research institutions due to the large number of constituents that can become involved in the strategic planning process.

In addition, respondents also noted a significant disconnect between a strategic plan's implementation and periodic assessment of the plan, emphasizing the significant lack of the latter. While several respondents noted that strategic planning has become a primary focus throughout higher education, the extent to which it is effective is up for debate. As noted above, presidents felt that with so many constituencies shaping public universities, the ways in which these grand strategic initiatives are followed through is inconsistent at best. Part of this variability stems from disconnects that can occur when a presidential transition (expected or unexpected) takes place mid-course of a strategic plan. Therefore, one downside of shortened presidential tenures is the challenge of maintaining long-term, multi-year plans for an institution. One respondent explained the disconnect in these terms:

> [Y]ou get serial strategic planning but the exercises are largely disconnected. So, it's a presidentially-driven strategic plan, the next president comes in (and) does a new strategic plan because they have to show that they're different than the last one, and what you miss in this process is sort of linking the best of the ideas over time and developing the continuity that you need to really build a great organization and ensure that it's done creatively for the future. So you tend to get into more of what people call tactical planning rather than longer term strategic planning. And, one of my favorite quotes of all time comes from the British author, John Galsworthy, who said if you don't think about the future you can't have one. And there's not enough of that kind of longer range thinking in the strategic planning that surrounds Higher Education today. They tend to be more short-term than I think they really ought to be. – Participant 5

Rather than implementing massive, multi-year strategic plans through the office of the president, one respondent suggested that delegating smaller scale goals envisioned by the president to school leaders within each institution (i.e. provosts, academic deans, etc.) would be a more effective strategy. One president offered this perspective:

> My take on strategic planning is that if one is looking at fundraising and budgeting, it has very limited value. It's the current fad. Everyone talks about it. But what interested me was the longer range planning to be sub-assigned to schools, to institutes, to centers, and the long-range planning was an attempt to raise the horizon and keep people focused on the longer distance with the implicit condition that we were trying to get people to do the discreet tasks one at a time. – Participant 8

Preparation. Several interview responses addressed the challenges of adjusting to the change in one's overall responsibilities in the presidency (i.e., transitioning from internal to external responsibilities). Five respondents indicated that managing a university budget was a formidable undertaking as a result of the lack of experience with budgets in previous roles. Three respondents addressed the issue of preparation when dealing with medical centers and athletic departments, two of whom stated that their lack of experience was problematic. In contrast, one of the three respondents stated that his or her prior experience in these areas (i.e., previous interdisciplinary work with medical centers and having Division I athletes in the family) made the demands of the chief executive officer more manageable.

Some respondents noted that while many presidents play a primary role in the strategic planning process, few have been fully immersed in the process of conceptualization, implementation, and assessment of a strategic plan, thus causing some strategic plans to fail. One respondent put it this way:

> I think this is probably one of the weakest areas in higher education. Most chief executive officers will do strategic planning, but they haven't really done it themselves and been responsible for starting the plan, consulting it, and grounding it in the governance system, mapping longer term priorities and then there's this great line in E.F. Schumacher's book, *Small is Beautiful*, the policy is in the implementation. So what happens in most strategic planning efforts in higher

education, implementation is not done well, and then you move on to the next
strategic plan in three to five years. – Participant 5

In terms of general preparation, one respondent noted the uniqueness of taking on the role

of the chief executive officer in that, regardless of one's prior experience, the role of the

president is far removed from any other traditional role within higher education, thus

creating an inevitable lack of preparation. The respondent stated:

> You can pretty much tell if you hire a department chairman of a large department
> if they're going to be a good dean, and you can pretty much tell if a provost is
> someone who is going to be a good provost if they've been a good dean. The odds
> are they will be a good provost because each position is a natural extension of the
> previous, but that just isn't the case in going from the provost position to the
> presidency, and it's a shock… I think as I say it's a shock for the person assuming
> for the first time a presidency when they come up through the academic ranks and
> how they will adjust and handle that public role is just so hard to gauge when
> they've come up through the traditional academic route. So I think that's a very
> challenging dynamic in the traditional succession to the presidency.
> – Participant 4

Benefits of Effective Upper Management Teams

While respondents spoke at length about the challenges of the presidency, eight

respondents noted that these challenges were more manageable if the president had an

effective upper management team at his or her disposal to take the lead on certain issues.

Two respondents noted that the fundraising process as a whole and learning the skills to

become a good fundraiser became manageable with assistance from "experienced

professionals" (i.e., a seasoned financial officer). One respondent expanded upon this

sentiment by asserting:

> You shouldn't move into the presidency if you are reluctant…I think one has to
> be willing to be schooled and to be educated and fortunately have an
> infrastructure of experienced professionals who can help the president learn how
> to be an effective fundraiser. – Participant 4

Four respondents noted that addressing the university budget was a more feasible task with the assistance of a skilled chief financial officer. A majority of respondents who discussed their role with a budgetary team noted that they did not handle the day-to-day budgetary transactions of the university but focused their efforts on overall priorities and allocations. However, respondents noted that delegating some responsibility for the budget by no means left presidents exempt from budgetary decisions. Several respondents stated that while presidents do not have to calculate the exact figures for a university budget, they must have a strong understanding of the budget and be able to discern what they can and cannot accomplish within their current financial constraints. Past presidents did note that having previous budgetary experience, however slight, as well as quantitative awareness, was always viewed as positive when it came to assessing potential presidential candidates. One respondent developed this point by stating:

> Enough hands-on experience, even if in…lesser complexity, in running budgets themselves, so that the president is able to discern when the kind of work professional staff is doing is congruent with what the president believes the institution should be doing, I think is important. – Participants 3

A number of respondents stated that delegation of budgetary responsibilities was only successful when a highly accomplished, experienced budget manager was at the helm. Owing to the great importance of fiscal responsibility, poor financial management could lead to a quick exit for university presidents. Another important issue that past presidents addressed was that having an effective budget manager was only half of the equation; the other half required a symbiotic relationship between the president and the budget manager, a strong balance of understanding both the university's mission and the way in

which funds could be used to accomplish that goal. These two respondents spoke to the

importance of delegation:

> So, therefore, it was important for me to have, as a working partner, a first rate
> chief financial officer who was indeed an accountant/finance type, but could also
> understand what it was that I wanted to do and was trying to do. – Participant 9

> Budgeting that's not a big problem for the president. You've got budget officers
> and you have professionals who do this. So you have to have some judgment in
> terms of what you're going to invest in and so forth. But that's the job actually.
> It's a privilege to have that job frankly because that is what allows you to make
> change. – Participant 11

In addition, five respondents noted that the demands of overseeing medical

centers and athletic departments were also reduced with the help of skilled deans and

athletic directors. In discussing the need for skilled administrators to manage medical

centers, one respondent made reference to the need for an expert staff in the private

sector. The respondent stated:

> You don't have to be the expert yourself. You don't have to know how to perform
> heart surgery, but like most things you can't be expert on everything. That's why
> your staff, and the deans, and all those are so important to you, but that's the same
> as it would be in the private sector. If you're president of General Motors, you're
> probably not the one who decided whether or not to have the recall, but you're
> responsible in the end. So it's very essential to have good people and medical
> centers largely because so much money flows through. – Participant 9

Privilege of Setting Institutional Vision

Several respondents noted that the presidency is also a privileged position where

one is able to bring about significant change across an academic community. A

significant contributor to enacting change throughout higher education institutions is a

president's ability to establish a vision for the future. As one respondent in particular

noted, establishing an effective vision is a challenging and time-consuming endeavor and

those who lack interest in promoting a vision are ill suited for the presidency. That

respondent explained:

> What the president brings to the institution is the vision. If you've got no vision
> you've got no progress. It's as simple as that. No vision no progress game over.
> So when presidents are hesitant to take jobs they may be reluctant in terms of the
> work load because it is a lot of work, no doubt about that. It occupies all your
> time. It's totally engrossing and some people are not for it, they're not ready for
> that. They want a job. They want to go home at 6:00 and so on and they want to
> just put everything aside during the day. You can't do that if you're a president
> because it's a singular position. It's a very, very privileged position. Everybody
> in the country would love to have a job where you can actually do something and
> almost nobody ever gets a job where you can actually do something. It's a very
> rare circumstance. A university president is one of those jobs, especially at the
> universities you're talking about. So it's a very privileged opportunity. Nobody
> should take one of those jobs and nobody should be offered the job if they're
> worried about the kind of details you're talking about. They shouldn't. Forget it.
> They're not going to do the job. They want to hire somebody with vision and
> somebody who wants to execute a vision and the vision has to be important to the
> university in its current stage. – Participant 11

Additional Presidential Challenges

 Loneliness of the Presidency. Another emerging challenge that three respondents

addressed was the loneliness of the chief executive officer position. Respondents

mentioned the burden of responsibilities, difficult decision-making, and constant

criticism as trying aspects of the presidency. In addition to the difficult decisions that

presidents must make on a routine basis, respondents noted the strain of receiving

criticism for aspects of the University over which they had no control. Three respondents

noted the problem of dealing with increased social media attention as the president,

particularly when it focused on high-profile areas such as Division I athletic programs,

rather than on academics. One respondent noted, "If someone screws up in the English

Department, usually nobody else cares. But if somebody screws up in the Athletics'

Department, everybody will care, and it will be in the newspapers" (Participant 12).

