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Becoming Leaders: A Phenomenological Study of How Mid-Level Leaders in Christian
Universities Develop Leadership Skills

A Dissertation by

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Irvine, California

School of Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

February, 2019

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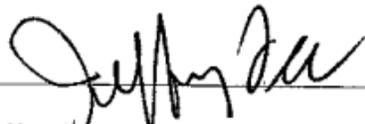
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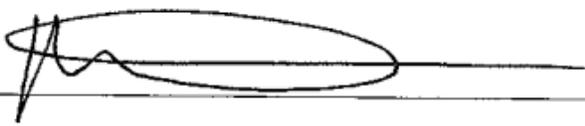
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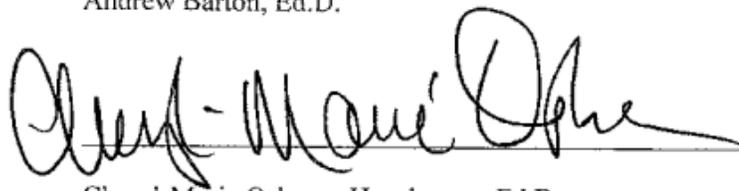
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February 2019

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Education is not a single event or space in time; rather, it is a life long journey of continuous learning and development. This dissertation process began as a quest to know more about a topic, but I gained infinitely more knowledge about myself through the process. This dissertation is dedicated to those who have gone before me, walked along side me, and will follow after me on this journey. I dedicate this work to...

My Grammy, Esther Tune – a woman who was so far ahead of her time that she couldn't see the impact she would have on those who followed after her. I will always be indebted to her for my strength, my resolve, and my endless quest to know more.

My Mom, Jean Davidson – the woman who taught me I could do whatever I set my heart to and the future was a wide-open door.

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ABSTRACT

Becoming Leaders: A Phenomenological Study of How Mid-Level Leaders in Christian Universities Develop Leadership Skills

by Joy Karavedas

Purpose: This qualitative study describes participants' perspective of how participation in the Leadership Development Institute through the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities supports the development of leadership skills within mid-level Christian university leaders.

Methodology: Using a phenomenological research approach to explore the lived experiences of LDI participants, semi-structured interviews illustrated study participants' perspectives. Interviews were triangulated through observations and artifacts. The totality of data collected included 14 interviews and observations and 42 artifacts.

Findings: Data analysis led to six major findings. Study findings revealed that mid-level leaders in higher education develop leadership skills when they possess a broad network of professional relationships, foster time and space for self-reflection about leadership, receive affirmation that builds confidence in leadership potential, experience close interactions with senior leaders, receive feedback to build self-awareness and presence, and have been identified as emerging leaders and provided with clear leadership plans.

Conclusions: Research findings led to conclusions; namely that successful leaders in higher education are intentional about broadening their professional network, designing time and space for reflection is a critical element of leadership development, affirmation

creates confident leaders and promotes employee engagement, interactions between senior leaders and emerging leaders strengthens the pipeline of prepared candidates, feedback raises awareness that builds confidence and presence, and clear leadership plans guide development necessary for leadership success.

Recommendations: Recommendations apply to a wide spectrum of stakeholders. Implications for actions by higher education leaders include scheduled reflection time, leadership coaching, 360° evaluations and senior leader engagement with emerging leaders. Institutional recommendations include cross-campus and institutional collaborations, virtual professional networks, gamification for leadership development, establishment of a growth culture, and employment of a chief learning officer to broaden leadership development institution-wide.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In 2015, a Moody's Investor Service report provided a bleak picture for small colleges and universities, indicating that the number of closures among small colleges and universities would triple within coming years (as cited in Woodhouse, 2015). Although the Moody's prediction has not proven accurate thus far, overall college enrollment has declined for six straight years and the impact of that decline has been felt among many Christian colleges and universities (Clarke, 2018). The stress of declining enrollment is not the only trend impacting the sustainability of Christian higher education institutions. Because they offer a faith-based education, Christian colleges and universities are also impacted by the role of religious and cultural changes in society, which is experiencing a drop in the religious significance among the millennial generation and a rise in atheism in teens (Clark, 2018).

To keep classrooms full and campuses open, Christian higher education must determine how they will address these trends to stave off shrinking enrollment and burgeoning budget deficits. This response will require strong, well-prepared leadership at all institutional levels; yet college and university employees rank in the bottom quartile for professional learning opportunities when compared to employees in other industries in the United States (Busteed, 2018). As higher education faces the challenges of changing mindsets, declining enrollment and a value-driven consumer, the need to develop leadership skills within institutional leaders is essential to the health and sustainability of every college and university, including Christian higher education institutions.

The challenges facing college and university leaders today illustrate how significantly higher education has changed since Harvard College was founded in 1636. Globalization has made the world much smaller, bringing a diversity of culture and people to the halls of academia. An increased availability of resources provides access to students who never believed they would have the opportunity to learn within a university setting. Additionally, the ever-increasing use of technology has presented challenges for students and faculty alike (Ahmad, Zafar, & Shahzad, 2015). Colleges and universities have morphed into multi-million dollar entities facing complex issues such as rising tuition costs, changing pedagogy, a shifting focus to graduate education, and an ever more knowledgeable and selective student body (DeZure, Shaw, & Rojewski, 2014; Gagliardi, Espinosa, Turk, & Taylor, 2017; Walseth, 2009). Leading these institutions requires leadership skills greater than ever anticipated by many in higher education.

Christian universities also face challenges due to a unique educational package that includes spiritual formation at the forefront of their mission – a mission that may be difficult to appreciate by people for whom faith is not a priority (Adringa, 2007). To carry out their mission of integration of faith and curriculum often requires faculty to include aspects of the Christian faith into their lessons and assignments and may require students to attend chapel and/or participate in community service for credits toward graduation. These unique elements limit the pipeline of faculty and students to individuals agreeable to these added conditions of employment or enrollment. Christian universities must develop leaders with skills to meld these critical distinctive characteristics of Christian higher education with an understanding of the risks and decisions necessary to serve their institutions while keeping in mind the faith-based

values that form their very existence. The future of Christian higher education lies in the hands of its future leaders, and it is the responsibility of each institution to ensure those leaders possess the skills necessary for their role.

Background

Unfortunately, identifying and developing leaders has not been a strength of higher education, secular or religious. Riccio (2010) addressed this when he said, “it is ironic that the higher education environment that prides itself on continuous learning and forward thinking, spends very little time identifying its future leaders” (p. 17). Higher education has been lax in identifying and developing leaders within its midst. Since the mission of most Christian institutions requires them to make a profound moral impact on surrounding culture, leadership development is critical to the influence of these institutions on culture both inside and outside the university walls.

Changing 21st Century Higher Education Landscape in America

The landscape of higher education in America is as diverse as America itself, with universities including for profit, non-profit, public, private, and faith-based. Whether a small liberal arts college in Iowa or a sprawling university in urban New York, institutions of higher education are feeling the effects of our changing world. Today’s higher education landscape reveals a world with a diverse student body, plateaued enrollment, volatile funding, intense accountability and a tumultuous political climate (Ahmad et al., 2015; Gagliardi et al., 2017). In a 2008 study by *The Economist*, 63% of survey respondents indicated that technological innovation would have a major influence on teaching methodologies over the next five years. Time has shown the predictions of study respondents to be accurate, and the rapid technological developments and changing

nature of higher education have created an environment that is more turbulent than ever (Ahmad et al., 2015). This environment requires leaders who are able to cast vision, maintain mission and lead their institutions through shifting times.

Change is not always negative, with some believing the challenges facing higher education provide a unique opportunity for great change – transformational and innovative change that will impact the future of academia (Gagliardi et al., 2017).

Although the hierarchical nature of higher education lends itself to the culture of individual achievement firmly entrenched within its halls higher education must learn to shift this culture to embrace collaboration to build new partnerships and open doors to the innovation and improvement needed to be effective in today's modern world (Metheney-Fisher, 2013). Accomplishing this culture change will require leaders who know how to bring people together toward a shared vision and mission, as well as shift the paradigm to include the intentional development of future leaders (Luna, 2012).

Preparing Higher Education Leaders in the 21st Century

Research indicates that 50% of senior administrators will turnover in the next decade (Gagliardi et al., 2017; Klein & Salk, 2013). The majority of college and university presidents expect to leave their current positions within five years (Gagliardi et al., 2017; Selingo, Chheng, & Clark, 2017). The revolving door within senior leadership positions in higher education creates a mindset focused on the immediate management of the university, rather than on long-term strategic planning designed to move the university forward into a new age (Stefani, 2015). The statistics on aging university leadership has sparked a growing awareness of the need to intentionally identify and develop leaders within higher education available to prepare for the anticipated turnover

in the not-to-distant future (Betts, Urias, Chavez, & Betts, 2009; Leubsdorf, 2006; Luna, 2013; Selingo et al., 2017). Organizational culture affects leadership development and leadership development affects organizational culture (B. M. Bass & Avolio, 1993; Metheney-Fisher, 2013). A fully developed team of employees becomes more confident and engaged in their organization (Pati & Kumar, 2010). Given the effect of organizational culture on the creation of leaders within higher education, further study must be conducted to understand how leaders will be identified and prepared to address the expanding turnover rate and to prepare future leaders needed to lead higher education in the 21st century (Bisbee, 2007).

One hindrance to leadership development lies in the very nature of higher education faculty. Since faculty are hired for a skill set that reflects the autonomy and independence necessary for scholarship production and teaching effectiveness, they may not fully understand and embrace the leadership skills needed to advance the teamwork and collaboration required for leadership (Bisbee, 2007, Selingo et al., 2017). One person expressed this misunderstanding saying they would “be vilified by faculty” for choosing a leadership position, while others have mentioned “going over to the dark side” of administration (DeZure et al., 2014; Leubsdorf, 2006; Selingo et al., 2017). In fact, many leaders themselves lack the preparation needed for their positions since institutions often pay little attention to preparation of academic leaders or their succession into leadership and administrative positions (M. Wolverton, Ackerman & Holt, 2005). It is clear that a greater appreciation of leadership is necessary before higher education will embrace and find the leadership skills development needed to fill the leadership gaps that will soon exist.

Forms of Higher Education Institutions

An understanding of the different forms of higher education institutions is important to frame the conversation of institutional leadership within academia. There are six classifications for degree-granting universities in the United States based on the types of degrees offered and the levels of research conducted by the university:

- doctoral universities
- master's colleges and universities
- baccalaureate colleges
- associate's colleges
- special focus institutions
- tribal colleges (Carnegie, n.d.).

There are both public and private universities within all classifications. Public universities receive their funding through state and/or federal governments, and are often referred to as state universities. Private universities operate on private funding, although they may receive public monies in the form of student loan and grant dollars. The Liberal Arts College places primary emphasis on exposing undergraduate students to a wide range of academic subjects (University Guide Online, n.d.). Information regarding the types of higher education institutions is important when determining the leadership needs of each institution. A breakdown of the different types of universities in the United States and the enrollment numbers for each is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Post-secondary Institutions in the U.S. and Student Enrollment

| Classification | Number of Institutions | Percent of Total | Total Student Enrollment | Percent of Total |
|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| All Institutions | 4,627 | 100% | 20,207,369 | 100% |
| Public | 1,621 | 35% | 14,655,015 | 73% |
| Private | 3,006 | 65% | 5,552,354 | 27% |
| For Profit | 1,334 | 29% | 1,623,103 | 8% |
| Nonprofit | 1,672 | 36% | 2,047,481 | 10% |
| Religiously Affiliated* | 900 | 19% | 1,881,770 | 9% |

Note. Data derived from “Total Fall Enrollment, 2014,” by U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS, 2014. Data on religiously affiliated schools derived from “Keeping the Faith: Challenges Unique to Religiously Affiliated Colleges and Universities,” by R. C. Adringa, 2007.

Unique Challenges to Christian Universities

Of the 1,600 private four-year college and university campuses in the United States, 900 define themselves as religiously affiliated, representing 19.5% of the 4,626 degree granting postsecondary institutions in the United States and over 1.8 million students enrolled (Adringa, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). In meeting the needs of these students, Christian colleges and universities face the same challenges as their secular counterparts plus additional financial, cultural, and leadership challenges directly related to their mission and purpose (Barton, 2016). For example, tuition costs in private universities have increased by 146% in the last 30 years and technology has created the need for new learning platforms, a change in instructional methods, and a shift in thinking away from a liberal arts education as today’s career-minded student seeks more from their four-year degree (Hulme, Groom, & Heltzel, 2016; U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

A significant challenge facing faith-based institutions today is the ability to retain a distinctly Christian perspective in a changing world. Christian universities set their purpose within the broader perspective of relating Christ to the culture in which they exist. The moral formation of students is a fundamental aspect of the academic experience on the Christian university campus (Morgan, 2012). Yet, religion and Christianity is becoming less important to young people. Among adults born between 1981 and 1996, the Millennial Generation, only four-in-10 people say religion is an important part of their lives (Clarke, 2018). As students react to a society that continues to redefine standards, Christian universities must make clear the distinctions that make their academic experience unique, while finding ways to attract students who desire the educational experience they offer. President Emeritus of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, Robert Adringa (2007) recognizes this challenge when he writes that “the intangible benefits of a truly faith-based campus are hard to appreciate by people for whom faith is not a priority” (p. 10). Navigating these challenges within a changing culture requires skilled leaders at all levels who possess the ability to build relationships as well as manage budgets.

The nature of faith-based institutions creates additional challenges in leadership development. Communicating the mission and vision of the institution are a critical aspect of university leadership, which places great importance on a leader’s belief in and ability communicate the faith mission of the institution (Klein & Salk, 2013). The challenge is to find skilled leaders with an acute understanding of academia as well as institutional management who are also able to communicate the cultural values and biblical views of the institution’s faith foundation. To ensure full understanding of the

institutional values, many Christian colleges and universities have an expectation of a faith alignment between institutional leadership and the values of the institution. Finding highly skilled leaders who also match the institution's faith foundation can be difficult and narrow the leadership talent pipeline considerably (Barton, 2016). Tighter budgets have led to flatter organizational structures with fewer opportunities for promotion further narrowing the leadership talent pipeline within Christian higher education. Given this challenge, development of leadership skills within those leaders who are already on campus may be the best means for creating a stronger leadership pipeline within Christian higher education.

Identifying and Developing Leadership Skills within Emerging Leaders

Given the anticipated turnover of leaders at the highest levels of the institutions and the lack of qualified and prepared individuals for these positions, the development of leadership skills within future institutional leaders has reached critical levels. Leadership skills are the strengths and abilities used by individuals to oversee processes, guide initiatives, and lead employees and are used to make decisions about institutional mission, resource allocation, strategic planning, etc. These skills may include elements such as the ability to delegate, to communicate effectively, and to inspire (TechTarget, 2018). Since people do not simply become leaders or automatically possess leadership skills by virtue of a position, it has been suggested that academic institutions take a closer look at developing clear pathways to leadership positions for their faculty and staff (Davis, 2008; Klein & Salk, 2013). Clear leadership pathways may allow individuals to develop leadership skills along the way toward a leadership position. However, in some ways, the lack of clear leadership pathways has become embedded within the culture of

higher education. Moser (2008) points out that these leadership pathways are challenged by the lack of interest in administration held by many faculty members. Changing this culture of disinterest will take time, but a broader understanding of leadership and leadership development can be achieved through intentionality within institutions. Since the day-to-day practice of leadership is the essence of leadership development, it requires an intentional focus on the scope of those leadership activities and the people involved in them (Day, Fleenor, McKee, Atwater, & Sturm, 2014). This daily focus and intentionality may provide the means necessary to make leadership pathways more clear and the development of leadership skills more enticing.

Developing Leadership among Mid-Level Leaders in Higher Education

An ambivalence toward administrative and leadership positions can be equated to a lack of alignment of leadership skills within faculty and administration (DeZure et al., 2014). The combination of this lack of interest in leadership roles and the push for scholarship among faculty members, creates a challenge for universities who desire to create leadership development practices that support future academic leaders (Weiss, 2016). Scholarship is important to the position of individual faculty members within an institution, but leadership is important to the position of the institution within the higher education landscape. For that reason, institutions must extend their view of prospective leaders within their walls. All those with leadership potential must be encouraged to take on leadership roles and provided with the support and training needed within those roles (Bisbee, 2007). Many mid-level leaders within higher education have shown leadership potential outside of purely academic areas. Unfortunately, it is common that the career trajectory of these mid-level leaders is overlooked (Garza & Eddy, 2008). It is possible

that higher education is missing the chance to strengthen its leadership pool by overlooking the leadership potential within its mid-level leaders. Defining visible career paths to leadership that cross institutional divisions will create a larger pool of candidates who, through professional leadership development, will be prepared and ready for more senior leadership positions (Betts et al., 2009).