Another respondent offered some advice on dealing with criticism:

> A president has to develop super thick skin…No matter what they do, presidents will get criticized and there will be letters to the editor and people will be offended by things that presidents had no control over and the president will suddenly be finger pointed because some students got inebriated and trashed a dormitory. Well, how is the president going to control that? But certainly the president being the face of the institution is on the hot seat for that. So having a very thick skin and being able to get publicly criticized and move on and learn from it, if need be, but move on and not let the slings and arrows get you down I think is another challenge for presidents. – Participant 4

> And then if you're really serious about moving your institution forward, making some decisions that you think will make it better, you're constantly in conflict with people who have invested interest to keep it the same. And in some cases, you're making decisions that affect people in the local communities. – Participant 4

Lack of Resources. Three respondents indicated that insufficient funds were an obstacle that many presidents faced. This lack of resources took the form of budget cuts, lack of donors, and insufficient state support.

Dealing with the legislature. Five respondents also noted challenges of working with the legislature and various elected officials on competing priorities. One respondent stated that "There are always challenges interacting with legislative people because they're always seeking, appropriately some would say, inappropriate others would say, they're always seeking to be reelected and to move up. It's a house of cards" (Participant 2). Another respondent noted the challenges of building legislative support while remaining true to his or her institution's values. The respondent stated, "The challenges are to build an appropriate level of support without compromising the values of the

institutions, and I think a president obviously can never be seen as partisan when it comes

to politics. They must remain politically neutral" (Participant 4).

Strategic planning. Seven respondents noted the challenges of participating in or

implementing a long-term strategic plan. Respondents noted the challenge of creating

buy-in for the strategic plan as well as structuring the plan in a way that could be

understood in order to have a lasting impact on the institution. One respondent stated:

> [T]he challenges of the strategic plan are to build institutional ownership of the
> strategic plan. I think it's a very delicate, difficult process that one has to go to.
> If it's sort of driven down from the top it won't have ownership. If it percolates
> entirely up from the bottom it will be too diffuse to have any significant impact.
> It will be all over the place, so there's kind of a bottom up, top down push/pull
> aspect to effect strategic planning in the institution. And so it's got to be…It can't
> be done in a rush. Again, it's an area where the presidents need to be very patient.
> They have to ensure that the strategic plan captures his or her passions and beliefs
> for the institution that if that there's a sharp focus to the strategic plan but that the
> process has to be one of give and take and back and forth with the larger
> community so that at the end of the day there is very strong buy-in with the plan.
> – Participant 4

While some respondents acknowledged the complexities of strategic planning but

ultimately viewed it as a beneficial and necessary process, two respondents questioned

the functionality of strategic planning in higher education, describing it as "the current

fad" (Participant 8) and that the methods for creating and implementing a strategic plan

were "largely disconnected" (Participant 5). One respondent noted that with each new

president comes a new vision and a new set of priorities, thus making a continuous

strategic plan a daunting task, especially with shortened presidential tenures. However,

six respondents stated that the primary role of the president is implementing a "strategic

vision." This ability to form and implement a strategic vision was, as one respondent

stated, "essential, absolutely essential" (Participant 3). Respondents also noted that in order to implement an effective strategic vision, presidents needed to create buy-in from high-level administrators (i.e., chief financial officer and chief development officer) and allocate/reallocate appropriate resources to areas that were tightly aligned with that vision. Without a concrete vision, institutions struggle to move forward. As one respondent stated, "A university can't move without strategic vision and that vision can only come from the president because there is nobody else in the organization that is positioned to lead the university as a whole. It's a very singular responsibility" (Participant 11).

Age of the President

Former presidents were also asked about whether or not they viewed the increasing age of university presidents as a concern, given the significant number of presidential retirements looming in the future. They were also asked whether or not the next generation of higher education administrators was adequately prepared to take on the challenges of the chief executive office. The researcher asked respondents to discuss the key facets of what best prepares presidential candidates for the demands of the presidency, and to address the need for professional development opportunities as well as the necessary academic and administrative skills required to be a successful leader of higher education institutions.

No Need for Expedition. Three respondents directly stated that professional development opportunities were not necessary and that the traditional presidency track was a "good path" to reaching the chief executive officer position. Three other

respondents believed that the increasing age of university presidents was not necessarily

something to be alarmed about; instead, they felt that more focus should be placed on

accumulating additional experience, which would help administrators be prepared better

for addressing the demands of the presidency. One respondent spoke to creating a balance

of preparation and experience in these terms:

> If someone takes a long time to accumulate the experience that fits them to be a
> president, and by the time they have it all they decide they don't want to do it,
> well what's wrong with that? So somebody else will be the President. I don't see
> that as a real big problem, to tell you the truth. If you look at lots of people, if you
> look at the … the average age may be 62, but there are a lot of Presidents
> appointed in their 40's. I was. And, there are plenty of people who are ready by
> their 40's to be President. And happily now, there are lots of women as well as
> men. Women have been on the academic ladder for a couple of decades now, and
> there are plenty of women Deans and women Provosts... I don't think it's a very
> important problem. - Participant 12

Respondents who indicated less concern for the advancing age of chief executive officers

noted the benefits of additional time for individuals to gain experience (i.e., research,

deanship, provost, etc.) and develop the necessary skills required to be a successful

president. One respondent advanced the idea that additional time prior to taking on the

responsibilities of the president was beneficial by stating, "There is a huge benefit to the

experience one gets by spending time in the vineyards and getting to know how the

enterprise works and operates" (Participant 4). Another respondent suggested that a

potential explanation for the increasing age presidents was that an increasing number of

chief executive officers are being selected after having previously served as the president

of an academic institution. While some respondents who indicated less concern about the

age of presidents focused primarily on the benefits of increased time to gain additional

experience, one respondent addressed the age of presidents from a university perspective,

stating that the increasing age of the presidency came about because universities and

search committees sought to minimize risk and liability to their own institutions by hiring

seasoned professionals rather than hiring younger candidates. The respondent explained:

> The search committees are less willing to take risks because the money is so big there, so much federal financing. These are big operations now that rely upon continuous funding from government, from individuals, from corporations. They're less willing to ... and they're politically sensitive. You know one wrong word you've got yourself a political problem you can't get out of. So they put greater and greater emphasis on experience. So they want people with more experience. Because you know the people that became presidents when they were 60, it's not as if it wasn't until 55 that they became deans in general. So I think there's been this emphasis on experience as a way of minimizing risks, whereas it used to be, well, gee, this person is a real [up-and] comer. He's a superstar. If we hire him we can have a long run and continuity and the like. Now they're less willing to take that risk. It's not that there aren't young people that have the kind of experience that young people used to have before; it's just that they'd rather have somebody who's had broader experience and has proven themselves over a longer period rather than take the risk that it might not work. – Participant 9