Any discussion about leadership development must include an understanding of the difference between leadership development and leader development. Leadership development concerns itself with the development of multiple individuals for organizational benefit such as trainings to develop industry or position-specific skills and abilities. By contrast, leader development focuses on the personal development of an individual leader that benefit the individual as well as the organization (Day et al., 2014). For organizational success, both are important. Organizations need more than a great leader; they need a great leader with great leadership skills (Frost, 2015). It is highly unlikely that a person can develop fully as a leader solely through organizational programs and workshops. People develop as leaders through the ongoing, day-to-day practice of leadership (Day et al., 2014). People must be provided the time to develop as leaders. Learning to lead is a gradual process and time is needed to gain a breadth of experiences necessary to acquire leadership skills, to reflect on those leadership experiences, and to allow leaders to develop their own leadership philosophy and skills (Garza & Eddy, 2008; Inman, 2007). Since the process takes time, it is important that it not be left to chance. Understanding how mid-career leaders develop leadership skills will provide support to those in more senior leadership positions and identify career pathways to attain those positions (Garza & Eddy, 2008).

Leadership Skills Development in Christian Higher Education

Many leaders within higher education arrive at their positions as a result of institutional need, rather than a planned, career trajectory (Betts et al., 2009; Bisbee, 2007; Garza & Eddy, 2008; Inman, 2007; Klein & Salk, 2013). They have been tasked with filling a leadership role or provided a leadership opportunity they had not desired. The result is a majority of leaders within higher education lack preparation for their leadership roles and receive little or no leadership training before or after they step into the position (Inman, 2007). Given the unique aspects of Christian higher education that may involve an integration of faith into delivery of the institutional mission, leadership skills development is critically important for its leaders. Christian colleges and universities regularly require faculty to include a Christian worldview within lessons and assignments and may require faculty themselves to provide a testament to their alignment with the faith mission of the institution. Christian institutions often require students to attend chapel events and may require service as a part of their graduation requirements. Christian colleges and universities may require employees, including leaders, to use the Bible as a guide for personal interactions and relationships. Faith is not simply one aspect of the college experience on a Christian university campus; it is the most important aspect on the Christian university campus. If the mission of the university is to create meaning and influence cultural change, the skills development process of the persons leading that mission is critical to the communication of the message (Amey, 2006; Barton, 2016). Many leaders on Christian campuses describe their work as a calling from God, rather than a simple vocation, which places both greater incentive and greater responsibility to complete the work well. Development of leaders on faith-based

campuses requires attention to these subtle aspects of leadership to develop the whole leader for the calling of missional leadership in much the same way as faith-based universities develop the whole student within the academic setting.

Leadership Skills Development of Mid-Level Christian University Leaders

The narrow talent pool within Christian universities is a serious matter. In an article for the States News Service, Longman indicated that much of higher education, Christian higher education included, has experienced difficulty identifying and developing future leaders (“Summer Impact”, 2015). Yet, leadership within Christian higher education remains an under-researched topic (Stefani, 2015). Little attention has been paid to understanding how potential leaders within Christian higher education can be identified and how that potential can be developed and leadership skills gained. The studies on leadership that do exist within Christian higher education explore leadership from the perspective of position, gender or ethnicity. There are no studies relating to leadership skills development of Christian university leaders (Inman, 2007; Stefani, 2015). Understanding leadership skills development of mid-level leaders within Christian higher education is necessary if Christian colleges and universities are to successfully address the needs of their limited leadership talent pipeline.

Statement of the Research Problem

The changing landscape and expected attrition within higher education create a very real need for qualified leaders in Christian higher education who are ready and able to step into significant leadership roles (Barton, 2016; Betts et al., 2009; Gagliardi et al., 2017; Klein & Salk, 2013; Selingo et al., 2017). Much of the existing research has found that academia has been reluctant to embrace the development of clear leadership

pathways or the intentional development of those traveling the path toward academic leadership (Betts et al., 2009; Bisbee, 2007; Klein & Salk, 2013; Womack, 2009). There are many studies on leaders, leadership, and leader effectiveness, but few have considered how leaders in higher education acquire the skills needed to lead their institutions. Inman (2007) examined how mid-level academics learned to lead through the lens of learning theory; however, her study did not look at development of leadership skills nor did her study consider the unique aspects of the Christian university. A closer examination of leadership skills development within Christian higher education is needed to address the unique demands of Christian higher education leadership in light of the considerable changes facing higher education today (Adringa, 2007; Garza & Eddy, 2008; Klein & Salk, 2013).

There is a growing body of research that supports the need for further investigation into higher educational leadership within private universities, including Christian universities (Barton, 2016; Inman, 2007; Klein & Salk, 2013; Metheney-Fisher, 2012; Womack, 2009). Much has been written about the importance of leadership to ensure organizational success both outside of higher education and inside the academic circle (B. M. Bass & Avolio, 1999; Betts et al., 2009; Bisbee, 2007; Day et al., 2014; Frost, 2014; Inman, 2007; Klein & Salk 2013). Existing research on higher education leadership examines higher education leadership from the perspectives of leader effectiveness, leadership styles, and leadership learning styles. Research becomes more scarce when focused on leadership among Christian university leaders. There has been some preliminary research related to leadership development through the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) Leadership Development Institutes (LDI).

While these studies have explored leadership development with a focus on gender and ethnicity, researchers have not explored leadership development by LDI participants through the lens of leadership skills needed by mid-level leaders in Christian institutions.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe the participant's perspective of how participation in the Leadership Development Institutes through the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities supports the development of leadership skills in mid-level Christian university leaders.

Research Question

The research question for this study sought to answer: What is the participant's perspective of how participation in the Leadership Development Institutes through the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities supports the development of leadership skills in mid-level leaders in Christian universities?

Significance of the Study

This study focuses on the leadership skills development of mid-level Christian university leaders. There are three significant reasons for this study. First, this study will assist Christian universities in the identification of emerging leadership talent and the development of a stronger leadership pipeline. Second, this data will strengthen the ability to develop clear pathways into senior administrative leadership positions for those who currently hold mid-level leadership positions in Christian higher education. Finally, this study will provide direction and benefit to mid-level leaders who seek to advance into higher-level or senior administrative leadership positions within Christian higher education.

The first significant area of impact from this study provides an increase in the understanding of the leadership skills needed by Christian university leaders. A clear understanding of leadership skill development will allow universities to identify current mid-level leaders who have potential for higher-level administrative positions and provide them the leadership development needed to fully develop their leadership skills, both of which create a stronger leadership talent pipeline (Betts et al., 2009). As explained by Meyers (2007), developing people on the inside of an organization saves money on recruitment efforts and also has a positive impact on morale. A culture of leadership development benefits the organization because employees are empowered to achieve which inspires innovation and creativity (Kornik, 2006). Identification and development of leaders is critical within Christian colleges and universities because it allows these institutions to develop leaders who already align with the spiritual mission and institutional goals of the institution. Given the faith match component required of most Christian university leaders, it is critical that the leadership talent pipeline within Christian higher education not be ignored.

The second reason this study is significant is because it will help to develop clear pathways into senior leadership positions for those who currently hold mid-level leadership positions within Christian higher education. Mid-level leaders often provide the pipeline of future leadership talent within institutions. A lack of clear pathways toward leadership in higher education has been confirmed by previous research and without a clear trajectory, potential leaders have lost interest in pursuing leadership roles within university administration (Betts et al., 2009; Davis, 2008; Klein & Salk, 2013). Many universities lack intentional direction for mid-level leaders seeking senior

leadership positions. Without a formal plan for career advancement and leadership skills development, most mid-level leaders within Christian colleges and universities are left to fend for themselves to find development both in faith and in profession. (Garza & Eddy, 2008). This study will provide Christian colleges and universities the knowledge they need to create structured plans for leadership development and career pathways for those seeking leadership positions.

Finally, this study will provide information to mid-level leaders who seek to advance into senior administrative positions. Most individuals who move into leadership positions within higher education lack a clear understanding of the actual responsibilities (M. Wolverton et al., 2005). A clearer understanding of the leadership skills needed to move into senior administrator positions will benefit those seeking advancement. Yet, higher education has neglected to develop intentional opportunities for leadership skills development among mid-level leaders even though significant research indicates a desire for leadership skills development exists among those holding mid-level leadership roles in higher education (Betts et al., 2009; Garza & Eddy, 2008; Inman, 2007; Klein & Salk 2013). As a result, the majority of mid-level leaders within higher education have not had opportunity to develop the leadership skills needed for their positions. Mid-level leaders seeking advanced senior leadership roles within Christian higher education have the further need to understand the impact of the faith mission of the university on the practice of leadership within the institution. Understanding leadership skills development will allow mid-level leaders in Christian universities to pursue leadership development opportunities that will advance their abilities and provide opportunity for promotion.

Higher education continues to change and become more complex, requiring its leadership to change to meet these growing complexities. As the needs of students, faculty, and staff become more diverse, it becomes important to develop a diverse pool of senior leaders to meet those needs (Gagliardi et al., 2017). Advancing technology, unstable financial resources, and anticipated attrition within senior level leadership make leadership skills development critical to higher education as institutions seek to stabilize organizational culture and strengthen leadership succession. These challenges impact Christian higher education even more significantly because the ability to understand the faith mission of these institutions creates a smaller talent pool from which to select its leaders. Intentional leadership skills development of Christian university leaders is necessary to lead colleges and universities into the future. This study will contribute to the body of research needed to create those leadership development practices.

Definitions

This section provides definitions of the relevant terms in this study.

Acculturation. Merriam Webster (n.d.) defines acculturation as the process by which a human being acquires the culture of a particular society. For purposes of this study, acculturation is defined as the process of acquiring the knowledge and value shared by the society of LDI participants.

Christian Higher Education. A college or university that integrates the Christian faith into its mission, vision, and purpose.

Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. The Council for Christian Colleges and Universities or CCCU is an association of 181 Christian higher education institutions worldwide, more than 150 of which are in North America. They represent

over 35 protestant denominations and the Catholic Church (Council for Christian Colleges & Universities [CCCCU], 2018a).

Leadership Skills. Leadership skills are the strengths and abilities used by individuals to oversee processes, guide initiatives, and lead employees toward the achievement of individual and institutional goals. Leadership skills are used to make decisions about institutional mission, resource allocation, strategic planning, etc. and may include elements such as the ability to delegate, to communicate effectively, and to inspire (TechTarget, 2018).

Leadership Skills Development. The development of leadership skills requires proactive steps by a potential leader to develop a complex mix of behaviors, attitudes, thoughts, and social skills. These leadership skills may develop at different rates and require different learning experiences (Lord & Hall, 2005).

Leadership Development. The development of leadership capacity within multiple individuals for the benefit of the organization (Day et al., 2014).

Mid-Level Leaders. Mid-level leaders are those within higher education in positions below the Dean level. Typical positions include such titles as Directors, Managers, Coordinators, Advisors, and Counselors (Johnsrud, Heck, & Rosser, 2000). These positions are often non-academic positions, but for purposes of this study, I have included academic department chairs in this definition.

Senior Leaders. Senior leaders are those holding positions at the assistant dean level or above, including associate deans, deans, executive directors, provosts, vice presidents, and university president.

Delimitations

Delimitations provide the factors that may affect the study and are controlled by the researcher (Roberts, 2010). This study was delimited by the researcher to include only participants of LDI offered by the CCCU during the years of 2008 through 2018. CCCU is an association of 181 Christian higher education institutions worldwide, representing 35 Christian denominations and serving a student population of 450,000 (CCCU, 2018a). The CCCU has been offering its LDI since 1998, and of the nearly 500 leaders who have participated in LDI, more than 50 have moved into cabinet-level positions, making it an appropriate model for a study on leadership development within Christian higher education (CCCU, 2018b). The study was further delimited to LDI participants who are employed at institutions within the states of California, Oregon, and Michigan due to constraints of time and accessibility.

Organization of the Study

This study was organized into five chapters. Chapter I provides an introduction to frame this study, including background information, the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, definitions of terms used, and study delimitations. Chapter II provides a thorough examination of the literature on higher education and the needs of today's higher education leaders, including mid-level leaders within higher education. This chapter specifically examines leadership within Christian higher education, including the unique challenges facing Christian institutions and their leadership development needs. Chapter III provides the methodology used for the study, including the research design, study population, and sample criteria used for the study. Chapter IV offers a detailed analysis of the findings of the study and Chapter V concludes the study

by providing an interpretation of the data, offering conclusions and implications based on analysis of the study results, and proposing recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The future of Christian higher education lies in the hands of its future leaders, and it is the responsibility of each institution to ensure those leaders have developed the leadership skills necessary for their role. Leadership skills development has not been a strength of higher education, spiritual or secular. The changing higher education landscape and the impact of a graying leadership make it necessary to identify and develop leadership skills among mid-level leaders and administrators to prepare them to step into greater leadership roles in the future. Developing the leadership skills of mid-level leaders becomes even more critical within Christian colleges and universities because the talent pipeline is made smaller by the requirement of a match to the institution's faith mission.

Review of the Literature

This literature review will examine factors that influence and impact leadership skills development of mid-level leaders in Christian higher education to provide better understanding of this need. Beginning with a thorough examination of higher education in America from its history to the current day, the chapter establishes the lack of leadership development research within higher education, explores leadership development from a variety of perspectives, and confirms the necessity for continued development of leadership skills within higher education. Leading today's colleges and universities requires strong leaders, and the next section of this chapter will review the practice of leadership within higher education, including the impact of leadership attrition, the challenges to leadership skills development within the higher education culture, and the place of mid-level leaders within the leadership landscape of colleges and

universities. The chapter then makes the connection to the distinct aspects of Christian higher education through a review of literature describing Christian colleges and universities and the unique challenges facing these institutions as they seek to deliver higher education from the perspective of a spiritual mission. The chapter concludes with a section that brings the research together by exploring leadership skills development of the mid-level leaders in Christian higher education. The themes within this literature review were brought together through the use of a synthesis matrix prepared by the researcher (see Appendix A). The synthesis matrix supports the researcher's careful analysis of the elements to create a whole study.

History of Higher Education in America

To understand the need for leadership development within higher education, we must first review its history to recognize the foundation on which higher education leadership has been built and the context in which its leaders have been developed. Harvard College was the first American institution of higher education. Founded in 1636 by Puritan leaders, the intent of the college was to uphold orthodox Puritanism in America (Geiger, 2014). Courses were designed to provide a liberal arts education and a study of divinity for future clergymen. Over the next 100 years, several additional institutions were established throughout the colonies, the majority of which were also founded by religious denominations for the purpose of expanding their beliefs and training men for the ministry (Geiger, 2014). The spiritual mission of these early universities can still be found in the Christian colleges and universities.

From Spiritual to Secular

Over the next 150 years, higher education continued to grow and find its place in the United States. Colleges and universities were established throughout the east, and by the 1800s higher education had become ensconced within the American landscape. As with Harvard, many of these institutions were founded by religious organizations. The 19th century brought change to higher education with the advent of the land grant system which offered a practical focus on agriculture and engineering and was championed as bringing higher education to everyone. The Morrill Act of 1862 traded land for education, ensuring each state had at least one public college within its borders (Loss, 2012). These land grant universities were an early precursor to our current public college and university systems and were dedicated to meeting the practical needs of the American public in support of the assertion to make higher education accessible for all (Jaschik, 2014; Loss, 2012). For the first time, the government was readily investing in education with the recognition that higher education was necessary for the public good.

Higher education continued to move in new directions and the 20th century saw an explosion of growth and the creation of systems such as departments, majors, letter grades, and credit hours to organize the delivery of the educational experience (Mintz, 2017). This period of time saw an increase in enrollment as a result of government programs such as the G.I. Bill, the creation of statewide, multi-campus systems delivering public education, and the emergence of public community colleges, a uniquely American idea (Eckel, 2004; Thelin, n.d.). Higher education was now accessible to the middle class, women, and minorities – all of whom had previously been excluded from access to advanced education (Eckel, 2004). Significant growth would require an increase in the

number of people working within academia, and with systems fairly well set, higher education moved its emphasis toward faculty research. Universities became bastions of information for a new and changing world with professors becoming the experts in the field and keepers of knowledge.

Unrest and Uncertainty Change the Landscape of Higher Education

Higher education continued to flourish for many years. In the early 1960s, the landscape of higher education began to change as it reflected greater changes occurring within society. This changing landscape created new challenges for institutional leaders. Leading the change was a move of student dissatisfaction. Although campus enrollment was increasing, students did not feel well served by their institutions (Thelin, n.d.). Student dissatisfaction combined with a changing political climate may have played a role in free speech activism and anti-war protests that began to take place on large and small campuses across America (Thelin, n.d.). Well-established university leadership was staid and steady, making it largely unprepared and lacking of the leadership skills necessary to handle the situations presented to them. Disorderly campuses and the tragedies at Kent State (four protesting students killed by National Guardsmen) and Jackson State (two protesting students killed by police) were instrumental in driving culture change but also resulted in a loss of confidence in higher education (Mintz, 2017; Thelin, n.d.). The public was no longer confident that the educational experience being provided on college and university campuses was effective and equitable (Thelin, n.d.). Although confidence was declining, those leading higher education institutions were often too busy managing their universities to develop the leadership skills needed to define a clear perspective on the mission of their institutions. Christian higher education

also felt the winds of change within their institutions as they were no longer the standard for moral behavior and saw a decline in commitment to religious values by their students (House, 2013)

During this time, education also became the focus of political campaigns and politicians as others sought to speak into the situation facing higher education. Throughout the latter part of the 20th century, higher education continued to see many changes, both positive and negative. Uncertainty became commonplace and institutions struggled to find their identities (Thelin, n.d.). Questions of quality, access, and value were at the forefront of the educational discussion on secular and Christian university campuses. Today, widespread access to higher education has been embraced by the American public, but issues of value and flexibility remain (Anderson, Boyles, & Raine, 2012). The literature reveals that higher education has been slow to embrace the leadership development needed to equip leaders with the skills necessary to lead universities during this complex time.

Impact of History on Higher Education Today

Higher education's rich history has changed American society. Largely influenced by uniquely American ideals such as individualism and limited government, American higher education has been protected from the outside influence and governmental control often seen in other countries (Eckel & King, 2004). Rather, capitalism and market flexibility have created a place for competition among educational institutions that requires leadership practices similar to those found in the corporate world. As American higher education continues its commitment to equal access for all students and the assurance that education will exclude no one due to gender, ethnicity,

religion, or social status leaders must understand the significant influence their institutions have in changing lives (Eckel, 2004). American higher education, especially Christian higher education, seeks to produce students who not only change their own lives, but change the world. To understand how institutions will achieve this mission, it is important to study how higher education leaders will develop and possess the leadership skills needed to lead their institutions in complex and changing times.

Changing Needs of the 21st Century Higher Education Leader

American higher education has evolved dramatically over the years and that change continues today. To understand the leadership skills needed by today's 21st century higher education leaders, we must review the landscape of higher education that has created the necessity for the development of new and changing leadership skills. Both secular and Christian universities face challenges to both mission and operation that require the development of leadership skills needed to direct institutions in the midst of change. This shifting face of higher education has created challenges and opportunities unlike any we have seen in history (Hulme et al., 2016).

Changing 21st Century Higher Education Landscape

Some have said that higher education is in the midst of a revolution (Mintz, 2017) or an identity crisis (Gagliardi, 2017; B. L. Smith & Hughey, 2006). Diverse student bodies, plateaued enrollments, rising tuition costs, and contentious political climates have created a complex higher education environment that affects public, secular universities, as well as private, Christian universities. Market competition among institutions has increased, student demographics have shifted, and endless changes in technology and culture are having a profound impact on both the philosophy of higher education and the

business of delivering it (B. L. Smith & Hughey, 2006). The academy has reached a turning point that provides both risk and opportunity. Today's institutions of higher education require leaders at all levels who have developed the leadership skills required to influence the culture and guide the future of their institutions.

The changing landscape has had a significant impact on the entrenched, traditional culture of higher education (Metheney-Fisher, 2013). Often now seen more as businesses with commercial concerns colleges and universities must answer a host of criticisms including whether a college education presents a good value for the money (Mintz, 2017; B. L. Smith & Hughey, 2006). The literature indicates that the future of higher education is unclear, and the solutions are unclear as well. Viewing the current environment as one of opportunity, many writers agree that institutions must embrace uncertainty, willingly challenge assumptions that have existed for centuries and seize this chance to design education that will serve the needs of today's student (Hulme et al., 2016; Mintz, 2017).

To remain relevant, 21st century leadership within all colleges and universities must possess the leadership skills needed to address the changing characteristics of students, meet the goals of the student-centered educational experience, and speak to the impact of technology on the means and methods used to deliver instruction. The current culture of higher education makes it clear that everyone should be prepared to be a leader some of the time and a valuable team member at different times (Collins, 2014). Higher education leaders need to be independent thinkers who are able to anticipate trends, create a vision for opportunity, and be willing to take the risks needed to encourage creativity and innovation to address the future (Mrig & Sanaghan, 2017). An

examination of research on topics pertinent to the changing landscape of American higher education will build the foundation to understand the need for leadership skills development among the higher education administrators who must be prepared to guide today's institutions into the future. Two major changes in the higher education landscape directly impacting the need for development of leadership skills are the changing look of the traditional university student (as impacted by the globalization of education and student-centered approaches in higher education) and the influence of technology.

Changing face of the traditional university student. It is important to understand the changing characteristics of today's traditional college student because the needs of these students impacts the leadership skills needed by today's college and university leaders. The body of literature on trends in higher education strongly indicates that today's college and university students have never looked more different. The average student on today's campus is no longer the recent high school graduate heading off to a university dorm room for a broad-based liberal arts education. In a report by the Office of Educational Technology (2018) titled *Reimagining the Role of Technology in Higher Education*, Ted Mitchel, Under Secretary in the U.S. Department of Education, describes the changing face of the today's university student as follows:

Today's average student is no longer the 18-year-old whose parents drive her up to "State U" in a minivan stuffed with boxes. Instead, the "new normal" student may be a 24-year-old returning veteran, a 36-year-old single mother, a part-time student juggling work and college, or the first-generation college student. The faces we picture as our college hopefuls can't be limited by race, age, income, zip code, disability, or any other factor. (p. 6)

Enrollment statistics indicate that between 2005 and 2015, the percentage of students enrolled in colleges and universities who were over the age of 25 increased by 13% and this increase is expected to continue (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Currently, approximately 40% of college students are over the age of 25, many having returned for retraining or to advance their career (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2018). Once seen as non-traditional, increasingly more college and university students are older students who are likely to be employed full time and married with a family (Mintz, 2017; U.S. Department of Education, 2018). To adapt to the changing look of the traditional student, institutions are designing instructional programs that offer flexibility in course delivery, support for transfer of education to employment, and increased academic and non-academic support (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). In their article *Today's College Students Aren't Who You Think They Are*, Nadowrny and Depenbrock (2018) assign numerical values to the changes seen in today's college students. That data is included in Figure 1, which provides a demographic picture of today's college student. The changing look of today's higher education student requires a change in approach to higher education. Bringing about dramatic change in higher education will require development of additional leadership skills among 21st century higher education leaders.

As the lines between traditional and non-traditional are blending (Racen, 2016), literature indicates that institutions are adapting characteristics previously reserved for the corporate world or the for-profit university environment. Flexible course options, multiple satellite campuses, and a focus on student service offer the options required by today's college and university students, but present challenges for leaders with little

experience in these areas. Today's leaders in higher education need 21st century leadership skills that allow them to be creative with program offerings and transformative in their leadership of culture change that aligns with the changing desires of today's higher education student.

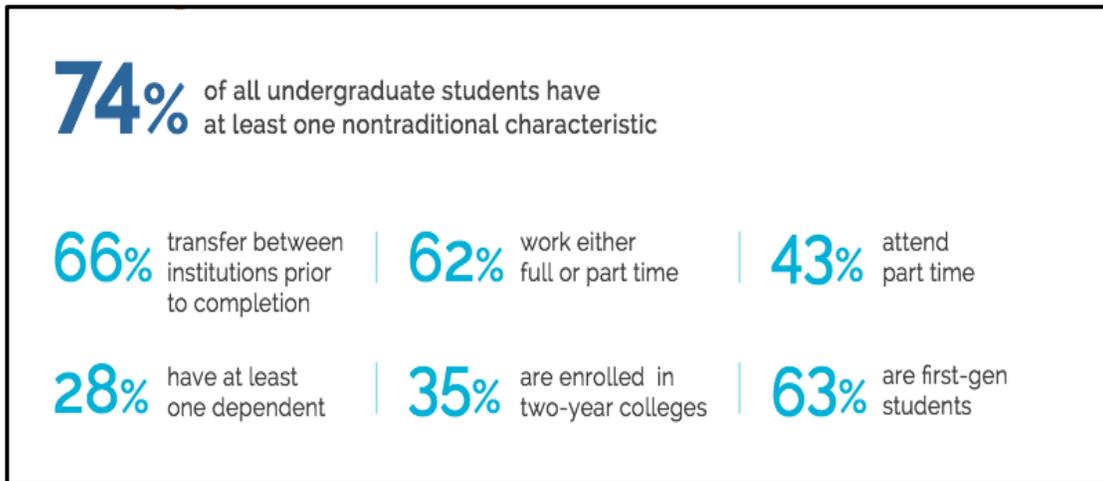


Figure 1. Characteristics of today's higher education student. Adapted from "Today's College Student," by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Globalization of education. An important factor impacting the changing look of today's traditional student is the globalization that has made the world a much smaller place and, as a result, created a significant increase in the diversity seen on college and university campuses. According to the Gates Foundation, there are more students of color, more first-generation students, and more students from low-income backgrounds enrolling in post-secondary education today than in the past (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2018). These claims are supported by statistics from the U.S. Department of Education, NCES (2018) which show a steady increase in enrollment of minority students across all recorded ethnicities between the years 2005 and 2015. The globalization now apparent on college campuses requires leaders who are intuitively cognizant of the diverse factors that typify most campus environments (B. L. Smith &

Hughey, 2006). These leaders must be able to navigate the demographic, economic, and cultural transitions taking place on and off campus as colleges and universities determine how they will address the needs of this increasingly diverse student body (ACE Fellows Program, 2017; Gagliardi et al., 2017). Diversity goes beyond the students on college and university campuses. Institutions are also facing a more ethnically, culturally, and generationally diverse workforce, and will need to develop innovative solutions to accommodate the needs of their valued human resources (Mayhew, n.d.). As the world continues to arrive at the doorstep of academia, college and university leaders must develop leadership skills that provide an understanding of the diversity of student needs on their campuses and the career needs of university employees, and they must possess the ability to apply this understanding for the benefit of their campuses.

Student-centered approach to higher education. It is important to understand how the needs of this new higher education student has created a necessity for leadership development within higher education that is necessary to produce leaders with the 21st century leadership skills needed to lead institutions into a more student-focused education. Today's student is very aware of rising tuition costs and large student loan payments, making value for education a primary concern of most students (The Aspen Institute, 2017). Researchers agree that universities must define the quality of their academic offerings in terms of outcomes and focus their decisions on meeting the needs of students (Mintz, 2017; Racen, 2016). Students understand they need higher education, but have become more selective in their choice of institution and require more from those institutions such as portability, customization, and work-ready programs. Sadly, higher education was not originally designed with these students in mind and many institutions

lack the flexibility needed to support this new student (Mintz, 2017). To adapt to these changing needs, institutions have had to become creative about their programs, which requires leaders with well-developed leadership skills necessary for leading innovation and change.

Recent literature has indicated that higher education may become more student-centered and responsive to the needs of today's student by viewing itself as a system combined of inter-related functions, components, and relationships (Pop, 2018). Systems thinking encourages institutions to view education as a whole, rather than single elements. Adopting a systems approach, will position institutions to adapt a more student-centered approach with programs that offer the following:

- Aligned assessments and certifications at multiple levels that prevent duplication of work and improve timely completion of programs, including competency-based programs assessed based on learning rather than hours.
- Financial aid programs that incentivize outcomes in which students pay for what is learned rather than the time taken to achieve the learning.
- Clear pathways toward career application and assurance that graduates will have knowledge and skills needed to succeed in today's workplace.
- Flexibility, accessibility, and affordability of program offerings that recognize the diversity and mobility of today's student (Racen, 2016).

Traditional academia has been primarily concerned with individual achievement and moving toward a culture built upon inter-connected relationships and collaboration may be challenging to some institutions (Metheney-Fisher, 2013). To remain sustainable and relevant in this student-centered system of education, higher education will need to

develops skills among its leaders that allow them to lead change and migrate culture toward customizability, affordability and innovation (Pop, 2018). Sustainability and relevance are particularly important to Christian colleges and universities who are challenged to maintain both while also demonstrating a spiritual mission.

Influence of technology on higher education. An understanding of the impact of technology on higher education is important because technology influences the leadership skills development needed by today's 21st century higher education leaders. Some have said that technology has changed higher education more than anything else (Frost, 2015). Technology has revolutionized the delivery of education and allowed access to higher education to an even greater number of students (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Delivering curriculum through a variety of sources inside and outside of the classroom setting allows students to take advantage of vast amounts of knowledge and has made learning more relevant by connecting course content to the needs of the student and the learning situation (Racen, 2016).

This new learning experience means the classroom professor is no longer the center of the learning experience (Pop, 2018). Rather, faculty and student have a myriad of resources and expertise available to them from anywhere in the world (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Technology makes these resources available to anyone who needs them. Information is available at one's fingertips. As pointed out by Thomas Friedman (2005) in his book *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*, "never before in the history of the planet have so many people – on their own – had the ability to find so much information about so many things and about so many

other people” (p. 178). No longer is the university professor the sage on the stage, dispensing all information.

Technology has changed higher education for everyone. Its impact on the university workforce has become added momentum for more advanced technology across the institution (Mayhew, n.d.). Digital literacy is an expected skill within the 21st century workplace. Fifteen years ago, 49% of mid-level jobs required medium to high levels of digital literacy, but in today’s work environment, that number has risen to 87% (Valley Vision, 2019). Technology has transformed the way people work across the university.

In 2017, The Aspen Institute conducted a study of college and university presidents regarding the future of higher education. Figure 2 illustrates some of the results from that study as reported with respect to the anticipated impact of technology on higher education. The report shows the shifting face of higher education as it seeks to embrace technology within its midst. University presidents seem to recognize the need for program flexibility and a stronger connection between academia and preparedness for the world of work with 80% agreement that partnerships between corporations and universities will occur in the future and 85% agreeing that interdisciplinary majors will also be found in future programs offered by colleges and universities. Customized degrees (32%), interchangeable courses (33%), and varied term lengths (36%) are gaining momentum, but still have a significant number of university presidents who doubt they will be seen within higher education.