Expediting the Path to the Presidency. Nine respondents indicated that higher

education professional development programs had some form of positive impact on

presidents and presidential hopefuls. Respondents who viewed professional development

programs as worthwhile noted the benefits of mentorship and networking opportunities as

well as positives that came from gaining additional experience and learning about fields

outside of one's immediate realm of higher education expertise. While several

respondents noted that programs designed specifically for newly selected college

presidents (i.e., Harvard, ACE) were beneficial overall, four respondents emphasized the

importance of professional development programs designed for junior to high-level

administrators to encourage a more streamlined succession process. One respondent

discussed the benefits of professional development programs such as those in the CIC

(Council of Independent Colleges) and various fellowships that target individuals in a

wide range of higher education positions with varying levels of experience in these terms:

> The CIC has a leadership development program, and it's available to faculty and Department Chairs, and Center Directors and it's very, very, effective. One of the things that really shaped my skillset and experience was a three-year Kellogg Fellowship, leadership fellowship, as part of their national program. So I think there are a number of these opportunities where you can gain experience or you can gain sort of a deeper understanding of what's involved in the job. And I always encourage young people who are interested in some aspect of leadership in Higher Education to avail themselves of these opportunities. I think they broaden your experience. They give you a chance to interact with people from other universities and learn about best practices outside your own environment.
> – Participant 5

While most respondents (nine) noted that professional development programs for

current presidents were beneficial because they allowed for additional mentorship and

networking opportunities, these programs were not considered the only option for

preparing university presidents for the challenges of the chief executive office. Nor were

these programs seen as the solution to poor succession planning practices throughout

higher education. Rather, they were seen as most effective for individuals who had

already attained the presidency[5]. In addition, while encouraging recently selected

presidents to partake in professional development programs, some respondents

emphasized the importance of professional development programs designed for mid to

high-level administrators that provide advanced training in valuable areas for those

---

[5] The following professional development programs for new and tenured presidents were mentioned: Harvard Seminar for New Presidents, Harvard Seminar for Experienced Presidents, ACE Institute for New Presidents, ACE Presidential Roundtables, The Council of Independent Colleges Presidents Institute.

interested in the upper echelons of higher education administration[6]. Four respondents indicated that universities and institutions of higher education needed to increase their internal professional development practices to create more qualified candidates for the presidency. While some of these respondents noted the benefits of existing professional development programs, others placed greater emphasize on institutional "experiential" efforts (i.e., internal grooming). The "experiential" efforts that respondents discussed consisted of young professionals and/or possible presidential candidates taking on various external assignments, giving speeches, serving on boards, dealing with various constituency groups, and fundraising.

Academic vs. **Administrative Credentialing.** Respondents were asked to identify which skill sets (i.e., academic over administrative, administrative over academic, or both) took precedence when evaluating potential chief executive officers. Seven respondents stated that a combination of both academic and administrative skills was required to successfully run a higher education institution successfully. Ten respondents, however, stated that having academic credibility and experience was a preliminary requirement in order to reach higher ranks within their institutions and that administrative experience could be gained along the way. Several respondents noted that establishing one's academic credibility by attaining your Ph.D., becoming a full professor, and a member of a national academy (i.e., National Academy of Sciences or

---

[6] The professional development programs for mid to high-level administrators that were mentioned included the Institute for Management and Leadership in Higher Education|MLE, CIC Senior Leadership Academy, CIC Executive Leadership Academy, and ACE Advancing to the Presidency.

Engineering) were common requirements before being considered for higher-level

academic and administrative positions. One respondent offered more detail on these

academic requirements by explaining:

> They have to have academic qualifications, which allow them to be highly
> credible nationally and internationally. For example, you may want somebody
> who is a member of the National Academy of Sciences or Engineering. They
> may want somebody who can sit around the table with people in Dartmouth and
> talk about what their needs are who has enough contacts that they can call people
> at high-level positions in industry and so forth. So you're talking about people
> who have been around a bit and have a broadened experience well beyond the
> university nationally and even internationally and maybe have lived abroad in two
> or three different countries and so forth. – Participant 11

Two respondents noted the time required to attain this level of academic

credibility (i.e., Ph.D., full professor, national/international recognition) as a potential

challenge for presidential hopefuls, with academic credibility being achieved by middle

age (i.e., 40-50) depending upon when a candidate was able to complete his or her Ph.D.

Those respondents who noted the combination of both academic and administrative skill

sets as a requirement to reach the chief executive officer position often cited academic

credentialing as the initial step in increasing their leadership potential, with

administrative credentialing coming after but serving as an equally important process to

attain the skills required to run a higher education institution. Respondents noted that

traditional crossroads of academic and administrative credentialing occurred at the

department chair position and continued on throughout the administrative ranks (i.e.,

Academic Dean, Provost, Vice President). One respondent observed that much of

administrative credentialing involves the accumulation of functional skills such as

strategic planning, budgeting, fundraising, and conflict resolution, which can be attained

while simultaneously remaining active in academic positions (i.e., department chair,

dean, provost). Another respondent marked the increased hiring of nontraditional

presidents (i.e., mostly administrative or political figures outside of higher education) as

evidence of the gradual shift in the role of the president from largely an academic to that

of multi-purpose administrator, further stressing the importance of administrative

credentialing when evaluating a potential chief executive officer (ACE, 2007, 2012;

Selingo, 2013). The respondent elaborated on this sentiment by observing, "my hunch is

that whereas 20 years ago it was 80/20, 80 percent the academic and 20 percent the

experiential [(i.e. administrative)], it's got to be at least 50/50 now and it's probably

moving on more to 30/70, the experiential and the true elegance of an ability to lead and

to manage a complex organization" (Participant 3). Another respondent noted that while

achieving high academic credibility was a positive, the potential negative consequences

of selecting an accomplished academic for a high level office within higher education

with little administrative experience were high. He/she stated:

> On the other hand, someone who has done that very well and has been a very
> good scientist, has done outstanding research, has gotten funding and has been
> viewed as an outstanding teacher without any administrative background that type
> of person can end up in a terrible mess and they just don't quite have the talent or
> ability to do what needs to be done and you sort of find that out when a person is
> taking on the role of a deanship or provost. – Participant 1

Overall Conclusions

Each respondent articulated unique challenges that presidential hopefuls face on

the path to the chief executive office. These challenges were driven mostly by each

respondent's own personal experiences in previous roles in and outside of higher

education or while serving as president. An analysis of the study sample's path to and

success (or lack there of) in the presidency revealed common themes about the status of

higher education and institutional preparation for future leadership transitions, which are

discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Of the 12 former presidents interviewed, mixed opinions arose as to the need for adjustment of current succession processes (i.e. presidential searches, professional development, internal grooming) within higher education and to the professional pathways that traditionally lead to the most prepared university presidents. Additionally, responses differed regarding the perceived challenges presidents face as they pertain to fundraising, budgeting, managing athletic departments and medical centers, strategic planning, and working with the legislature.

What follows are detailed themes that arose from the interview findings. These themes were organized under the primary research question that guided the study (listed below) and were further explored through the interview questions addressing the topics of succession planning and the challenges of presidential responsibilities (Interview Questions- Appendix B).

> ***What perceptions do past presidents of public, doctoral-granting research institutions identify as key challenges in the pathway to becoming a president?***

Pathway to the Presidency

The path to the presidency of a public, doctorate-granting research institution is not a uniform one. Most presidents attained the chief executive office after many years in academia while others, albeit a smaller percentage, assumed the chief executive office after professional careers outside of higher education. This non-academic approach has

been a relatively new phenomenon over the past few decades but is slowly gaining

traction. The traditional track to the presidency consisted of long academic tenures with

gradual assumption of administrative responsibilities (i.e. full faculty, department chair,

association dean, academic dean, provost). For the purpose of this study, the goal of

examining the path to the presidency was to determine if new professional pathways

needed to be forged in order to ensure strong future leadership in higher education, and to

that end, to provide recommendations for changes in practice.