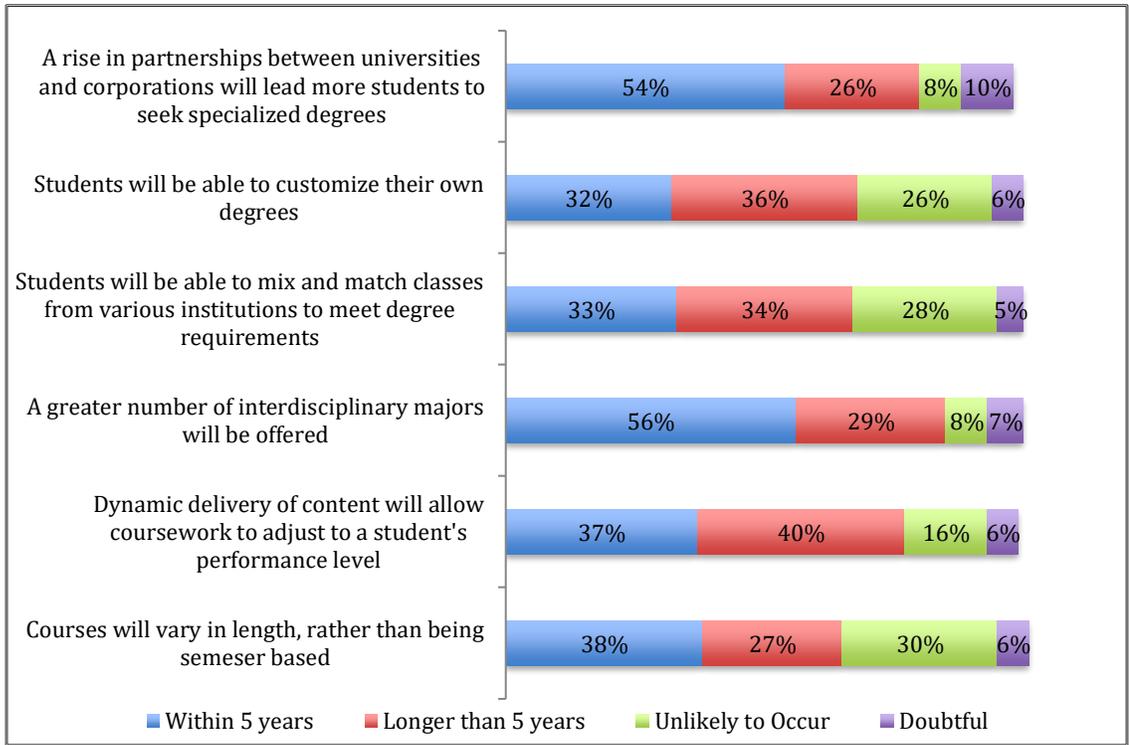


Figure 2. How Will Technology Impact Higher Education in the Future. Adapted from “The Future of Higher Education: How Technology will Shape Learning,” by *The Economist*, 2008. Retrieved from [https://www.nmc.org/pdf/Future-of-Higher-Ed-\(NMC\).pdf](https://www.nmc.org/pdf/Future-of-Higher-Ed-(NMC).pdf)

Online learning. There has, perhaps, been no greater example of the impact of technology on higher education than in the development of online education. With the advent of digital technology and the internet, the field of education is able to provide students access to education at virtually any time and in any place (Siemens, Gasevic, & Dawson, 2015). This unlimited student access to higher education learning through technology is provided at a much lower cost and with greater flexibility (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). The cost and accommodations offered by technology and online learning are well suited to the desires of today’s student looking for flexible access and connection to future value. It is important to understand the impact online learning has had on higher education to have a clear picture of the overall leadership skills needed to lead within this relatively new and different learning environment.

The first online course was offered in 1981, and it was immediately apparent higher education would never be the same (Siemens et al., 2015). A report by Allen and Seaman in 2011, published by the Sloan Consortium stated that 6.1 million students had taken at least one online course in the fall 2010 term (as cited in Siemens et al., 2015). That number has multiplied greatly in the last eight years. Arizona State University (ASU) provides an example of the impact of online learning to support and change their institution. In approximately 10 years, ASU added 140 online degree programs increasing their enrollment from 47,000 students to 300,000 (Siu, 2016). Although ASU is a public university, private institutions, including Christian colleges and universities, have also embraced online learning. Grand Canyon University, a Christian university in Phoenix, Arizona, maintains 111,211 students in its unduplicated headcount and Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia has 109,921 students in its headcount. Both universities carry the majority of their students in online courses (Leingang, 2018). The addition of online learning into the higher education environment has increased enrollment dramatically without requirement of additional classrooms and overhead inherent in face-to-face courses.

Preparing Future Leaders in the 21st Century

Changing technology, including online education, has transformed higher education and created a need for new leadership skills among higher education leaders. However, technology is not the only area impacting leadership needs within higher education. The increased diversity affecting campus student bodies is also apparent at all levels of the university workforce, including staff, faculty, and administration. Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y are mixing in classrooms and in conference

rooms. The 21st century leader must possess the skills to lead effectively in a rapidly changing and diverse environment, which includes the ability to bring a diverse team of individuals together to achieve their fullest potential (Jefferson, 2015). Leadership skills development of mid-level leaders within higher education, including Christian higher education, is important for these institutions that seek to be at the forefront of the 21st century trends affecting their campuses.

The 21st Century Workforce

Today's workforce is diverse in both values and needs, which has created different expectations for the workplace and for development. The 21st century workforce will need to combine hard and soft skills tailored to the specific needs of their institution, including the ability to think clearly about complex problems, apply creative and innovative solutions, and apply new knowledge and skills in new settings (Short & Keller-Bell, 2019). Leading in the 21st century will require more versatility than ever before and leaders must have the leadership skills and competencies necessary to address rising trends in higher education. There are three workforce trends on university campuses that are changing the current work culture and will require competent leadership to move forward into the future. They are the rise of the multi-generational workplace, the growth of technology and the need for digital literacy, and the desire for work flexibility.

Multi-generational workplace. When factoring in student employees, it is not unprecedented to have as many as five generations working in one department on campus. Each of these generations brings its own attitudes, beliefs, habits and expectations to the workplace (Graystone, 2019). Generational differences and differing

work values can lead to complications and misunderstandings about desired work outcomes (Word & Sowa, 2017). Leaders must be able to create understanding of the strengths and attributes of each generation as they develop and lead age-diverse teams. Finding methods for bringing a team together to celebrate the positive attributes of each generation is an important skill for higher education leaders (“6 Emerging Leadership Trends,” 2018). This is especially true within Christian higher education where values can be closely aligned to institutional mission. Employees attracted to the mission and values of an institution expect a work environment that matches those values (Word & Sowa, 2017). Leaders will need to understand the importance of those values as they effectively navigate the disparity of expectations and guide a multi-generational team toward a common purpose (Graystone, 2019).

Technology and digital literacy. Increased technology usage both inside and outside of the classroom, global interconnectivity, and new media sources are disrupting the landscape of higher education (Short & Keller-Bell, 2019). The digitalization of work is affecting jobs across all organizations and industries, including higher education (Valley Vision, 2019). Jobs are changing and the skills needed for those jobs are changing as well. Digital-age literacy was identified as a part of a nationally-recognized 21st century skill set essential to workplace success (enGauge, 2003). As higher education adjusts to the growing demands caused by changes in technology, it will require a workforce that is digitally literate and able to navigate the rapidly changing landscape.

Work flexibility. The nonstop, technology-driven global environment is causing people to rethink the traditional concepts of time and space with relationship to work

(Mayhew, n.d.). Technology has transformed what people do for a living and how they do it (Litchfield, Cooper, Hancock, & Watt, 2016). Flexibility in work hours and in the workplace are becoming common practice across the nation, including in higher education. Within the non-profit sector, including private Christian higher education, employees found that the freedom over work functions and work schedules were particularly attractive (Word & Sowa, 2017). Work flexibility in terms of when and where work is completed is particularly attractive to younger workers who may have a different value set with respect to work-life balance and may be less willing to sacrifice their home life for their employer (Conlon, 2004). In this era of rapid change, everyone on the college and university campus must be prepared to be both a team member and a leader. To move their workforce into the future, higher education must support the development of individuals at all levels so they may initiate and lead innovative scholarly and institutional change (Collins, 2014).

Leadership Skills Development Leading into the 21st Century

An understanding of the history of leadership skills development leading into the 21st century is important to provide a complete picture of leadership development practices and needs within higher education. As higher education responds to the changes in its current environment, it will require leaders who possess the leadership skills necessary to navigate the change needed to move institutions from their comfort levels within traditional practices. Only recently has higher education begun to look at the leadership skills needed for successful leadership. The 21st century will require higher education leaders who can anticipate future trends, are willing to make tough decisions, and can foster the creativity to progress forward (Mrig & Sanaghan, 2019).

Leaders impact an organization's culture and an organization's culture impacts its leadership (B. M. Bass & Avolio, 1990). The corporate world has understood this premise for some time and has embraced leadership identification and development for many years. Business environments understand that managing leadership talent is necessary for a business to thrive and survive (Riccio, 2010). Yet, even with significant evidence of its success, leadership skills development within higher education has not been a common practice. Rather, the higher education academy often leaves leader identification to chance and leadership development to fortuitous experiences. The review of literature on leadership skills development within higher education suggests the need for a paradigm shift within higher education to expand its views and identify best practices for development of emerging leaders within its halls.

Leadership skills development within corporate culture. Since leadership skills development has been historically associated within corporate culture for quite some time, an understanding of its historical influences provides a foundation for a study on the leadership development culture found within colleges and universities. The earliest literature on leadership development primarily focused on succession planning for top-level executives. By the early 1980s, it was understood that leadership development requires a long-term focus, and literature began to reflect a change from the short-term concept of executive replacement to a longer term concept of leadership skills development as viewed on a continuum over time (Barton, 2016; Luna, 2012). Much of the credit for moving the leadership development conversation toward longer-term thinking lies with Jack Welch's success during his tenure at General Electric. Welch believed that leader development was the heart and soul of every company and lived this

out by creating an organizational culture that focused on identifying leadership potential early in an individual's career and developing it continuously (Kornik, 2006). Welch's model of inclusive leadership empowered employees at every level to rise to new heights (Kornik, 2006). Day, Fleenor, McKee, Atwater, and Sturm (2014) later research supported Welch's intuition in finding that leadership skills development should be an intentional, daily activity of organizational leaders.

Leadership development practices have changed significantly since the mid-1990s, largely as a result of growing leadership research. Developing individual leaders and effective leadership processes isn't straightforward and easy. Research proved that simply choosing a leadership theory and applying it within the organization is not enough (Day et al., 2014). Day et al. (2014) and others understood that leadership development involves human beings, and humans are complex individuals who develop over time. For this reason, the breadth of literature on leadership development includes a variety of issues involving leadership skills, leadership experience, and leadership characteristics (Day et al., 2014). Leadership skills development research has continued to evolve, with more recent leadership studies including identification of leaders within an organization and a focus on leader development that involves skills development within the individual necessary for both personal and professional growth.

Although the historical context for leader identification and development is relatively short, a fairly significant body of research has been accumulated. Early studies examined leadership skills development within the context of the leader's role in an attempt to determine common leadership characteristics that could predict behavior (Middlehurst, 2012). Often drawing from military examples, early leadership skills

research sought to identify how specific leadership skills were developed over the course of a leader's career (Day et al., 2014). One of the most significant studies supporting the stratification of leadership skills and the need for continuing leadership skills development throughout a leader's career was the 2007 study by Mumford, Campion, and Morgeson. In their study of just over 1000 professional United States government employees, they found that positions at higher level within an organization require higher levels of leadership skills. As leaders are promoted to more senior leadership positions, it is important that they have developed the leadership skills needed for those roles (Mumford, Campion, & Morgeson, 2007). Mumford et al.'s study typified findings that the need for development of certain leadership skills increased as one rose through career levels, and the development of advanced leadership skills was important for those rising into more senior level positions (Day et al., 2014).

To provide the most complete picture of the research, leadership research has distinguished between leader development and leadership development. Leader development concentrates development efforts on individual leaders whereas leadership development focuses the process on developing leadership skills and abilities among multiple individuals (Day et al., 2014). More recently, leader development has been associated with the process of intentionally identifying potential leaders within an organization (Riccio, 2010; Trotta, 2013). As we will explore later in this chapter, emerging leaders can also be developed as leaders within context of the organizational structure.

Leadership skills development within higher education. Leadership skills development within higher education has a much shorter history. An understanding of

the nature of leadership development within higher education is necessary to gain a clear picture of the culture in which leadership development within higher education takes place. For much of its history, the hierarchical nature of higher education has informed its patterns of leadership development and typical leadership trajectories have been almost accidental with little focus on planned leadership development (Inman, 2007). This lack of intentional leadership skills development, coupled with the structured hierarchy of higher education, provided little incentive to study leadership within the higher education academy. As a result, there is little early research on leadership skills development within higher education. This seems incongruent with the findings of some early researchers who suggest that corporate leadership characteristics may not apply within the context of higher education (Bryman, 2007).

Bass and Avolio conducted much of the earliest research on transformational leadership, and as a result of that research, higher education began to open the doors to research on leadership development within higher education. Much of this research has centered on leadership as doing, leadership with respect to gender, race and ethnicity, and role-based leadership with a primary focus on college and university presidents (Amey, 2006). This position-specific focus on leadership and leadership development has been a criticism of leadership development research in higher education. While it is clear that colleges and universities contain a variety of leadership roles with specific leadership skills expectations, including mid-level administrative positions such as directors, department chairs, managers, etc., these roles are seldom covered by researchers and are rarely considered in relation to the leadership effectiveness (Bryman, 2007). Despite the growing body of research on the value of leadership development, the lack of literature

on leadership skills development within higher education continues to indicate that leader identification and development within higher education remains far from the intentional approaches seen within other organizational contexts.

Challenges to Leadership Development within Higher Education

To better understand the importance of the leadership skills development for leaders at all levels of higher education who must lead within the midst of the significant culture change occurring in higher education it is important to review literature that reveals the challenges unique to higher education which impact higher education leadership. Higher education is in the midst of rapid technological advancements, changing student expectations, and a shifting organizational culture that make today's environment more turbulent than ever (Ahmad et al., 2015). The sheer burden of the responsibilities required by leadership in today's universities makes it difficult to offer a single response to the leadership needs facing higher education today (Stefani, 2015). Leading change of this magnitude requires development of formal and informal, senior and mid-level, leaders (Amey, 2006). However, the focus of many higher education administrators and leaders tends toward daily activities and crisis management rather than the development of leadership skills needed to lead others within their span of care (Heuer, 2003). There are three major events that present significant challenges impacting leadership development within higher education. These challenges are as follows: (a) the impact of leadership attrition affecting higher education; (b) the leadership structure typically found within higher education; and (c) the leadership culture common to higher education.

Impact of leadership attrition. The baby boom generation is defined as those people born between 1946 and 1964, and in America, that number is more than 75 million people, or over a quarter of all Americans (Casselman, 2014). Baby boomers have held a dominant place in the American workforce, accounting for approximately 38% of the entire American workforce but that number is declining (Catalyst, 2017). Using information from the U.S. Census Bureau, Casselman (2014) found that in 2003, 82% of boomers were part of the labor force, but by 2013, that number had declined to 66%. Casselman also found that every month more than one quarter million Americans turn 65 – the typical retirement age of most workers (Casselman, 2014). The impact of these statistics is supported by Gilbert’s (2018) research that indicates 10,000 baby boomers are currently retiring on a daily basis. Casselman and Gilbert agree that the impact of an aging American workforce is reaching a critical point in the United States. Additional research indicates higher education is also feeling the effect of impending retirement and attrition.

Many colleges and universities grew as baby boomers began to attend college in record numbers in the 1960s, and institutions are now faced with an abundance of aging workers who were hired during those years of rapid expansion (Leubsdorf, 2006). Current research supports Leubsdorf’s earlier claims, with recent projections indicating a 50% turnover among senior leaders in higher education beginning in 2014 could continue for more than a decade (Klein & Salk, 2013). There is a fair degree of agreement and certainty that higher education will be impacted significantly by the multiple retirements of senior leaders, senior faculty, and other leaders who reach retirement age and leave the academy. This impact will be multiplied in many instances because anticipated

successors are aging as well (Leubsdorf, 2006). Given the results found in the literature, multiple studies agree that there is a serious need for well-prepared leaders to replace the gaps anticipated in leadership roles within higher education (Barton, 2016; Klein & Salk, 2013; Leubsdorf, 2006). Succession planning within all levels of higher education is critical if colleges and universities are going to be able to sustain leadership within their institutions. Future leaders must be identified, developed and prepared to step easily into the roles of their predecessors.

For some time, research has suggested that leader recruitment and professional development will be important to prepare for the turnover of senior administrators facing higher education (Betts et al., 2009). While the need for leadership recruitment has been recognized in research, it is inconsistent with more current research that points to a lack of qualified and interested leadership candidates and indications that traditional leadership pipelines are running dry (Luna, 2012; Selingo et al., 2017). This recent research is supported by the real-world example that search firms are finding it difficult to locate qualified and prepared individuals for leadership positions within higher education (Leubsdorf, 2006). This leadership void has made it necessary to look at leadership development practices from a more diverse perspective, including building leadership skills capacity internally within individuals not traditionally seen as leadership matches (Luna, 2012). There is consensus within the literature that higher education leadership will be impacted by coming leadership attrition and must, therefore, invest in leadership skills development of administrators at all levels, including mid-level leaders, to respond to the expected deficit of prepared leaders. Again, leadership development at

all levels is important to succession planning and the sustainability of university leadership which is needed to ensure the continuation of the institutional mission.