In assessing the responses of past presidents, it seems that there are certain

traditional roles within higher education that continue to provide adequate preparatory

experience for the presidency. Primary among these roles is the academic dean position

that, in a sense, serves as a "miniature presidency." The academic dean position provides

opportunities for internal and external management and oversight of staff, faculty,

research, curriculum development, budget management, and fundraising. Outside of the

academic dean position, however, there are few traditional roles that provide the

necessary external responsibilities needed to perform at the presidential level. While

service on boards and committees (either academic or corporate) are beneficial roles

because they provide individuals with a larger knowledge base of areas outside of their

primary responsibilities, they are not sufficient for fully preparing someone for the

demands of the presidency. This prompts the question of whether or not there are

traditional academic roles outside of the academic dean position that can adequately

prepare presidential hopefuls for the demands of chief executive office. After assessing

the responses of past presidents, it appears that there are few, if any, traditional roles

outside of the academic dean position, that provide the appropriate combination of internal and external responsibilities needed to take on the presidency. Despite these findings, however, institutions still continue to hire provosts, whose primary responsibilities focus on the internal aspects of the institution. While provosts who have previously served as academic deans may have a strong combination of internal and external responsibilities, those interviewed for this research were divided on the question of whether the provost position on its own is now sufficient preparation for the presidency.

From an organizational perspective, one of the primary challenges in becoming an effective chief executive officer at a public, doctorate-granting research institution is the length of time that is required to climb the academic and administrative ranks to reach positions that are in contention for the presidency (i.e. provost, academic dean). In addition, the internally focused environment of academia itself creates a natural gap between the skills valued in academia (i.e. research, academic subject knowledge, publications) and those needed to run a public, doctorate-granting research institution (i.e., fundraising, budget management, strategic planning, etc.). This inward looking culture directly contrasts with the changing demands on the office of the presidency, which has continued to become more externally driven over time. This heightened focus on external responsibilities is particularly emphasized during times of economic recession. Given that fundraising and budget management are staple tasks of the contemporary university presidency, the fact that public institutions have few venues for developing one's skill sets in these areas throughout higher education is concerning. This

sentiment is further emphasized by the perceived lack of internal grooming that exists throughout public institutions, as noted by several past presidents in this study. Rather than identifying future leaders within higher education institutions who may possess interest or willingness in attaining more external skill sets and providing them appropriate training, public, doctorate-granting research institutions still tend to hire external candidates as presidential vacancies arise. This is not to say that external candidates have not developed the necessary skills to succeed in prior institutional roles, rather, some interviewed for this research expressed the opinion that there was additional value in developing and promoting from within. There has been a slight increase in the rate of hiring college presidents from within the institution over the past decade. In 2005, 19 percent of college presidents were hired from within, while, by 2013, 25 percent of college presidents were hired from within (Selingo, 2013). The amount of experience in vital areas such as fundraising and budget management provided to faculty and others within an institution prior to reaching senior administrative positions (i.e. academic dean, provost, president) appears to be inconsistent.

From a cultural perspective, barriers to the presidency may include the negative perception of the presidency itself. In conversations with study participants, several mentioned that part of the lack of appeal for the presidency comes from the negative responses one can receive from fellow academics if one expresses an interest in the position. Further, academics may also express a lack of interest in the position due to slim odds of reaching the presidency at an institution that employs thousands of faculty and staff and only one chief executive officer. The probability of being selected for the

presidency, therefore, is still remote, regardless of an individual's interest in pursuing the role. Consequently, while there certainly may be academics in higher education who are not interested in the presidency due to the inherent differences in job responsibilities and the uphill nature of attaining the presidency itself, there may be a greater number of individuals interested in the role than current literature contends.

That said, the current path to the presidency through academia still appears to be long and one-dimensional. Outside of the academic dean position, there currently do not appear to be positions within academia that effectively bridge the gap between traditional academic responsibilities and the external administrative duties (i.e. fundraising, budget management, strategic planning, community relations, etc.) of the presidency at public, doctorate-granting research institutions. This observation runs counter to recent survey data from *The Chronicle of Higher Education* whereby presidents at four-year institutions (Selingo, 2013) identified the provost position as one that provided some of the highest levels of preparation for the demands of the presidency (53 percent of presidents who previously served as a provost or chief academic officer stated they felt "extremely well prepared" for the presidency). Given the mixed reviews of the provost position provided by this study's participants and the inherent differences between the responsibilities of presidents and provosts at public, doctorate-granting research institutions, it would be unwise to conclude that the provost position is the only path when preparing for the external duties of the chief executive officer.

Given that there are few positions within academia that provide adequate preparation for the presidency, the question must be asked as to whether or not the

traditional leadership progression structure throughout academia ensures institutional

success when it comes to producing qualified leaders of public, doctorate-granting

research institutions. An assessment of the responses of past presidents and of previous

literature indicates that the traditional route to the presidency can create qualified leaders

if that path includes experience with external responsibilities through the position of

academic provost. While more academic deans are being hired directly to the presidency

than in the past, this trend is still in its infancy with only one in 10 academic deans being

selected as presidents of four-year institutions as of 2013 (Selingo, 2013).

Age of the President

    While past presidents in this study did not appear to find the increasing age of

public, doctorate-granting research institution presidents to be an issue, the increasingly

complex nature of higher education institutions and the growing competition for securing

financial resources has become a time-consuming job that requires presidents to travel

constantly, collaborate and communicate with various university and non-university

constituencies, balance multiple tasks simultaneously, and maintain a keen understanding

of current academic and economic trends, all the while withstanding criticism of many

for the decisions they make. Given the high demands facing university presidents,

combined with the paucity of external preparation (i.e. fundraising, budget management,

working with legislature) the traditional academic track currently provides, it is unlikely

that the majority of individuals who have reached the presidency later in their careers

would be as willing and able to acclimate to the high stakes environment of the chief

executive office, let alone develop new external skill sets, as effectively as would some younger individuals.

When asked about possible methods for expediting the garnering of skills needed to be a successful university president, nine participants indicated positive benefits that could be gained from specific professional development for new or tenured presidents as well as mid-level to high-level administrators. While these programs may be beneficial in that they provide additional opportunities for networking, collaboration, and support, they are not the solution, as study participants indicated, for filling the gap between the skills gained through the traditional academic ladder and the responsibilities required to run a public, doctorate-granting research institution.

The Appeal of the Presidency

The appeal of the presidency and its various responsibilities has been addressed from different perspectives. One is the apparent lack of interest in the presidency due to the inherent differences between academic responsibilities and those of the chief executive officer as described above. Study participants directly acknowledged this lack of interest. While members of academia expressing reluctance in pursuing the presidency may be concerning in some aspects, there are still many who apply for chief executive office across the country on a regular basis with the number of applicants far exceeding the number of vacancies. Part of this reluctance may also be the result of a general misunderstanding of what the president actually does.

Understanding Presidential Responsibilities

Financial stability is essential to institutional success, thus placing fundraising at the forefront of the president's responsibilities. This sentiment is consistent with recent national surveys and research (ACE 2012, Thompson, 2012, Skinner, 2010) that show presidents dedicating increasing amounts of time to fundraising because of the growing imperative to generate resources for higher education institutions, particularly in times of economic recession. The role that the president plays in fundraising, however, is far different from that of a member of a university's development office. The president is typically involved at the highest levels of fundraising initiatives, forming strong relationships with high priority donors, creating buy-in for the mission and the vision of his or her institution, establishing connections between the needs of the university and the desires of the donor, and making formal requests for large donations from said donors. Identifying donors, making initial contacts to said donors, and orchestrating annual fundraising initiatives are not duties typically handled by the president. These responsibilities more often fall to a team of development officers or high-ranking financial administrators under the chief executive officer. While some study participants acknowledged their initial struggles with requesting large donations from potential donors out of fear of rejection, participants stated that this was an inevitable part of being a president. Those interviewed also noted that the longer they participated in fundraising, the more comfortable and effective they became at requesting funds and the more enjoyable they found fundraising to be.

While recruiting and collecting funds for one's institution is a primary responsibility of university presidents, the management and use of funds garners equal attention when addressing the challenges of the presidency. Like fundraising, skillful budget management is imperative. Presidents who misuse or incorrectly allocate funds in a manner that is disconnected with their respective institutions' mission are likely to experience short-lived tenures. The lack of appetite for budget management, as some respondents noted, was due in part to the inherent difference in professional responsibilities between scholars and administrators. Few scholars with little previous administrative responsibilities have expressed the need or desire to engage in budget management (Thompson, 2012), yet for those who do, the challenges of budget management are inherent in the time required to dedicate to it, the growing complexity and size of public university budgets, and the necessary preparation and training required to manage large-scale budgets effectively. As noted before, generally decreasing state appropriations (SHEEO, 2014) have caused presidents and universities to be more diligent about budget management. This has caused presidents to dedicate more time and energy towards budgetary and finance related endeavors.