Leadership structure within higher education. As those in senior levels of administration retire, they will take with them an abundance of institutional knowledge accumulated during their years of experience. Colleges and universities cannot afford the brain drain that will walk away upon retirement of many senior administrators (Trotta, 2013). There is little doubt in the literature that the leaders needed to guide postsecondary institutions in today's complex environment must view their work and their role differently (Amey, 2006). Higher education is extremely hierarchical in nature and leadership is most often exercised through position on the organization chart (ACE Fellows Program, 2017). Unfortunately, position does not necessarily equate with leadership ability and/or effectiveness. An understanding of the leadership structure common to higher education is important to any discussion that may suggest it is time for a change to the current leadership structure and leadership development practices within higher education.

The literature is nearly unanimous in the view that leaders and administrators in higher education often find themselves in leadership roles quite by accident, having acquired those roles unintentionally and with little preparation (Garza & Eddy, 2008; Inman, 2007; Metheney-Fisher, 2013). In fact, in some faculty circles, leadership is actually stigmatized or seen as *going over to the dark side* (Leubsdorf, 2006; Selingo et al., 2017). Since leadership was not the goal, studies indicate that many currently in leadership indicate they were initially ambivalent to accepting a leadership position and have spent little focused time on the development of leadership skills important to the

position in which they are now found (DeZure et al., 2014). All too often, new administrators are left to fend for themselves, learning the needed leadership skills while on the job (Grotrian-Ryan, 2015).

Given that pathways into leadership roles within higher education are rarely made clear or explicit it is understandable that leaders find themselves in positions unaware and unprepared (Betts et al., 2009; DeZure et al., 2014). By defining visible career paths within and across institutional divisions, there will be a larger pool of candidates who through professional development will be prepared for senior administrative positions (Betts et al., 2009). Since many leaders in higher education were originally hired as faculty members, they had been trained teachers and researchers with no intention of entering into leadership positions (Metheney-Fisher, 2013). DeZure et al. (2014) recognized that the skills needed to be a scholar are not necessarily aligned to those needed for effective leadership. While leadership skills may have been noticed in these individuals, the lack of intentionality to further develop those leadership skills means leaders may be unaware of the need to continue to grow in these leadership areas or even the need to develop leadership skills.

Leadership culture within higher education. The leadership culture within higher education has a direct impact on the nature of leadership skills development of current and future higher education leaders, including those that hold mid-level leadership roles who seek to advance into senior positions. The overall culture of higher education is entrenched with individual achievement (Metheney-Fisher, 2013). The literature reflects that faculty enjoy the autonomy offered by higher education and are recognized for their scholarly research, teaching effectiveness, and efficiency - not for

accepting leadership roles or excelling in the management of departments or personnel (Bisbee, 2007; DeZure et al., 2014). The spirit of autonomy and academic freedom within higher education has created a culture focused on individual interests and discipline, rather than the quality of the institution. Riccio (2010) sums this up by saying, “it is ironic that the higher education environment that prides itself on continuous learning and forward thinking spends very little time and effort identifying its future leaders” (p. 17). As might be expected, this independent culture of higher education poses unique challenges to leadership development. In contrast, some research seems to suggest that the hierarchical structure and nature of higher education leadership may be changing. M. Wolverton et al. (2007) found only 60% of college deans had been department heads and approximately 40% of college deans had been associate deans. Claiming that academic leaders are now climbing many different career ladders, M. Wolverton et al. implies that the higher education leadership structure may be slowly responding to the changing landscape of higher education.

This leadership culture and structure has led to challenges within academia and the tendency of faculty members to lack interest in moving into administrative positions. Recognition, rank, and promotion are based on individual efforts and scholarly pursuits. As pointed out by Inman (2007), the advancement into positions of leadership has the potential to erode the self-identity developed through career success as a faculty member. The higher education culture of “publish or perish” has led faculty to be skeptical of the value of stepping into a leadership role, with many believing that the time commitment to leadership will hinder their promotion (Inman, 2007). Developing an understanding of the hesitancy to move into leadership roles and identifying the existing obstacles may

help create a greater willingness in faculty to assume leadership roles (Klein & Salk, 2013). The evidence presented in literature that faculty are disinterested in administrative positions leads to a tentative conclusion that it may be necessary to find other administrative leaders within higher education outside of the faculty ranks. By virtue of their positions, mid-level leaders have already indicated an interest and willingness to pursue an administrative position and may be candidates for further leadership skills development.

Once a leadership position within higher education has been accepted, either intentionally or by default, further development of leadership skills within the individual is important to both the individual's success as a leader and to the success of the program, department, or division. Yet, the individualized culture within higher education has impacted leadership development efforts as well, with most viewing leadership skills development as an individual endeavor (ACE Fellows Program, 2017). Within the autonomous nature of higher education, leaders who desire growth and development often must find it on their own or learn on the job (Amey, 2006; Grotrian-Ryan, 2015). This is in direct contrast to the corporate world wherein 78% of companies around the world have identified leadership development as a primary issue and 84% offer formal learning programs within their own organization (Selingo et al., 2017). Given the changing landscape of higher education and the trend toward similarities with the business environment, it is suggested that higher education could benefit by embracing leadership skills development of mid-level leaders to prepare them to lead within their areas of influence and to advance within the institution. Christian universities are not exempt from this suggestion since these institutions face the same challenges as their

secular counterparts, along with the added challenge of leadership from a Christian perspective.

Mid-Level Leaders in Higher Education

It is important to understand the role of mid-level leaders in higher education because they provide a pipeline of future leaders for colleges and universities. These leaders may eventually become the successors to those currently holding senior leadership positions. An understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and advancement needs of those in mid-level leadership positions provides critical information needed for a discussion on succession planning and the leadership skills development needed by those currently holding mid-level leadership positions.

According to the 2016 IPEDS data of the U.S. Department of Education, there are 1,839,885 professional staff performing academic and institutional support functions for four-year universities within the United States. Mid-level leaders and administrators make up the largest portion of that group with 937,354 individuals serving institutions. Of those, 342,196 are serving at private, non-profit universities, (U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2018), and it can be presumed that this includes Christian universities. Despite these numbers, mid-level leaders and administrators are often overlooked and their contributions are unrecognized (Garza & Eddy, 2008; Rosser, 2004). Rosser's 2004 seminal study on mid-level leaders was one of the first to examine work-life issues impacting mid-level administrator's role satisfaction and morale. Calling them "unsung heroes," Rosser (2004) found that mid-level leaders were committed to their roles and understood the importance of providing effective leadership within their areas of influence; yet, they were rarely provided with leadership development or training need to

ensure they had the leadership skills required to effectively provide the leadership needed in their roles. Rosser's findings were validated in future studies that showed higher education lacked a formal structure to provide leadership skills development for mid-level leaders (Garza & Eddy, 2008; Little, 2016). Leading at this middle level in higher education is complex and requires leadership skills (Inman, 2007). However, there are few opportunities for mid-level leaders to develop these skills both prior to their accepting their positions and after they have moved into them.

Roles and Responsibilities

Mid-level leaders are an essential group of individuals whose support roles are integral to the goals and mission of the academic institution (Mather, Bryan, & Faulkner, 2009; Rosser, 2004). They typically hold roles such as director (including assistant or associate director), student affairs officers, and/or administrative managers with responsibility for budgets, compliance, student programs, housing, advising, and other institutional support programs (E. C. Smith, 2014). Mid-level leaders and administrators lead from the middle, holding the place between decision-making and decision implementation (Rosser, 2004). Their position provides them unique access to the process of policy-making and the realities of implementing and enforcing those policies (Mather et al., 2009; E. C. Smith, 2014). Given the responsibilities associated with their positions, mid-level leaders are often called upon to enforce policies in which they had no input (E. C. Smith, 2014; Wenzel, 2013). This often leaves mid-level leaders in a thankless, isolated position from which they must balance the communication of institutional policies and directives with the needs of those they lead who provide support and service to the institution (Little, 2016; Rosser, 2004). The possession of leadership

skills among mid-level leaders is critical to the delivery of the institution's message, mission, and vision to those in all levels of the university.

Barriers to Advancement

Participants in Garza and Eddy's 2008 study of mid-level leaders identified two key barriers to advancement: the lack of opportunities within their current institutions and their own unwillingness to relocate for a new position. Although mid-level leaders may need to take responsibility for their unwillingness to relocate, it is noted that these positions do not typically provide the incentives that make this choice viable. Higher education operates within a flat, hierarchical system that does not provide for upward mobility in mid-level administrative positions (E. C. Smith, 2014). Existing administrative structure and hierarchical expectations provide little incentive or opportunity to move into administrative positions higher up the organizational ladder (Garza & Eddy, 2008). This system is further complicated by the existence of different administrative hierarchies for academic administrative positions and non-academic administrative positions, which each have their own levels of support for career growth and advancement opportunities (E. C. Smith, 2014).

Both academic and non-academic administrative positions lack clear pathways for advancement but for different reasons (Betts et al., 2009; Inman, 2007; Wenzel, 2013). As pointed out by Inman (2007), mid-level academic administrators are challenged by the individualistic nature of the faculty role that can create a lack of interest in advancement into administrative positions, but once accepted, promotion is typically available through a structured system. By contrast, opportunities for advancement within non-academic, mid-level leadership positions typically require a job change rather than promotion (E. C.

Smith, 2014). The literature agrees that the barriers preventing mid-level leaders from advancing into senior level positions could be removed with leadership skills development. This claim was further supported by Little's 2016 study in which participants indicated the need for a clear professional development plan to provide greater opportunities for advancement.

Identifying Emerging Leaders

It is incredibly difficult to determine leadership needs in this changing higher education environment. An understanding of how the emerging leaders can be identified is important because this practice provides institutions the opportunity to provide leadership skill development opportunities to individuals with leadership potential or desire to assist their growth as they move into future leadership roles. This understanding will benefit succession-planning efforts that are necessary at all levels of an organization to ensure a continuation of leadership that supports the institutional mission and vision.

Jack Welch said, "when you become a leader, success is all about growing others" (as cited in Stefani, 2015, p. 64). Leadership identification and development has been a component of the corporate world for many years. Business environments understand that managing leadership talent is necessary for a business to thrive and survive (Riccio, 2010). Yet, even with significant evidence of its success, identifying and developing emerging leaders within higher education has not become common practice. Rather, the literature strongly indicates that higher education has not developed sufficient methods for identifying emerging talent and developing leadership within its ranks, and often leaves leadership identification and leader skills development to chance and luck. A review of the literature will demonstrate the need for a paradigm shift within higher

education to expand its views and identify best practices for identifying and developing emerging leaders.

The need for a well-developed talent pool of future leaders is supported by research inside and outside of higher education. Researchers agree that an intentional, strategic, and focused effort to develop leadership skills in mid-level leaders within the halls of higher education is crucial to attracting leaders already working within colleges and universities. As has been discussed previously in this chapter, leadership identification and development has never been more important than it is now due to the leadership attrition and brain drain impacting higher education. A steady supply of well-qualified leaders affects the future viability and competitiveness of a university (Trotta, 2013). The literature agrees that to ensure there are trained leaders in the academy, institutions must develop clear paths to leadership for mid-level leaders and faculty to increase their future talent pool (DeZure et al., 2014; Klein & Salk, 2013). Identification of potential leaders early in their careers allows institutions to provide support, training, development, and encouragement needed to push individuals beyond their comfort zone to explore leadership positions they may not have chosen and to equip individuals to take on future leadership roles (Stefani, 2015). However, challenges within higher education make early identification and training of leaders complicated.

Two complications to leader identification within higher education have been identified most often within the literature. One of these complications was identified earlier in this chapter and that is the career ladders of administrative leaders in higher education have many entry points (Bisbee, 2007). The lack of clear pathways into leadership roles makes it difficult to identify those individuals who are on a leadership

trajectory (DeZure et al., 2014). The lack of career pathways was recognized in an early study by Inman (2007) when she found that leaders in her study moved into their leadership positions because no one else was available. This was supported by Garza and Eddy (2008) who found that the mid-level leadership participants in their study had also moved into their current positions unplanned. Much of the early work was confirmed in literature during later years, including Metheney-Fisher's (2013) study in which the majority of respondents indicated they had not intended to become leaders, but received the position when someone had recognized leadership within them. While it is clear that chance may have led to the advancement of mid-level leaders into leadership positions, it is also clear that their competence played a role in their advancement as well (Inman, 2007). However, as has been seen, since many leaders and administrators unintentionally find themselves in their leadership roles, they often lack the leadership skills and preparation needed for these roles (Garza & Eddy, 2008; Inman, 2007; Metheney-Fisher, 2013).

A further complication to leader identification is the egalitarian nature of higher education that makes it unnatural to single out one person for a leadership position (Barton, 2016). Individuals groomed for leadership are viewed negatively for violating the egalitarian principles of the academy (Luna, 2012). In their study titled *Cultivating the Next Generation of Academic Leaders*, DeZure et al. (2014) found that higher education faculty were skeptical about the value of holding a leadership role, believing the role would keep faculty from promotion. Many also felt that leadership was not their responsibility. DeZure et al.'s findings were similar to those found in Garza and Eddy's (2008) study of mid-level leaders who stated that the hierarchical structure within higher

education provided little incentive for seeking leadership positions. This individualistic culture common to higher education has resulted in the hierarchical view of leadership familiar within higher education (Amey, 2006). To build a leadership culture, colleges and universities will need to recognize the autonomous nature of their current culture and take steps to move it toward shared leadership (Stefani, 2015).

Research supports the need for identification and development of emerging leaders within the ranks of higher education. Walseth (2009) recognized that thoughtful consideration to identifying future leaders early in their careers allows institutions to cultivate and nurture talent for the future success of the institution. This was supported by Luna's (2012) study which found that despite indications that the benefits of formal grow-your-own leadership outweighed the institutional investment, few colleges and universities had formalized plans for succession to senior leadership positions. However, others understood there were challenges associated with the identification and development of leaders within higher education. Bisbee's (2007) study determined that although potential leaders were in existence, the process of identification and development was either inadequate or late. Further, programs that are designed to provide leadership skills development, training, career planning, and succession planning have been shown to create a competitive edge for the institution (Luna, 2012). The benefits of such programs are significant and academic institutions must look at developing clear paths to leadership for their junior faculty and staff to increase the future talent pool (Klein & Salk, 2013). Given the lack of existing research on the topic, additional research is needed to more fully understand how current leaders in higher education are identified and how they can develop leadership skills (Bisbee, 2007)

Christian Higher Education

An understanding of the nature of Christian higher education is important to this study on the development of leadership skills among mid-level leaders within Christian higher education because it illuminates the distinct aspects of Christian higher education that create the need for leadership development within Christian institutions. Christian higher education is a significant part of the higher education landscape within the United States. There are 1600 private four-year college and university campuses in the United States, and 900 of these institutions define themselves as religiously affiliated, comprising 19.5% of the degree granting postsecondary institutions in the nation. These institutions have a total enrollment of over 1.5 million students (Adringa, 2007, U.S. Department of Education 2018). Christian colleges and universities are classified as private universities meaning they operate their institutions with private funding, although they may receive public money in the form of student loans and grants. By contrast, public universities receive their funding through state and/or federal governments, and are often referred to as state universities. Given that they are tuition-based institutions, private colleges and universities are critically impacted by enrollment and are typically significantly more expensive than public universities. Tuition costs in private universities have increased by 146% in the last 30 years (Hulme et al., 2016).

Private Christian universities have an even greater distinction than simply tuition funding patterns. Private Christian institutions contrast with secular institutions because their mission is to develop students' faith along with their intellect (Cliburn & Alleman, 2017). Those colleges and universities that identify themselves as specifically Christian may vary in their identity with respect to denomination and educational practices. In

many Christian colleges and universities, including those institutions that are members of the CCCU, all aspects of the Christian college campus, including faculty, staff, and administration, are called to help facilitate a culture of faith and spiritual formation on campus (Cliburn & Alleman, 2017). Klein and Salk (2013) agreed with Cliburn and Alleman's (2017) finding as pointed out by their statement that the communication of the mission and vision of the institution are a critical aspect of all the institution's leaders, and great importance is placed on the ability to live out the faith mission of the institution.