As with perceptions of fundraising, the president's role in budget management may be misunderstood by potential chief executive officers. While it is important for a president to have a strong understanding of his or her institution's financial standing, daily budgetary responsibilities typically fall to a chief financial officer or a team of skilled budgetary officials. It should be noted that presidents delegating budgetary and financial responsibilities to high-ranking administrators does not mean presidents abstain

from these responsibilities. As noted by a recent study of 400 college presidents performed by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Selingo, 2013), 51 percent of college presidents allocate time daily to matters related to budget and finance. While *The Chronicle of Higher Education* study did not detail how much time these presidents dedicated each day to budgeting and finance or what specific budgetary or financial matters they addressed, it did point to the importance of prioritizing these items, regardless of the president's level of direct involvement.

The challenge of performing well in the areas of fundraising and budget management stem from the lack of opportunities to gain experience in these areas prior to taking on the role of the presidency. While the provost position does provide experience in budget management, there are few positions outside of the academic dean position that offer exposure to fundraising and budget management. While academic deans and provosts may gain access to fundraising and budget management opportunities at later stages in their careers, even then there is a significant shift in the time required to secure and manage sufficient resources as a university president. Given the vital role that presidents play in securing the financial well-being of public, doctorate-granting research institutions, the fact that there are few fundraising or budget-management training opportunities available within higher education prior to reaching the presidency presents a "learn as you go" environment upon reaching chief executive office. This situation is troubling given that the overall sustainability of public institutions lies in the ability of the president to attain sufficient funds and use them appropriately so the institution can achieve its mission.

Magnitude of the Presidency

Serving as the leader of a public, doctorate-granting research institution is no simple task. The modern day public university is a highly complex and expansive enterprise employing thousands of academic and non-academic staff, educating thousands of students, and comprising multi-million (in some cases billion) dollar endowments. Further, the diversity of initiatives throughout the various academic and non-academic departments at these universities makes oversight exceptionally challenging, even for the most experienced of higher education administrators. Therefore, regardless of the amount of internal or external training (or lack thereof) that an individual attains over his or her professional career, there may always be some level of unpreparedness in ascending to the presidency due to its unique position within higher education and the growing magnitude and complexity of public, doctorate-granting research institutions in general. For example, a majority of study participants believed that the challenges of overseeing medical centers and athletic departments stemmed from the sheer size and complexity of those divisions. Delving deeper, past presidents expressed grave concern about overseeing medical centers and athletic departments through three lenses: cost, liability, and mission. Many university medical centers exhaust a significant portion of an institution's annual budget[7] and could easily derail a fully functioning institution should an unforeseen medical disaster or crisis occur. While the financial scale of athletic departments pales in comparison to the budgets of medical

---

[7] The University of Virginia's Medical Center was allotted $1.3 billion of the $2.8 billion total operating budget for 2014-2015.

centers, the rapid expansion and growing expenditures on big-time athletics have attracted much attention on university athletic programs in recent history (Clotfelter, 2011). Poorly functioning athletic programs can have significant detrimental effects on higher education institutions. Moreover, respondents noted that because of the high profile stature that big-time sports such as DI football and basketball have throughout the general populous, the ability of a president to manage this enterprise effectively and align it with goals of the institution has become almost impossible.

Another area within higher education that is challenging due to its size and complexity is strategic planning. Primary among the challenges of strategic planning is creating support throughout the institution and all of its respective sectors (Amey, 2006). With each department and/or sector of an institution having its own respective goals and initiatives, the ability to reign in important key players and constituents can be a time consuming process. While setting long-term goals and priorities of the institution can be viewed as a positive, the significant amount of time required to set these initiatives in motion and bring them to fruition presents a sizeable challenge that, as some respondents noted, is not always able to be met. Compounding this challenge are the competing daily obligations of the institution that the president must attend to (i.e., fundraising, budgeting, legislature, unforeseen crisis). The ability to balance current problems and future priorities is no easy task but a highly needed skill for a president to remain in office and/or for a potential presidential candidate to attain office.

Due to the growing size and complexity of public, doctorate-granting research institutions, a certain level of unpreparedness can be expected when assuming the role of chief executive officer.

The President as Delegator

Given the massive scale of some departments that fall under the umbrella of higher education such as medical centers, athletic departments, strategic planning initiatives, and fundraising/budget management, should governing boards realistically expect one individual to manage such a large scale enterprise as a public, doctorate-granting research institution? In reality, the president is only one individual, a very important individual, but an individual nonetheless. Therefore, it is an unreasonable assumption that the chief executive officer can be the expert dictator in every field and facet of higher education. The role of the president, in more realistic terms, is a vision setter, communicator, and delegator. The president of a public, doctorate-granting, research institution is responsible for understanding the environment of higher education and shifting the priorities and initiatives of his or her institution, when needed, in order for his or her institution to accomplish its mission most effectively. This responsibility is accomplished by generating and allocating funds to various departments within the institution and making key decisions as to how they should function. The way the president determines these priorities and initiatives and how he or she allocates funds is through consultation with key administrators who directly oversee certain aspects of the institution (i.e. provost, chief financial officer, athletic director, medical school dean).

For example, while the president needs to be aware of his or her institution's financial standing, a president can and should allocate daily budgetary projections to a skilled chief financial officer. In a similar vein, a president with little to no background in running a medical center would be ill advised to make pertinent decisions on how a hospital should be run. Instead, the president should consult the chief of medicine and/or the dean of the medical school about the most appropriate course of action for a given situation and then make an informed decision. Once these decisions are made, the implementation and daily management of each decision is delegated to one of the aforementioned senior administrators. Therefore, the contemporary presidency calls for an experienced administrator who is exceptionally skilled at staff oversight, communication, and informed decision-making. With a highly functioning administrative team at his or her disposal, presidents of public, doctorate-granting research institutions can accomplish a great deal more than on their own. While the ideal method and frequency with which presidents interact and delegate may be impossible to quantify due to the inherent differences in work styles and the dynamics of each institution, failure to establish efficient lines of communication and task management will likely lead to short-lived presidential tenures and poorly functioning institutions.

Recommendations for Practice

With the average age of college and university presidents increasing over time, levels of preparedness for the demands of the presidency slowly decreasing and a growing number of professional retirements expected in the future, an examination of succession tracks and preparatory steps on the road to the presidency through the

perspectives of past presidents of public, doctorate-granting research institutions was

necessary to evaluate the extent to which our institutions are effectively selecting the next

generation of presidents and preparing them for the growing demands of the presidency.

As public universities continue to grow in areas such as academic instruction, research,

strategic planning, big-time athletics, and medical advancement, the increasing demand

for external resources and transformational leadership will likely continue. Therefore,

ongoing and formal institutional initiatives to identify emerging demands on the

presidency, and the appropriate training to meet those demands are necessary. The

findings of this study brought forth various recommendations for practice that are

presented in this section.

Pursuit of External Experience. A university president's primary responsibility

is to fundraise effectively and manage resources for his or her institution. In order to

accrue consistent funds for their institutions, presidents must be comfortable with asking

for funds in general, which, as some respondents noted, is an initial challenge that many

first-time presidents experience. Presidents must also be able to build strong relationships

with potential donors and the local legislature by communicating the importance of

institutional missions and the value that a donor's gifts, as well as the state's financial

contributions, bring to the achievement of these goals. Further, as many public institution

budgets encompass billions of dollars, presidents must be skilled at managing and

delegating large-scale budgetary responsibilities that span a wide array of academic and

non-academic areas within their institution. Effectively managing these institutional

funds can be increasingly challenging because of the significant ebb and flow of funds in

areas such as university medical centers and big-time collegiate athletic programs. As such, presidential hopefuls should be given opportunities and institutional support to gain additional experience in fundraising and budget management. This can be accomplished in a systematic and formal manner, either through the pursuit of professional development opportunities or by seeking out tutelage from fellow higher education professionals with experience in these areas. Institutions may further encourage professional development by providing incentives to departments to assist faculty and others who wish to garner additional leadership training.

Pursuit of Strategic Planning and Collaboration Opportunities. Coupled with meeting the financial needs of their respective institutions, presidents must be skilled in the art of setting the vision for the future of their institution through strategic planning initiatives. This requires the ability to communicate effectively and collaborate with various constituents throughout one's institution and beyond and unite them around a set of goals and initiatives. As a result, those who seek the role of president must exhibit proven ability to lead and delegate strategic initiatives that have clear, measurable outcomes that span a reasonable time period and incorporate responses from key constituents throughout their academic community. Consequently, institutions should consider creating opportunities for future leaders to involve themselves in various types of strategic planning initiatives throughout their professional careers, whether directly related to academia or not. Providing short-duration leaves or course relief are the types of incentives that can be used to enable those seeking additional leadership training the time to gain additional experience in goal setting, implementation and assessment. In

addition, institutional professional development programs should consider prioritizing consistent lines of communication, collaboration, and delegation of tasks.

Learning to Understand and Respond to Criticism. As public institutions continue to grow in size and influence, so too will the likelihood of criticism directed at presidential decisions. Successful presidents of public institutions must be capable of not only tolerating, but also learning from critics. As such, presidential hopefuls will benefit from personal coaching or other forms of mentoring on strategies for dealing with negative feedback from various constituents. Acknowledging criticism as an inevitable aspect of the presidency and reflecting on effective cases of responding to, and benefitting from, critiques of strategy and decision making would be beneficial to those contemplating taking on the responsibilities of chief executive office.

Investment in Talent. While past presidents noted that being an expert in every facet of higher education is an impossible task, they suggested that tackling the demands of the chief executive office can be more effectively managed by assembling a highly skilled and specialized senior support staff. The ability to identify and hire those who can best meet the needs of the institution is a skill that presidents must master in order to run a successful institution. This is particularly true for developing comfort with hiring and delegating authority to those who oversee particularly complex organizational enterprises, such as academic medical centers and athletics departments. Presidential hopefuls, therefore, should receive professional mentoring on how to most effectively identity talent and build working teams as they progress throughout their professional careers. This may be best accomplished through additional professional development

training at each presidential hopeful's respective institution or through external

professional development programs offered both within and outside of higher education.

The Importance of the Academic Dean. In examining the roles that best prepare

presidential hopefuls for the demands of the chief executive office, those interviewed for

this research turned considerable attention to the academic deanship. Past presidents

strongly favored the experience and preparation that the academic dean position offered

over that of the provost because of the lack of external responsibilities inherent in the

provost position, responsibilities they deemed as necessary training for the presidency.

While the provost position does offer a wide range of internal responsibilities and

experiences, institutions selecting new presidents should not consider the provost position

as stand alone preparation for the roles of chief executive officer. The academic deanship,

referred to by several participants in this study as a "miniature presidency", appears to

also offer considerable preparation for the external demands of the presidency as well as

academic oversight over faculty, staff, and curriculum. Institutions should shape their

visions for presidential searches with an open approach to the preparation of candidates

for the presidency and to skills and experiences garnered through traditional and non-

traditional pathways. To that end, in addition to taking a closer look at academic deans as

potential presidents, governing boards and search committees should endeavor to identify

candidates with committee service or board experience in such areas as the corporate

sector. This type of experience was much valued by the past presidents in this study as

preparation for the role of president, through providing the opportunity for individuals to

gain outside perspectives, thus broadening their understanding of higher education as well as being useful in developing general leadership management skills.

Advanced Planning of Presidential Searches. A significant concern voiced by past presidents was the lack of advanced planning of presidential searches and the failure to identify qualified future leaders when presidential vacancies occur. In order to establish a more forward thinking method of identifying the next generation of presidents, a revamping of how public institutions identify future presidents must occur at the governing board level. As past presidents in this study have indicated, conceptualization and planning for who the next president of a respective institution will be must begin well before a president is removed, retires, or seeks other employment. Failing to do so creates uncertainty throughout higher education institutions and stifles identification of current and future needs and those individuals who can adequately meet those needs as a chief executive officer. Therefore, continuous assessment of the needs of institutions and fostering of collaborative efforts between governing boards and current presidents to identify future leaders has the potential to create a more streamlined succession planning practice and prevent haphazard search processes that may result in institutions selecting individuals whose skill sets may not be in direct alignment with the needs of the institution. In order for succession planning to become a more fluid process, governing boards need to identify it as a top priority. Additionally, governing boards and current presidents should dedicate specific times to ongoing discussions about succession from the beginning stages of a president's tenure up until his or her last day in office.

Increased Internal Development of Staff. A common complaint among several past presidents was the lack of consideration of internal candidates during presidential searches because of the presumed advantages that come from having previous experience at another institution. Therefore, in order to increase consideration for internal candidates, governing boards should invest in establishing greater internal professional development opportunities for their staff in areas such as fundraising, budget management, strategic planning, and leadership management.

According to Thompson (2012), a potential challenge to the creation of formalized internal professional development programs for presidential hopefuls is that provosts, deans, and association deans were concerned about expressing interest in said programs due to the negative stigma that existed in academia towards those who expressed interest in administrative endeavors. In light of Thompson's findings, governing boards need to encourage their senior leadership to promote and incentivize development opportunities throughout the academic ranks in an attempt to diminish the negative stigma academics hold towards administrative leadership. Governing boards should consider, at a minimum, identifying mid-high level individuals throughout their institutions who can be offered additional external responsibilities, such as service on budgetary boards and committees, liaison roles with external constituencies, and fundraising initiatives. Prioritizing additional internal development from the highest levels could improve the skill sets and functionality of an institution's workforce and reduce the reservations expressed by the next generation of high-level administrators about the external responsibilities of the presidency.

Delegation of Strategic Planning Initiatives. While responsible for the primary vision and purpose of an institution's strategic plan, governing boards need to encourage their presidents to delegate the implementation and daily pursuit of concrete initiatives to their respective school leaders. This method would allow presidents to set the primary vision for the future through collaboration with their respective colleagues while balancing the daily initiatives and responsibilities of the presidency. In the event of presidential retirement or dismissal amid a strategic initiative, governing boards should emphasize the importance of continuing certain university wide initiatives to potential candidates during presidential interviews in order to maintain continuity of vision and purpose as it relates to strategic planning. While a change of initiatives is not uncommon with a presidential transition, the complete dismantling of a strategic plan or institutional initiative for the sake of establishing a newly elected president's own strategic plan was seen by some of those interviewed for this research as an unnecessary use of time and energy across the institution that could delay continued progress.

Reconsideration of Search Firms. Consistent with the findings of prior research, those interviewed for this study suggested that governing boards consider reexamining their use of presidential search firms to ensure that the candidates put forward are in alignment with the needs of the institution conducting the search. Some respondents expressed concerns about using presidential search firms based on the perception that search firms draw from a pool of presidential candidates that they routinely recommend for hire but who may not be the type of leader that a particular institution wants or needs. In order to identify accurately the type of leader that an institution does need, better

collaborative efforts between governing boards and presidents need to be established. If presidents and their executive officers, in collaboration with governing boards, are given the opportunity to identify key internal and external areas that the institution needs to address, institutions would be better equipped to discern the candidates best fit for leadership of the institution.

Suggestions for Future Research

Given that a majority of past presidents in this study identified the academic dean position as a strong stepping stone in preparing for the presidency, additional research is warranted as to whether previous service as an academic dean produces longer tenures and greater levels of success in presidential positions at public, doctorate-granting research institutions when compared to service as a provost or in a different administrative role. In addition, research as to whether internal or external hiring for presidential positions has a noticeable effect on time in office and overall success would be illuminating given several respondents' emphasis on a need for greater consideration of internal candidates and internal grooming for future presidential vacancies.

The findings of this study support Thompson's (2012) call for further research on academic leadership development to assess the effectiveness of current professional development practices throughout higher education. Thompson's study calls for an analysis of leadership development programs designed for associate deans, vice provosts, deans, and provosts. Similarly, based on the findings here, further examination of internal mid-level administrative development programs for academic positions such as department chairs and non-academic positions outside of the traditional academic

succession track (i.e., non-academic deans, non-academic associate deans,) may provide greater insight into the ideal format, length, and subject matter future programs should incorporate. Additional research on whether institutions, either formally or informally, incorporate training in such crucial areas of presidential preparation as fundraising, collaboration with political leaders, dealing with intercollegiate athletics, and medical centers would also prove enlightening. Thompson's (2012) study indicated that provosts and academic deans have shown support for, but lack interest in, participating in these suggested professional development programs due to the negative stigmas academia places on administrative credentialing. Further research could assist institutional efforts to reduce this perceived stigma. Finally, an assessment of who is best qualified to provide training to both mid-level and high-level administrators is necessary due to the time and expense required to provide executive professional development at the institutional level.