As previously described in this chapter, there is a significant amount of literature that indicates the landscape of higher education is experiencing significant change. Shifting student demographics, the proliferation of technology, and the move from traditional learning platforms have created an unstable environment to which Christian higher education must adapt to remain viable (Ahmad et al., 2015; Aspen Institute, 2017; Hulme et al., 2016). Hulme, Groom, and Heltzel (2016) continue this idea stating that it is becoming an increasingly complex task to maintain a distinctly Christian mission while providing an educational experience that attracts a diverse array of students. Yet, this task is vital to the sustainability of Christian higher education. The nature of faith-based institutions creates additional challenges in the development of leadership skills. Christian colleges and universities face the challenge of finding skilled leaders with an acute understanding of academia who are adept at institutional management, and are also able to communicate the cultural values and biblical views of the institution's faith foundation. To ensure full understanding of the institutional values, many Christian colleges and universities expect those who hold leadership positions at any level to be a

faith match with the Christian values of the institution (Womack, 2009). This is especially true in CCCU institutions that have an expectation that all faculty and staff, regardless of position, will be a faith match to the institution in which they serve (CCCU, 2018a). Finding highly skilled leaders who also match the institution's faith foundation narrows the leadership talent pipeline considerably (Barton, 2016). Given this challenge, it may be in the best interest of a Christian institution to develop leadership skills within those leaders who are already on campus. Doing so creates a stronger leadership pipeline by using leaders who are already on campus and who already express a Christian faith.

Unique Challenges Facing Christian Higher Education

It is important to understand the unique challenges facing Christian higher education to grasp the necessity for the specific leadership skills development required to develop leaders within Christian colleges and universities who are able to lead at all levels within the institution. Christian colleges and universities face many of the same challenges as their secular counterparts. However, they have the added burden of additional financial concerns, cultural challenges, and a shrinking leadership pipeline (Barton, 2016). The first of these concerns is economic survival, which presents a very real challenge for many Christian institutions. In response to questions about leading Christian universities in a changing world, former CCCU President, Robert Adringa (2007) noted that it is impossible for any private university to rely solely on tuition and endowments for their economic stability, and this has caused private Christian colleges and universities to find more creative means for generating revenue sources (Adringa, 2007). Many colleges and universities have become dependent on government support to maintain their existence and accepting this support has presented unique challenges to the

faith mission of some institutions (Andringa, 2007). Christian colleges and universities have always placed themselves within the cultural issues of their day, but these issues now impact revenue streams in a manner that has caused institutions to think deeply about their core institutional values and beliefs.

The cultural challenges facing today's institutions of Christian higher education are numerous. To begin, today's student is seeking opportunities often not found in the small, rural towns in which many Christian institutions have located. Rather, students prefer the excitement and opportunities of an urban environment (Andringa, 2007). To compound factors, research has shown that the beginning of a shift in thinking which is moving away from a traditional liberal arts education has challenged both the economics and the mission of many Christian colleges and universities (Hulme et al., 2016). As previously discussed in this chapter, today's student requires value for his college education dollar and the expensive, but general, liberal arts education offered by many Christian institutions does not translate well to today's career-minded students (Andringa, 2007). As Christian colleges and universities struggle to address declining enrollment, it is tempting to stray from traditional faith-based values, especially in smaller, institutions that are particularly susceptible to volatile enrollment climate (Henck, 2011).

This temptation points to what is, perhaps, the greatest challenge facing faith-based institutions today - the ability to retain a distinctly Christian perspective in a rapidly changing world. Christian universities relate Christ to culture and moral formation of students is a fundamental aspect of the academic experience on their campuses (Morgan, 2012). Morgan (2012) also points out that the staunchly conservative viewpoints of many Christian colleges and universities in areas of human sexuality,

creation, and Biblical authority have been challenged by today's college students who must react to continually redefined cultural standards. Adringa (2007) supports Morgan's viewpoints and insists that Christian universities must make clear the distinctions that make their academic experience unique and provide those experiences to the students who desire them. In contrast, Hulme et al. (2016) have suggested that it is time for Christian higher education to reimagine itself to address the challenges it faces. By challenging existing assumptions and reimagining themselves through innovative solutions, Christian colleges and universities can maintain their unique distinctive and thrive in a changing environment (Hulme et al., 2016).

Whether navigating change or addressing challenges, Christian higher education requires skilled leaders at all levels who possess the ability to build relationships as well as manage budgets. The intentional planning and design required to move an organization through the change process is even more important in Christian higher education because of the sometimes competing values of higher education and Christian ideals (Henck, 2011). This view is supported by Hulme et al. (2016), who point out that this challenge can find Christian higher education caught between their purpose and their solvency. Henck (2011) and Hulme et al. agree that Christian colleges and universities must fight the tendency to blur the distinctions that make them different in an effort to attract more students. Henck further asserts that the solution to this challenge can be met through exemplary academic and administrative oversight that works to maintain the missional values of the institution. Provision of such oversight will require development of leadership skills by leaders at all levels within Christian colleges and universities.

Leadership Skills Development of Mid-level leaders in Christian Higher Education

It is important to understand the need for leadership skills development of mid-level leaders in Christian higher education because these leaders provide a pipeline of future leaders within their institutions. Before they can lead within their institutions, mid-level leaders must be prepared for their future roles. It has been said many times that mid-level leaders are the *unsung professionals of the academy* (Cliburn & Alleman, 2017; Garza & Eddy, 2008; Rosser, 2004). Their days are busy with essential work that flows between the requests of those in senior leadership positions and the requirements of leading those who report to them. Within Christian higher education, mid-level leaders are asked to manage these roles while integrating their faith into the workplace (Cliburn & Alleman, 2017). Without a formal structure in place to plan for career movement or assist with development of leadership skills once in the position most mid-level leaders are left to fend for themselves to find development both in faith and in profession (Garza & Eddy, 2008).

Although there are no studies specifically addressing leadership skills development of mid-level leaders within Christian higher education, Sermersheim and Keim's 2005 study of 450 mid-level student affairs managers in higher education addressed leadership skills development of mid-level leaders in higher education. Their study found that leadership skills ranked highest in importance for these mid-level leaders (Sermersheim & Keim, 2005). The study also found that those in mid-level positions who were actively seeking advancement into other positions indicated a greater need for continued development of those leadership skills (Sermersheim & Keim, 2005). Wenzel (2013) took a different approach and studied how those in mid-level leadership positions

learned supervisory skills. Although clearly not the same thing, Wenzel found similar results to Semersheim and Keim; that is, mid-level leaders learned supervision skills through general observation of others. An interesting component of Wenzel's study was her exploration of the participants' incorporation of the Catholic mission into their supervisory role and the finding that most participants had difficulty blending their faith and their work. Finding that most colleges and universities typically hired for a mission fit, Wenzel found that these same colleges and universities neglected to develop the spiritual component any further once those in mid-level leadership positions were hired. Both of these studies indicate that those in mid-level leadership roles must be provided with opportunities to develop leadership skills and, within faith-based organizations, this skill development must address the importance of the spiritual as well as the practical. Together, these studies support the need for specific research into the development of leadership skills among mid-level leaders in Christian higher education.

As shown, although the research indicates a desire for leadership skills development among mid-level leaders in higher education, higher education has been remiss in their development of planned, intentional opportunities for leadership skills development among mid-level leaders (Betts et al., 2009; Garza & Eddy, 2008; Inman, 2007; Klein & Salk 2013). As a result, the majority of mid-level leaders within higher education have not had opportunity to develop the leadership skills needed for their positions. Development of leadership skills for those mid-level leaders on Christian colleges and universities has occurred even less.

Mather, Bryan, and Faulkner (2009) understood that the role of the mid-level leader in higher education provided a broad perspective of university realities, making it

important to the institution. These mid-level leaders work together with senior leaders to communicate mission and vision to the larger university constituency (Little, 2016). The importance of this mission communication becomes even more critical within Christian colleges and universities which carry with them a distinct spiritual purpose. In order for mid-level leaders to be successful in Christian higher education, they must know and understand the responsibilities of their role, as well as the understanding of the Christian faith essential to the institution where they serve (Cliburn & Alleman, 2017)

The need for the development of leadership skills at the mid-level leadership position was evident in research by Little (2016) in which three-fourths of the responses to a single question on the need for leadership development yielded the result that this was an important and critical need of those in mid-level leadership positions. Mather et al. (2009) made similar conclusions in which they found that leadership skills development was important to mid-level leaders within student affairs. Student affairs administrators were not alone. M. Wolverton et al. (2007) found that only 4% of the mid-level academic leaders in their study had received leadership preparation prior to their leadership role. This is unfortunate since Rosser (2004) found that support and development of mid-level leaders was critical to ensuring their retention. Despite the overwhelming call within research for leadership skills development of mid-level leaders, most universities still lack formal structures for intentional leadership skills development (Garza & Eddy, 2008)

The importance of leadership skills development for mid-level leaders in Christian higher education is not lost on this researcher. Pending leadership attrition is expected to impact both private and public higher education institutions in the very near

future (Leubsdorf, 2006), and early career talent identification allows for the intentional development of leadership skills in the individual (Garza & Eddy, 2008; E. C. Smith, 2014). Klein and Salk (2013) concur, expressing the urgency of the need for institutions to develop clear paths to leadership positions for junior staff to increase the future pool of talent. Developing leaders from within the halls of the academy provides institutions with the competitive edge needed to retain a strong channel of leaders within their organizations (Luna, 2012). While a number of universities are beginning to recognize the need to develop the next generation of leaders, most often, the responsibility for leadership skills development continues to be driven by individuals and not the institutions themselves (Luna, 2012). Given the faith match component for leaders on Christian campuses, strengthening the leadership talent pipeline is quickly becoming an urgent matter. Developing the leadership skills of leaders currently within the institution helps to ensure the mission fit so highly desired within Christian higher education.

Summary of Literature Reviewed

Leadership development within Christian higher education is an under-researched topic (Stefani, 2015). In recent years, scholarship regarding faith integration and administrative work on college campuses has begun to turn toward senior-level administrators, such as presidents, provosts, and vice presidents of universities but a gap remains within the research regarding mid-level college leaders and administrators (Longman, 2012). Studies relating to the development of leadership skills by mid-level leaders at Christian universities do not exist at all. Understanding more about the lived experiences of mid-level leaders within Christian universities can help identify pathways that lead to higher-level, senior positions and provide leadership skills development

which will support the strengthening of the leadership pipeline into senior positions on Christian college and university campuses.

CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

Overview

Well-prepared leaders are needed to navigate complex issues facing colleges and universities, including rising tuition costs and a changing student body that requires values for their experience (Gagliardi et al., 2017; B. L. Smith & Hughey, 2006). Christian universities require leaders who can lead through these challenges while maintaining alignment with the spiritual mission of their institutions. Chapter I also pointed out that leadership development has not been a priority within higher education in the past, requiring those selected for leadership roles to learn on the job (Garza & Eddy, 2008; Inman, 2007). Mid-level leaders within higher education must find methods to develop the leadership skills needed to lead within their current roles and to advance into more senior leadership positions. Chapter I provided background support recognizing the need for development of strong leaders to advance higher education in the currently changing and complex environment. This need becomes even more critical within the Christian university because mission fit creates a smaller talent pool from which to select leaders.

Placing this study within the literature is critical to understanding the study's significance. Beginning with an overview of the formation of the American university system, Chapter II provided the historical context for the study and research to show how higher education has changed significantly since its inception. The chapter continued with an exploration of the literature surrounding the shifting face of higher education, including the impact of leadership attrition on the leadership practices of most universities (Luna, 2012). Leadership is a diverse topic and an abundance of literature is

reviewed regarding leadership development in general, within higher education, and within Christian higher education. The focus of this portion of the literature review is to understand the changing needs of the 21st century higher education leader and the leadership skills needed to lead during turbulent and changing times in higher education. Reviewing leadership development literature from a variety of lenses provided a strong foundation to understand leadership skills need for the future. The literature review continued to funnel the topic of leadership development further through exploration of the literature on mid-level university leaders, pointing out that these individuals may find themselves in positions of leadership without a clear plan or design (Garza & Eddy, 2008). This look at mid-level leadership is important since identification of future leaders within higher education may begin at this level. The literature review addresses the unique aspects of Christian higher education and concluded with a look at the small amount of research regarding leadership skills development of mid-level leaders within Christian colleges and universities.

Determining the research methodology for a study is important because it provides direction to the research questions asked and data collected. The study methodology must be matched to the purpose of the study and directly related to what the study is trying to determine or explain (Patton, 2002). An adequate description of the methodology allows the research results to be validated and the study replicated by others (Roberts, 2010). This chapter will provide background for the study by describing the purpose of the study, the research question, research design, study population, research instruments, data collected, study limitations, and an analysis of the data. Study

methodology is based on the purpose and nature of the study (Roberts, 2010) and Chapter III will clearly define the methodology and its appropriateness to the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe the participant's perspective of how participation in the Leadership Development Institutes through the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities supports the development of leadership skills in mid-level leaders in Christian universities.

Research Question

The research question for this study sought to answer: What is the participant's perspective of how participation in the Leadership Development Institutes through the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities supports the development of leadership skills in mid-level leaders in Christian universities?

Research Design

This study sought to describe the lived experiences of mid-level leaders in Christian universities who have participated in one of the LDI offered by the CCCU in an effort to gain insight into how participants' perceptions of their experiences with LDI have informed their development of the leadership skills needed to perform well as Christian college and university leaders.

Selection of LDI and CCCU as Basis for Study

The CCCU was founded in 1976 and is based in Washington, D.C. With more than 180 Christian institutions worldwide, including 150 in the United States and Canada, CCCU institutions are accredited, comprehensive colleges and universities with Christ-centered missions. Representing over 40 different denominations, CCCU institutions

vary greatly in size, scope, and mission, but all CCCU institutions share commitments to biblical truth, Christian formation, and gospel witness. Of significance with respect to developing and maintaining leaders within Christian higher education, all CCCU institutions hold institutional policies that require full-time faculty and administrators to profess a Christian faith (CCCU, 2018a).

The CCCU has offered the LDI since 1998 with nearly 500 participants from over 85 institutions (CCCU 2018b). The goal of each LDI is to develop and equip those who have been identified as having potential for future senior leadership roles in Christian higher education. During the five-day institute experience, LDI participants interact with 20 to 25 identified leaders, discuss leadership literature, participate in activities and complete lessons in best practices in leadership. LDI participants also work with resource leaders to develop a year-long professional development plan designed to support the LDI participant's continued growth. The highlight of the LDI experience is participation in an individualized shadow experience consisting of two to three days spent with a senior leader on another CCCU campus. Of the nearly 500 LDI participants, more than 50 have moved into cabinet-level positions, including 32 provosts and 12 presidents (CCCU, 2018b). CCCU offers four different institutes:

- Leadership Development Institute (LDI) – A mixed gender institute for emerging leaders on CCCU campuses. LDI is offered annually.
- Women's Leadership Development Institute (WLDI) – An institute for development of women leaders on CCCU campuses. WLDI is offered every other year, in even numbered years.

- Women’s Advanced Leadership Institute (WALI) – An institute offering training to women who have previously completed one of the other CCCU institutes and seek further development. WALI is offered every other year.
- Multi-Ethnic Leadership Development Institute (MELDI) – An institute for emerging leaders of color on CCCU campuses. MELDI is offered every other year, in odd numbered years (CCCU, 2018b).

The LDI reflect the distinctions of Christian higher education in their approach to leadership. This distinction is important because as CCCU President, Shirley Hoogstra pointed out in an article titled *Summer Impact* (2015), “for leaders in Christian higher education, achievement is not the end. Our goal is serving in the model of the Lord Jesus, who served and loved for the sake of humanity” (para. 5). Hoogstra further stated that the goal of LDI and CCCU is to position the best possible people for leadership on CCCU campuses which includes equipping them to be ready to lead, invigorated to lead longer, and equipped to lead in new ways (“Summer Impact,” 2015). Karen Longman, an ongoing LDI facilitator, agrees with Hoogstra offering that LDI uniquely equips emerging leaders for Christ-centered higher education (“Summer Impact,” 2015).

CCCU plays an important role within Christian higher education and maintains a strategic focus on public advocacy, professional development, and experiential education (CCCU, 2018a). Its size and longevity provide it with influence in the world of Christian higher education. Similarly, the LDI through CCCU are significant because of their distinct focus on leadership development for emerging leaders within Christian higher education. Having developed leaders for Christian universities for 20 years, LDI

provides a meaningful basis for this study on leadership development of mid-level administrators within Christian higher education.