Conclusions

The role that presidents of large public, doctorate-granting research institutions play in the field of higher education is a substantial one given that these institutions educate a majority of our undergraduate student population and produce a majority of Ph.D.'s awarded (NASULGC, 2009). As such, institutions must make preparing the next generation of public university presidents a top priority in order to remain financially stable and successful, especially during times of economic recession. As the needs and demands of higher education and the economy change, so too will the demands placed upon chief executive officers. Foremost among these demands will be the need to manage and sustain the financial and budgetary well-being of these institutions. These financial

and budgetary responsibilities span diverse areas of higher education ranging from

academic research to collegiate athletics and require the ability to collaborate and

communicate with various constituencies with different priorities both within and outside

the field of higher education. In addition to fiscal stability, university presidents must be

able to set measurable strategic initiatives for their respective institutions that incorporate

feedback from all constituents within their academic community and beyond. This

formidable task requires an individual with exceptional academic and administrative

experience in the aforementioned areas as well as the ability to withstand considerable

criticism in a demanding, high-pressure environment.

In order to best prepare future generations of higher education leaders, the

participants in this study suggest an increased focus on academic deans as presidential

candidates because they have had fiscal and academic responsibilities comparable to

those of a university president. As Thompson (2012), noted in his study, academic deans

may also be a more viable source of future leaders because they are, on average, younger,

well qualified, and numerous, thus increasing the pool of potential candidates for the

presidency. The perspectives of past presidents in this research further support

Thompson's findings.

At an institutional level, improvements must be made to succession planning

practices through a more streamlined and intentional presidential search process and

greater internal development and preparation of future leaders in vital external areas such

as fundraising, budgeting, and strategic planning, as well as development of better

relations between governing boards and active presidents. These initiatives should be

considered priorities in order for higher education institutions to effectively develop and

promote leaders to enable them to accomplish their missions and remain financially

stable in the future.

REFERENCES

American Council on Education. Center for Policy Analysis, & TIAA-CREF Institute.
(2007). *The American college president: 20th anniversary*. Washington, DC:
American Council on Education, Center for Policy Analysis.

American Council on Education. Center for Policy Analysis, & TIAA CREF Institute.
(2012). *The American college president*. Washington, DC, American Council on
Education, Center for Policy Analysis.

American Council on Education. (2012). *ACE institute for new presidents*. Retrieved
from http://www.acenet.edu/leadership/programs/Pages/ACE-Institute-for-New-
Presidents.aspx

Amey, M. J. (2006). *Leadership in Higher Education*. Change: The magazine of higher
learning 38, 6, 55-58.

Archibald, R. B. & Feldman, D. H. (2014). *Why does college cost so much?* Oxford:
Oxford University Press.

Astin, A., & Astin, H. (2000). *Leadership reconsidered: Engaging higher education in
social change*. Battle Creek, MI: W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

Becker, G. S. (1993). *Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis with special
reference to education.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Belkin, D., & Thurm, S. (2012, December 28). *Dean's list: Hiring spree fattens college
bureaucracy—and tuition.* New York, NY: Wall Street Journal, 1-51.

Birnbaum, R., & Umbach, P. D. (2001). *Scholar, steward, spanner, stranger: The four
career paths of college presidents*. The Review of Higher Education, *24*(3), 203-
217.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of theory and practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University
     Press.

Brenner, M. E. (2006). *Interviewing in education research.* Handbook of Complementary
     Methods in Education Research, 357-370.

Clotfelter, C. T. (2011). *Big-time sports in American universities*. Cambridge: Cambridge
     University Press.

Cole, J. R. (2009). *The great American university: Its rise to preeminence, its
     indispensable national role, why it must be protected* (1st ed.). New York:
     PublicAffairs.

Cohen, D., & Crabtree, B. (2006). *Qualitative research guidelines project*. Retrieved
     from http://www.qualres.org/HomeRefl-3703.html.

Cohen, M. D., March, J. G., & Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. (1986).
     Leadership and ambiguity: The American college president (2nd ed.). Boston,
     MA: Harvard Business School Press. (Original work published 1974).

Cook, B. J. (2012). *The American college president study: Key findings and takeaways*.
     American Council on Education: Special Supplement. Center for Policy Analysis.
     2-6.

Fain, P. (2006). *Crisis of confidence*. The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 52*(42), A28.

Fisher, J. L. (1984). *The power of the president.* New York, NY: American Council on
     Education.

Fisher, J. L., & Koch, J. V. (2004). *The entrepreneurial college president*. American
     Council on Education and Praeger Publishers. 9-34.

Fisher, J. L., Tack, M. W., & Wheeler, K. J. (1988). *The effective college president*. American Council on Education. New York: Macmillan Publishing.

Flawn, P. T. (1990). *A primer for university presidents: Managing the modern university* (1st ed.). Austin: University of Texas Press, 46-52.

Fleming, J. C. (2010). *Faculty expectations for college presidents*. Journal of Higher Education*, 81*(3), 251-283.

Gmelch, W. H. (2004). *The department chair's balancing acts*. New Directions for Higher Education*, 2004*(126), 69-84.

Harrison, L. M. (2011). *Transformational leadership, integrity, and power.* Wiley Periodicals. DOI: 10.1002/ss.403

Hartley, H. V., III & Godin, E. E. (2009). *A study of career patterns of the presidents of independent colleges and universities.* Washington DC: Council of Independent Colleges.

Harvard Institute for Higher Education. (2012). *Harvard seminar for new presidents.* Retrieved from http://www.gse.harvard.edu/ppe/programs/higher-education/portfolio/new-presidents.htmlKing,

Gomez, G. G., & King, J.E (2008). *On the path to the presidency: Characteristics of higher education's senior leadership.* American Council on Education. Washington, DC.

Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (1985*). Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Lorden, J. F. (2009)*. Advancing higher education: Chief academic officers and the future leadership of higher education*. TIAA-CREF Institute

Lucas, C. J. (1994). *American higher education: A history* (2, 1st ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 185-200.

Marten, J., & Samels, J. E. (2004a). *A new model of transition management*. In J. Marten & J. E. Samels (Eds.), *Presidential transition in higher education: Managing leadership change* (pp. 225-234). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis* (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Monks, J. (2009). *Job stability among U.S. university presidents*. A working paper posted by the Cornell Higher Education Research Institute. Working paper 123. Retrieved from http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/cheri/workingPapers/2009.htm

Muller, S. (2004). *Pressure on presidents and why they should leave*. In J. Marten, J. E. Samels (Eds.), *Presidential transition in higher education: Managing leadership change* (pp. 225–234). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Murphy, J. T. (1980). *Getting the facts: A fieldwork guide for evaluators and policy analysts,* Glenview, IL: Foresman.

National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, NASULGC (2009). *Competitiveness of public research universities & consequences for the country: Recommendations for change.* Washington DC: Author. Retrieved from http://www.aplu.org/document.doc?id=1561

Rawlings, Hunter. (2012). *The plight of the public university.* Retrieved from http://www.virginia.edu/humanities/hunter-rawlings-president-of-the-aau-addresses-the-plight-of-the-public-university/

Sanaghan, P. H., Goldstein, L., & Gaval, K. D. (2008). *Presidential transitions: It's not just the position, it's the transition.* Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

Selingo, J. (2013). *What presidents think: A 2013 survey of four-year college presidents.* Washington, DC: The Chronicle of Higher Education. Retrieved from: http://results.chronicle.com/PresSurveyP1?elid=CLP2013print

Skinner, R. A. (2010). Turnover: *Selecting the next generation's presidents.* Change, *42*(5), 9-15.

Stanley, P., & Betts, L. J. (2004). *A proactive model for presidential transition.* In J. Marten & J. E. Samels (Eds.), *Presidential transition in higher education: Managing leadership change* (pp. 83-96). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

State Higher Education Executive Officers Association. (2014). *State Higher Education Finance: FY 2014.* Retrieved from: http://www.sheeo.org/sites/default/files/project-files/SHEF%20FY%202014-20150410.pdf.

Stripling, J. (2011). *The graying presidency.* The Chronicle of Higher Education. Retrieved from: http://chronicle.com/article/The-Graying-Presidency/129140/

Thompson, J. B. (2012). *Leader succession and the evolving presidency at public doctorate-granting universities.* University of Virginia. Dissertation for Doctorate of Philosophy.

Turner, E. H. (2012). *The changed role of the president at the university of Virginia.* University of Virginia. Unpublished masters thesis.

Tzanakis, M. (2011). *Bourdieu's social reproduction thesis and the role of cultural capital in educational attainment: A critical review of key empirical studies.* Educate: The Journal of Doctoral Research in Education, 11(1), 76-90.

Vaughan, G. B. (1989, Spring). *Leadership in transition: The community college president.* New York: Macmillan.

Vitullo, E., & Johnson, J. (2010). *University presidential rhetoric and the 2008-2009 economic crisis*. Journal of Higher Education Policy & Management*, 32*(5), 475-485. doi: 10.1080/1360080X.2010.511120.

Walseth, T. (2009). *The case for growing our own*. Academic Leadership Journal*, 7*(1). Retrieved from http://www.academicleadership.org/310/the-case-for- growing-our-own.

Weisbrod, B. A., Ballou, J. P., Asch, E. D., & Ebooks Corporation. (2008). *Mission and money: Understanding the university.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Zusman, A. (2005). *Challenges facing higher education in the twenty-first century*. American higher education in the twenty-first century: Social, political, and economic challenges, *2*, 115-160.

APPENDIX A

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL: PAST UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS

1. Today's higher education literature suggests that it is rare to become a research university president without first holding the position of chief academic officer and/or provost.
   a. What other roles, if any, were the most impactful in preparing you for the demands of the president?
   b. Do you feel these positions are appropriately emphasized in searching for a new president?

2. Research on the pathway to the presidency has consistently found that many academics well positioned to become presidents hesitate to seek the position. Several activities have been identified as matters of concern for prospective presidents. I would like to ask you about these specific activities individually. Based on your experiences, what are the challenges to helping academics overcome this reluctance in the following areas?
   a. fundraising
   b. budgeting
   c. strategic planning
   d. overseeing medical centers and athletic departments
   e. working with the legislature

3. Research suggests that many academics arrive in a position to become presidents at an age when they are not willing to make the commitment.
   a. Is there a way to expedite garnering the expertise and understanding that it takes to become a president?
   b. How much of the time required is for academic credentialing and how much for administrative credentialing?
   c. Do you see a role for professional development to increasing the pool of potential presidents?

APPENDIX B

INITIAL EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear <<Name>>,

By way of introduction, my name is Hal Turner and I am a doctoral student in U.Va.'s Curry School of Education with the Higher Education Department. I am writing you today to request your participation in a study I am conducting to understand more about the challenges facing college and university presidents.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the current state of the presidency succession planning within higher education through the eyes of past college presidents at public doctorate-granting institutions. This study aims to evaluate through interview and document analysis how past presidents view their ascension to the presidency over their administrative careers and how institutions can better assist future presidential hopefuls in reaching a chief administrative position.

As the <<Insert title of person here>> at <<insert name of institution here>>, I would like to invite you to participate in a 30-45 minute phone interview with me at a date and time that is most convenient for you. If an in person interview is possible, a location of your preference will be determined as well. The purpose of the interview is to explore your experiences as a president within higher education. Your name and your institution will be kept confidential. The results of the study will be compiled and shared with presidential search firms and current presidents with the aim of enhancing preparation for the presidency.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Hal Turner
Graduate Student
U.Va. Curry School of Education

APPENDIX C

LIST OF START CODES

Table 2.

List of Start Codes

Code Name	Code	Description
(1a) Previous traditional role	**PTR**	Participant identified as a Provost, Chief Academic Officer, or Dean as an impactful role in preparing for the presidency.
(1a) Previous non-traditional role	**PNTR**	Participant identifies different academic/administrative role that was impactful to preparing for the presidency.
(1a) Emerging theme	**ETO**	Participant has an experience outside of a prior position (i.e., mentor, student/work experience, professional development) that was impactful in preparing for the presidency.
(1b) Traditional search	**TS**	Look at traditional CAO's, Provost's (i.e., internally focused roles)
(1b) Non-traditional search	**NTS**	Emphasizes greater demand on financial planning, fundraising, external relations, etc.
(1b) Emerging theme	**ETN**	Emphasizes new type of position or work experience either within or outside of higher education.
(2a) Challenge: Appeal	**CA**	Address the lack of appeal of external responsibilities of the presidency.
(2b) Challenge: Time	**CT**	Address the amount of time required needed to address the external duties of the president.
(2c) Challenge: Preparation	**CP**	Address the lack of preparation for the presidency due to shift from internal to external responsibilities.

Table 2. List of Start Codes (continued)

Code Name	Code	Description
(2d) Emerging Theme: Challenge	**ETC**	Address new challenge not accounted for regarding the presidency.
(3a) No Expedite	**NET**	Identifies traditional succession track (i.e., teaching, tenure, department chair $\rightarrow$administration) as unavoidable in reaching the presidency.
(3b) Academics vs. administrative	**AVA1**	Identifies academic credentialing as superior to administrative credentialing.
(3b) Academics vs. administrative	**AVA2**	Identifies administrative credentialing as superior to academic credentialing.
(3c) Expedite	**EPD**	Identifies professional development or training as a viable option for increasing the pool for potential presidents.
(3d) Emerging theme	**ETP**	Identifies a different factor outside of traditional succession tracts and/or professional development.

APPENDIX D

LIST OF START CODES 2.0

Table 3.

List of Start Codes

Code Name	Code	Description
(1a) Previous traditional role	**PTR**	Participant identified as a Provost, Chief Academic Officer, or Dean as an impactful role in preparing for the presidency.
(1a) Previous non-traditional role	**PNTR**	Participant identifies different academic/administrative role that was impactful to preparing for the presidency.
(1a) Emerging theme	**ETO**	Participant has an experience outside of a prior position (i.e., mentor, student/work experience, professional development) that was impactful in preparing for the presidency.
(1b) Traditional search	**TS**	Look at traditional CAO's, Provost's (i.e., internally focused roles)
(1b) Non-traditional search	**NTS**	Emphasizes greater demand on financial planning, fundraising, external relations, etc.
(1b) Emerging theme	**ETN**	Emphasizes new type of position or work experience either within or outside of higher education.
(2a) Challenge: Appeal	**CA**	Address the lack of appeal of external responsibilities of the presidency.
(2b) Challenge: Time	**CT**	Address the amount of time required needed to address the external duties of the president.
(2c) Challenge: Preparation	**CP**	Address the lack of preparation for the presidency due to shift from internal to external responsibilities.
(2c) Challenge: Magnitude	**CM**	Addresses the size and complexity of specific presidential responsibilities.

Table 3. List of Start Codes 2.0(continued)

Code Name	Code	Description
(2d) Emerging Theme: Challenge	**ETC**	Address new challenge not accounted for regarding the presidency.
(3a) No Expedite	**NET**	Identifies traditional succession track (i.e., teaching, tenure, department chair →administration) as unavoidable in reaching the presidency.
(3b) Academics vs. administrative	**AVA1**	Identifies academic credentialing as superior to administrative credentialing.
(3b) Academics vs. administrative	**AVA2**	Identifies administrative credentialing as superior to academic credentialing.
(3b) Academics and administrative	**AVA3**	Identifies a required combination of academic and administrative credentialing
(3c) Expedite	**EPD**	Identifies professional development or training as a viable option for increasing the pool for potential presidents.
(3d) Emerging theme	**ETP**	Identifies a different factor outside of traditional succession tracts and/or professional development.
Discontinuity in academic admin succession	**DAC**	Makes statement disclaiming succession planning/PD in higher education.
Overall Emerging Theme	**OET**	Makes statement that attributes to overall theme regarding the presidency.