Selection of Qualitative Research Design

Qualitative research provides the opportunity for deep inquiry and rich descriptions with a focus on the perceptions of the study participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2002). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state that qualitative studies explore the process in which behavior occurs to provide explanation for that behavior, or as further explained by Patton (2002), qualitative studies are appropriate for capturing developmental and transformational change because they describe what occurred during the change process. Whereas a quantitative approach may indicate “what” change occurred, a qualitative approach seeks to determine “how” and “why” the change occurred. Because this study sought to describe behavior from the perspective of the study participants’ perception of their experience with LDI and desired to further examine the impact of that perception on the development of leadership skills among study participants, a qualitative research method was the best research method for this study.

Selection of Phenomenological Research Approach

There are a variety of approaches within qualitative research, and, after careful consideration, the researcher chose to utilize a phenomenological research approach for this study. A phenomenological research approach describes the meaning of a lived experience of a group of people and seeks to thoroughly capture the essence and meaning of that experience through the words of those who directly participated in it (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2002). This study used a phenomenological approach to

examine the recollections of past participants in one of the LDI with the CCCU.

Phenomenology is appropriate because it seeks to understand individual perceptions and meaning in relationship to a phenomenon, which, in this case, is participation in LDI with CCCU.

Phenomenological research typically consists of long, in-depth interviews designed to gain as much understanding as possible about the experience of the participants. The focus of these interviews is to understand the essence of the experience as interpreted by the participant. The experience and the interpretation of the experience are so intertwined that it becomes difficult to separate the two (Patton, 2002). As such, the interview process is the backbone of phenomenological research.

The experiences as described by all participants are compared for commonalities and themes. By examining the groupings of themes, the researcher is able to develop an understanding of the experiences and interpretations of those experiences by participants. In this study, in-depth interviews were conducted with participants who participated in LDI between 2008 and 2018 to understand their lived experiences in the program and define common themes of all participants to better understand the impact of LDI on the development of leadership skills among its participants.

Population

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) define population as a group of study elements that conform to the study criteria and to which the intent is to generalize study results.

This study investigated the lived experience of participants in a CCCU Leadership Development Institute. The population of this study included past participants in any

LDI offered by CCCU. The population of this study was the approximately 500 people who have participated in any LDI since its inception in 1998.

Target Population

A target population of a study is defined as a smaller portion of the larger group that the researcher has identified based on the same characteristics as that of the total population (Creswell, 2012). Based on evidence in part from Day, Fleenor, McKee, Atwater, and Sturm (2013) that leadership development is a complex and ongoing process that continues to take shape over time, the researcher concluded that the target population for the study should cover a multitude of years of LDI participation. To provide a broad mix of leadership experiences, while still maintaining study feasibility, the target population for this study was participants in LDI cohorts that took place within the last 10 years, or between 2008 and 2018.

Sample

The group of participants from whom the study data is collected is the sample (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The logic behind qualitative sampling is one of depth over breadth; in other words, a few cases studied in depth provide meaningful insight about the topic (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The sample is representative of the larger group and sampling is the process by which the sample was selected (Roberts, 2010). The sample for this study consisted of 14 leaders at Christian universities who participated as members of cohorts in any of the LDI offered by CCCU over the last 10 years, or between 2008 and 2018. Each member of the sample is either currently a mid-level leader within Christian higher education or was a mid-level leader at the time of LDI participation.

Sampling Procedure

Nearly 500 people have completed LDI since its inception, with each LDI cohort consisting of approximately 20 to 25 participants. To select a strong group of participants for the sample, the researcher met with an instrumental LDI leader and facilitator to seek her assistance and introduction to past LDI participants. This LDI facilitator gave the researcher the name of a 2010 LDI participant who holds a leadership role at the researcher's current institution. This individual provided the researcher with his cohort list and permission to contact each cohort participant about the study. He further made email contact with additional LDI participants, asking them to provide the researcher with their LDI cohort lists. The researcher then used a combination of purposeful sampling and snowball sampling to finalize the sample.

Purposeful sampling uses the researcher's knowledge of the population to make a judgment about which subjects should be selected to provide the best information to address the research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Purposeful sampling was used to select subjects that would be representative of the study. The researcher reviewed the names and universities on the cohort lists provided and study participants were selected on the basis of having met at least two of the following criteria:

- The LDI participant's institution had participated in LDI for multiple years.
- The LDI participant's institution had sent multiple individuals to LDI.
- The LDI participant's institution had leaders who were LDI resource leaders and/or facilitators.
- The LDI participant was an LDI resource leader and/or facilitator.

- The LDI participant was recommended by an LDI resource leader and/or facilitator.
- The LDI participant was recommended by another LDI participant.

The researcher sent emails to each of the identified individuals who met the criteria, described the study, and invited them to participate. The researcher also asked each individual for names of others in his or her institution who had participated in LDI, and for permission to contact them for the study. Snowball sampling is an acceptable sampling strategy that asks each successive participant to refer another, and these participant referrals become the basis for choosing the final sample (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This process resulted in 14 study participants. The breakdown of study participants and the university location is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Study Participants

| Institution | Location | Number of Participants |
|----------------|------------|------------------------|
| Institution #1 | Michigan | 4 |
| Institution #2 | California | 3 |
| Institution #3 | Oregon | 3 |
| Institution #4 | Washington | 1 |
| Institution #5 | Washington | 1 |
| Institution #6 | California | 1 |
| Institution #7 | California | 1 |
| Total | | 14 |

Instrumentation

The instruments used to collect data are important to the research process because they must be designed to collect the data necessary to answer the question being researched. Individual, semi-structured interviews were conducted with all study

participants, using interview questions designed to elicit information about the participants' experiences with LDI, their perceptions of those experiences, and their descriptions of how those experiences informed their leadership development after participation in the program. A concentrated interview process provides rich data about the individual experiences of each study participant, which is even stronger when supported by observations and artifacts collected by the researcher at the time of the interview. The combination of interviews, observations, and artifacts provided extensive detail about each participant's experience with LDI.

Researcher as an Instrument of the Study

The researcher is an integral part of qualitative research and this level of involvement makes the researcher an instrument within the study itself, which implies that the researcher's attributes have the potential to influence data collection (Pezalla, Pettigrew, & Miller-Day, 2012). The reality-based orientation of qualitative research makes it especially vulnerable to this bias. Bias refers to the intentional and unintentional influence of the researcher on the study results (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Since completely value free inquiry is impossible, safeguards must be in place to protect the validity of the study (Patton, 2002). Prior to conducting the research, safeguards were built into the study to limit the influence of researcher bias on study results.

One possible area of bias arose due to the researcher's employment as a mid-level leader at Azusa Pacific University, a private Christian university. Although none of the study participants were employed at Azusa Pacific University, the researcher brought bias to the study from her employment in a similar role at a similar university to those

examined in the study. Explicit recognition of this bias allows the researcher to take steps to mitigate its influence.

Cultural Informant as Instrument of the Study

Since the researcher had no personal experience with LDI or CCCU, she determined that the use of a cultural informant would be helpful to navigate and understand the meaning of behavior within the culture of the group of LDI participants. The cultural informant was a 2010 LDI participant who has advanced to a senior level administrative position within the same university as the researcher. By virtue of his participation in LDI and his promotion to a senior level leadership position, this person is an appropriate resource as a cultural informant. The cultural informant assisted the researcher by providing meaning to culturally explicit interview responses and setting observed behaviors within the culture of LDI.

Interview Questions as Instrument of the Study

Another instrument of the study are the interview questions used during the interview process. The purpose of interviewing is to allow the researcher to enter into the study participant's perspective (Patton, 2002). Interview questions were intentionally designed to answer the research question with the hope that themes would emerge from the participant interviews. Each semi-structured, open-ended question was developed with a specific intent and designed to allow individualized responses (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). A total of 14 interview questions were used in the study (see Appendix B).

Validity

Instrument validity refers to the degree to which the content collected through the instruments aligns with the research questions (Patton, 2015). Validity assures that the findings from the instrument are true (Roberts, 2010). Since the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection, validity is affected by the skill of the researcher. To limit researcher influence during data collection, steps must be taken to neutralize the impact of the researcher on the interview process (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). To address this limitation, the researcher employed strategies to ensure validity of the data collected.

Expert Panel

Interview questions were validated by an expert panel prior to their use in data collection. The expert panel reviewed the interview questions and validated their usefulness for the study. The expert panel consisted of three researchers familiar with higher education and qualitative research methods. To qualify as a member of the expert panel, an individual must hold a terminal degree and meet at least three of the following criteria:

- Over five years' experience in higher education.
- Hold a leadership position within higher education.
- Be a member of doctoral faculty within higher education.
- Have published articles on higher education subjects.
- Have conducted qualitative research within the last five years.

Table 3 outlines the expert panel accomplishments.

Table 3

Expert Panel Criteria

| Member | Criteria 1 | Criteria 2 | Criteria 3 |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Panel Member 1 | Over five years in higher education | Published articles on higher education | Conducted qualitative research in last five years |
| Panel Member 2 | Over five years in higher education | Leadership position in higher education | Conducted qualitative research in last five years |
| Panel Member 3 | Over five years in higher education | Is a member of doctoral faculty | Conducted qualitative research in last five years |

Member Checking

Member checking provides study participants with the opportunity to review transcripts of their interview to ensure what has been transcribed is accurate and valid. Member checking is a common strategy used to enhance validity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Each study participant was provided with a transcript of their interview to validate accuracy prior to coding by the researcher. Participants were asked to correct any inaccuracies in transcription to ensure the data was captured correctly and accurately represented the interview.

Pilot Interview

Given that the researcher is an instrument of the study, the interview skills of the researcher may affect the interview process. A pilot interview checks for bias in the procedures, the researcher, and the interview questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). During a pilot interview, an expert researcher provided feedback to the researcher with respect to engagement of participant, interview pacing, wait time for thought and reflection, and tone. The use of a pilot interview provides validity of the interview

process. The expert is a doctoral faculty member with over five years in higher education and experience in qualitative research.

Reliability

Reliability describes how an instrument will continue to produce similar results when used in different circumstances (Roberts, 2010). In other words, reliability measures consistency of the instrument to achieve the same results. Reliability is critical to the research design because it indicates the rigor of the research and the ability to trust the research findings. Three measures of reliability were used to ensure the instruments being used could be consistently applied and provided accurate results.

Internal Reliability

Internal reliability is the manner in which the researcher employs multiple methods for gathering data to triangulate the results to provide a complete picture of the subject being studied. By triangulating through multiple data sources the researcher substantially increases the reliability of the results and adds to the credibility of the study (Patton, 2002). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), using multiple methods of data collection permits triangulation of the data across the study since different data collection strategies may yield different insights and increase the credibility of findings. This study used data triangulation to increase reliability by collecting data via interviews, observations, and artifacts.

External Reliability

External reliability refers to whether the study could be replicated by another researcher to achieve the same results. Since the nature of qualitative research is to study a specific issue, group, or phenomenon, generalizability of research findings is not an

expected attribute (Leung, 2015). Therefore, external reliability was not a concern of this study.

Inter-coder Reliability

Inter-coder reliability is a measure of the extent to which different individuals, working independently, would make the same coding decisions when evaluating the data collected (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2002). To assess reliability, a representative sample is double coded by an outside researcher. An appropriate sample size depends on many factors, but is generally accepted to be at least 10% of the full sample (Lombard et al., 2002). In this study, 10% of the data collected from the interviews, observations, and artifacts was presented to an outside researcher to confirm the themes and frequency counts of the data collected. The outside researcher was another doctoral candidate familiar with qualitative research. A goal of 90% agreement was considered best and 80% agreement was considered acceptable in terms of reliability and accuracy of themes in data coding (Lombard et al., 2002). Inter-coder reliability in this study was 88%.

Data Collection

Responsible research increases knowledge and understanding of a subject while maintaining a high ethical standard and safeguarding the rights of study participants. All study participants must be fully informed about the research procedures and risks prior to their agreement to take part in a study (Roberts, Priest, & Traynor, 2006). To ensure adherence to ethical standards and allow the utmost protection for study participants, the researcher submitted to a university review process ensuring this study conformed to all laws and regulations protecting research participants and also met institutional standards

for professionalism, integrity, and accountability. An email from the Brandman University Institutional Review Board (BUIRB) indicating research approval is attached as Appendix C. Further, the researcher completed a training course in Protecting Human Research Participants provided by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research. Evidence of completion of this training is attached as Appendix D. The researcher provided assurance that study participants were protected from undue risks throughout the study and were advised of their right to consent to the study, including the right to remove themselves from the study at any time. Following BUIRB approval, an email was sent to each of the 15 study participants formally requesting their agreement to participate in the study and scheduling a time for to begin data collection (see Appendix E). Before interviews were conducted, each participant provided informed consent through signature on the Informed Consent form (see Appendix F)

Types of Data Collected

Qualitative research generally collects data in three ways—interviews, observations, and artifacts. Collecting data through a variety of means allows the researcher to triangulate the data and increase study validity. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with individuals in the study sample. Additional data was collected through observations made and artifacts collected during the interview process. The types of data used in this study are discussed further in this section.

Interviews. Phenomenological interviews are used to study the lived experiences of a selected group of participants, and are designed to investigate what was experienced, how it was experienced, and the meanings assigned to that experience (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). As such, the interview process is a critical part of phenomenological

research. Prior to data collection the researcher worked with an expert panel of three experienced researchers to develop a list of pre-established, semi-structured, open-ended questions designed to collect data focused on answering the research question. Additional exploratory questions were allowed to clarify responses or to explore unanticipated data that surfaced during the interview process (Patton, 2002). The interview questions were related to the lived experiences of participants during their participation in LDI. The researcher also participated in a pilot interview to validate the interview questions and prepare for the interview process. Following the interview process, the researcher removed all identifying information to assure anonymity and protect the identity of the study participant.

Observations. LDI is offered only during the month of June, and, therefore, the researcher did not have the opportunity to personally attend or preview an institute. However, since the current study focuses on the impact of past participation in LDI, observations of current participants may not establish the same impact as that of past participant experiences. To strengthen the study focus on the development of leadership skills of past LDI participants, the researcher conducted observations during the interview process with study participants. Further, conducting the interviews on the home campus of the study participant allowed the researcher to view the participant in his or her current leadership role, permitting observation of leadership skills to occur in a natural setting for the participant. These direct observations were used to triangulate data collected from other sources on the impact of LDI on the leadership development of participants.

Artifacts. Artifacts are regularly collected data during qualitative research and are used to provide a third source for data triangulation and to offer a different lens through

which to view the research subject. After receiving permission, the researcher collected artifacts from participants during the interview process. Artifacts collected in this study consisted of LDI brochures, LDI agendas, professional development plans created during LDI participation, LDI shadow report forms, job descriptions for positions held by study participants, pictures from participation, and copies of books and resources. All identifying marks and information were removed from the artifacts to protect the identity of the study participants. Collected artifacts were then used to triangulate the research data by providing published descriptions of the LDI experience and participant-created documents.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection took place between October 20, 2018 and November 15, 2018, and included the collection of multiple sources of data from the 14 study participants. Data collection included interviews, observations, and artifacts. Special consideration was taken to protect the rights of the participants of the study. Confidentiality is the responsibility of the researcher and refers to the agreement of study participants regarding the handling of their data (Roberts, 2010). To ensure confidentiality and understanding of all participants, prior to beginning data collection, the researcher gave each participant information concerning the study, provided participants the opportunity to consider all participation options, answered questions as raised by each participant, and provided each participant with additional information as requested. Written consent was obtained from each study participant according to BUIRB conditions and requirements.

Participant recruitment. The research question in this study seeks to describe the manner in which participation in LDI supports the development of leadership skills in

mid-level leaders in Christian higher education. Since LDI participation is based on a cohort model, the participants form a close-knit group based on their shared experience. The researcher understood that gaining access to this group could potentially be challenging. As such, careful attention was given to the recruitment process. The five steps below were used to recruit participants for this study:

1. The researcher reached out to an LDI facilitator for advice on gaining access to past LDI participants. The facilitator suggested that the researcher start with one particular previous LDI cohort participant who was employed at the same university as the researcher and ask for his assistance by providing the researcher with his LDI cohort list.
2. The researcher reached out to the identified LDI cohort participant who provided the researcher with his cohort list and offered to email other past LDI participants to ask them to supply the researcher with their lists as well.
3. The researcher received the cohort member lists from two past LDI participants employed at her own university. After removing participants from the researcher's university to eliminate bias, the researcher used purposeful sampling to identify people who met at least two of the following sampling criteria:
 - LDI participant's institution has participated in LDI for multiple years.
 - LDI participant's institution had sent multiple individuals to LDI.
 - LDI participant's institution had leaders who were LDI resource leaders and/or facilitators.
 - LDI participant was a LDI resource leader and/or facilitator.

- LDI participant was recommended by a LDI resource leader and/or facilitator.
4. The researcher identified 40 individuals who met the criteria and emailed all of them seeking their participation in the study. Of the 40 individuals contacted, eight replied with interest in the study.
 5. The researcher asked each participant for names of other past LDI participants who may qualify as study participants, and was given the names and contact information for 17 additional individuals.
 6. The researcher emailed all 17 of these individuals seeking their participation in the study. Of these 17 individuals, six replied with interest in the study.
 7. The 14 study participants were located within the states of California, Oregon, Michigan, and Washington. The researcher contacted each individual to secure a commitment to participation in the study, and believes this participant distribution provides a broad perspective of LDI impact on leadership.

Interviews. Phenomenological interviews are used to study the lived experiences of a selected group of participants, and are designed to investigate what was experienced, how it was experienced, and the meanings assigned to that experience (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This study of mid-level administrators in Christian higher education followed a phenomenological research perspective, and, therefore, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions. To ensure clarity and accuracy, all interviews were audio taped with participants' permission and transcribed by the researcher. The following steps were taken to provide clear direction to the study participant and minimize disruption during the interview process:

1. Prior to the interview, the researcher contacted each interviewee and arranged a time and place on the interviewee's campus in which to conduct the interview. Each interviewee was advised that the interview would last approximately 45 minutes to one hour and that the interviewee would have an opportunity to review the interview transcript once complete.
2. Before beginning the interview, the researcher informed the interviewee about the study and the interviewee's rights, including the right to stop the interview or take a break. The researcher reminded the interviewee that the interview was voluntary and advised that there would be a time for questions and answers following the interview.
3. The researcher confirmed that the interviewee understood the interview process and answered any questions prior to beginning the interview.
4. The researcher then reviewed the Informed Consent form with the interviewee and acquired the participant's signature indicating consent.
5. Interviews took place for approximately 45 minutes to one hour and began with prepared interview questions. Follow up and/or clarification questions were asked as needed.
6. Each interview was electronically captured using an electronic recording device. An iPhone served as a back-up device.
7. At the conclusion of the interview, the researcher thanked the participant and explained the next steps, including the sharing of the interview transcription for review by the interviewee.
8. The researcher transcribed each individual recording herself.

9. Once ready, the interview transcript was sent to the interviewee with instructions to review and provide any necessary feedback.

Observations. Observations serve as another means of data collection and were conducted during the interview process. Direct observations increase the researcher's understanding and can provide insight into the subject (Patton, 2002). Since interviews occurred in the participant's office on their home campus, the researcher was able to observe the study participant in his or her natural work setting as a leader. Observations were included in notes taken by the researcher while on campus during the interview and the researcher took care to ensure she made no assumptions about the meaning of what was observed (Patton, 2002). During the observation process, the research kept a journal with fieldwork notes observed before, during, and after the interview process. These notes included observations about the participant's work environment, their interactions with others, the physical setting, and characteristics of the campus and work environment.

The following steps were taken to provide clear direction to the study participant regarding the observation process:

1. Prior to visiting the participant's campus for the interview, the researcher advised that observation field notes would be collected before, during, and after the interview process. The participant was advised that these observations would include notes regarding the participant's work environment, their interactions with others, the physical setting, and characteristics of the campus and work environment.

2. Before making observations and collecting field notes, the researcher informed the participant of the scope of the observations, their rights, including the right to remove themselves from the study at any time.
3. The researcher confirmed that the participant understood the observation process and answered any questions prior to collecting observation data.
4. The researcher then reviewed the Participants Bill of Rights (see Appendix G) and the Informed Consent form with the participant and acquired the participant's signature indicating consent.
5. Observation field notes were collected in a separate journal for each study participant and included data and reflections on the participant's physical work setting and work environment, verbal and non-verbal interactions with others, and the campus environment.

Artifacts. Prior to the visit, the researcher submitted a request to each study participant asking for artifacts from their experience with LDI. Examples of collected artifacts were LDI brochures, LDI agendas, professional development plans created during LDI participation, LDI shadow report forms, and job descriptions for leadership positions currently held by study participants. Permission to use the collected artifacts within the study was obtained from each participant. To ensure confidentiality and protection of the artifacts, the following steps were taken by the researcher:

1. Artifacts were personally collected by the researcher from participants at the time of the interview.
2. The researcher quickly reviewed each artifact collected and asked the participant for clarification as necessary.

3. Following the interview, identifying marks were removed from each artifact to protect the identity of the participant and/or his or her institution.
4. Each artifact was logged and categorized in a spreadsheet.
5. Each artifact was then scanned and kept in an individual, secure folder on the researcher's computer labeled with the interviewee's name.
6. Hard copies of artifacts were kept in a locked filing cabinet.

Data Protection and Control

The researcher took careful steps to protect collected data, protect the identity of study participants, and minimize risk to participants. All data was collected with the permission of the participant and all personally identifiable information was removed from the study. For identification purposes, each participant was identified by a number, such as Participant 1, Participant 2, etc. The digital files and transcriptions of the recorded interviews were kept in a locked filing cabinet to which only the researcher had access. Once the study was fully completed, the data files were destroyed.

Data Analysis

According to Patton (2002), it is important that the researcher get a sense of the whole collection of data prior to separation into themes and categories. This allows the researcher an overall look at the full collection of information. However, this also presents a challenge to the researcher who must make sense of an overwhelming amount of data. Combining Patton's suggestion with concepts recommended by Creswell (2013), the researcher took the following steps to organize her analysis of the data:

1. Organize data by type (interviews, observations, artifacts).

2. Read and review all data collected.
3. Code the data.

Developing a system or coding scheme is important to managing the coding process (Patton, 2002). The researcher used content analysis to identify, code, and categorize the data that emerged from all resources. Data was reviewed on multiple occasions during the coding process and arranged into systematic groupings to explain the data being analyzed. Dedoose, a qualitative data analysis software system, was used to assist with coding classification at different points in the data analysis process.

The analysis to develop themes provides the richness of meaning to the phenomenological study. As themes emerged to answer the research question about the manner in which LDI participation supports leadership development in mid-level administrators in Christian universities, they were coded and analyzed for frequency of occurrence. The researcher used the following data coding process for this study:

1. Code all data collected – interviews, observations, and artifacts.
2. Scan codes for emerging themes.
3. Utilize Dedoose to code for frequencies.
4. Submit a random selection of 10% of collected data to outside researcher for double coding, securing 80% to 90% accuracy of codes and frequencies.
5. Analyze codes and frequencies for understanding of lived experiences of LDI participants.

Limitations

Every study must address the limitations that may affect the results. All research involves bias, and it is important for researchers to recognize the possibility for bias, be

clear about the limitations, and design intentional strategies to address bias and strengthen the study (Patton 2002). The following limitations were considered by the researcher, and the efforts to decrease these limitations are described:

- **Researcher as the instrument:** The validity and meaningfulness of qualitative inquiry is directly related to the rich information collected and the analytical capabilities of the researcher (Patton, 2002). As such, the researcher serves as an instrument of the study and is instrumental in assessment of results. To limit bias, the researcher took careful steps to remain non-judgmental and conscious of possible bias during the interview and observation process.
- **Self-reported data:** This study leans significantly on the interview process and the depth of the data gained from the semi-structured interviews. However, the researcher recognizes that the participants' self-reported data is a limitation of the study. To address this limitation, the researcher triangulated the data with observations and artifacts to improve validity.
- **Time constraints:** The data collection process involved a significant amount of time-consuming travel, which when coupled with the data analysis process presented a limitation of time. The significant amount of time necessary for qualitative research was addressed by allocating sufficient time to conduct research and analysis, including travel.

Summary

This chapter defined the purpose of this study by describing the research question, research design, study population, and research instruments. An explanation of the data collected, study limitations, and an analysis of the data completed the chapter.

Throughout Chapter III, the researcher aimed to guide the reader toward the methods used to gather the data necessary to illustrate the lived experiences of participants in the LDI offered by the CCCU with an eye toward the program's impact on leadership development of participants who are mid-level leaders at Christian universities.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Leadership attrition is expected to impact higher education in the very near future, and to have a ready pipeline of available leaders, mid-level leaders must have opportunities to develop the leadership skills they will need at these higher levels (Leubsdorf, 2006). Christian higher education is faced with the added pressure of developing leaders that are well suited for leadership and maintain a faith commitment that aligns with the institutional mission. Chapter I provided the background to understand the importance of strong leadership in higher education generally, and in Christian higher education specifically. Leadership skills development is necessary to strengthen the pool of available leadership talent in Christian higher education. Chapter II identified relevant research at all leadership levels in higher education with a particular focus on mid-level leadership in Christian higher education. Literature on leadership skills development stresses the importance of identifying emerging leaders and creating clear paths toward senior leadership positions in to maintain stability of leadership talent (Klein & Salk, 2013). Research design is critical to study results, and Chapter III described the study's phenomenological research design, as well as the process for selecting participants, gathering data, and developing themes.

Overview

This chapter will describe the findings that are the result of data collected from 14 study participants located in four U.S. states. Study participants were all identified as having participated in at least one of the LDI established by the CCCU and are all currently serving in higher education leadership positions. Chapter IV will provide a

narrative description of the participants, the research methods, and the data collected, along with a detailed analysis and summary of the study findings.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe the participant's perspective of how participation in the Leadership Development Institutes through the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities supports the development of leadership skills in mid-level leaders in Christian universities.

Research Question

The research question for this study sought to answer: What is the participant's perspective of how participation in the Leadership Development Institutes through the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities supports the development of leadership skills in mid-level leaders in Christian universities?

Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

A qualitative, phenomenological research method was chosen to describe the lived experiences of 14 people who have been participants in at least one LDI offered by CCCU. In-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted by the researcher during October and November 2018 captured the experiences described by all study participants. These interviews took place on the participant's campuses to ensure a familiar setting that was comfortable for the study participant. Open-ended questions were supported by follow up questions to clarify responses or elicit additional detail and information (Patton, 2002).

The interview process was supported by the collection of artifacts from each participant. The number and type of artifacts collected varied by participant, but resulted in a total of 42 artifacts collected for analysis. These artifacts consisted of LDI

brochures, LDI agendas, professional development plans created during LDI participation, LDI shadow report forms, job descriptions for positions held by study participants, pictures from participation, and copies of books and resources.

Informal observations were also conducted during the interview process, resulting in field notes from each interview, as well as observations made while on the participant's campuses. Direct observation allowed the researcher to view the participant in his or her natural leadership setting and provided additional data with respect to the participant's leadership skills.

Population

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) define population as a group of elements that conform to the study criteria and to which the intent is to generalize study results. This study investigated the lived experience of participants in one of the LDI conducted by the CCCU. The CCCU offers four different LDI:

- Mixed LDI – an annual, mixed gender LDI for emerging leaders.
- Women's LDI (WLDI) – a biennial LDI for emerging women leaders.
- Women's Advanced Leadership Institute (WALDI) – a biennial LDI for women in currently holding leadership positions.
- Multi-Ethnic (MELDI) – a biennial LDI for emerging leaders of color.

The population of this study consists of the approximately 500 people who have participated in any LDI since its inception in 1998.

Sample

The group of participants from whom the study data is collected is the sample (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Qualitative research sampling focuses on depth over

breadth and the sample is a smaller group that is representative of a larger group (Roberts, 2010). The sample for this study consisted of 14 leaders at Christian universities who participated as members of LDI cohorts in any of the LDI offered by CCCU over the last 10 years, or between 2008 and 2018. Each member of the sample is either currently a mid-level leader within Christian higher education or was a mid-level leader at the time of LDI participation.

Demographic Data

The study included 14 participants who met the study eligibility criteria. Each participant consented to the study and Informed Consent forms were collected from each person. Demographic information was collected from participants to describe their current position, gender, ethnicity, the LDI(s) attended, and the year(s) attended LDI. Table 4 details the demographic data of the sample.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Data was collected through a variety of means to allow for triangulation and increase study validity. The findings in this study are the result of interviews, artifacts, and observations collected between October 22 and November 14, 2018. Over 13 hours were spent conducting in-person interviews with 14 individuals at their home campuses in four different states. The interview setting will have an impact on the responses provided by participants (Patton, 2002). Conducting interviews on each participant's own campus allowed the interviewee to establish the time and place that provided them with their desired level of comfort and privacy for the interview.

Table 4

Study Demographic Data

| Identification Number | Current Position | Gender | Ethnicity | LDI Attended | LDI Year |
|-----------------------|--|--------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | Director of Intercultural Research | Male | African American | MELDI | 2017 |
| 2 | Chaplain | Female | Caucasian | WLDI | 2008 |
| 3 | Vice President for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion | Female | Multi-Racial | MELDI | 2017 |
| 4 | Dean of Community Life | Female | Caucasian | WLDI | 2012 |
| 5 | Co-Director of Center for Faith and Writing | Female | Caucasian | WLDI | 2012 |
| 6 | Associate Provost and Dean | Female | Caucasian | WLDI & WALDI | 2012 2017 |
| 7 | Vice President for Enrollment, Marketing, & Admissions | Female | Caucasian | WALDI | 2012 |
| 8 | Provost | Male | Hispanic | Mixed LDI & MELDI | 2001 2009 2011 |
| 9 | Director of Career Center | Female | African American | MELDI | 2017 |
| 10 | Associate Dean of Intercultural Life | Female | Asian American | MELDI | 2017 |
| 11 | Associate Provost for Local & Global Engagement | Female | Hispanic | MELDI | 2011 2012 2013 2015 |
| 12 | Department Chair | Female | Caucasian | WALDI | 2018 |
| 13 | Executive Associate to President for Diversity & Inclusion | Female | African American | MELDI | 2011 2015 2017 |
| 14 | Director of Ed.D. Program | Female | Caucasian | WLDI | 2008 |

Note. LDI = Leadership Development Institutes; MELDI = Multi-Ethnic Leadership Development Institutes; WLDI = Women's Leadership Development Institutes; WALDI = Women's Advanced Leadership Development Institute.

Observations and artifacts were also collected to provide data triangulation and enhance study validity. Observations were conducted during each interview and field notes were recorded. The researcher spent additional time on participants' campuses to provide acculturation to campus climate. Acculturation can provide context for understanding the setting and community in which the study participant works each day (Patton, 2002). Lastly, artifacts were collected from each study participant immediately following their interview. Multiple artifacts were collected from participants including copies of participants' professional development plans, LDI schedules, and shadow experience reflections, pictures of mementos kept from LDI, pictures of books used in sessions, copies of notes made in session notebooks, etc. Table 5 provides the breakdown of types of data collected, the amount of data collected, and the allocation of hours spent by the researcher in collecting study data.

Table 5

Allocation of Collected Data

| Type of Data | Amount of Data | Hours Spent |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Interviews | 14 interviews | 13 hours |
| Observations | 14 observations | 13 hours |
| Artifacts | 42 artifacts | 3 hours |
| Acculturation | 7 campuses | 7 hours |

Development of Themes and Frequencies

Once all data was collected, the researcher personally transcribed all interviews, sought verification from participants, recorded observations, reviewed artifacts, analyzed the data, and categorized the data into themes. Within qualitative research, the researcher develops inductively from the patterns that emerge from the collected data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In this study, 10 themes emerged from the data that specifically

address the research question. The identified themes are described in Table 7 and are listed in order of frequency from highest to lowest. Table 6 also includes the number of sources for each theme, which is further disaggregated by the type of data represented by each source.

Table 6

Themes, Sources, and Frequency

| Theme | Frequency | Sources | Source Type | | |
|--|-----------|---------|-------------|----|---|
| | | | I | A | O |
| Establishing a broader network of professional relationships | 77 | 30 | 13 | 10 | 7 |
| Creating time and space for self-reflection about vocational aspirations | 57 | 20 | 13 | 7 | 0 |
| Building confidence to lean into leadership potential | 56 | 20 | 12 | 8 | 0 |
| Using ongoing and systematic feedback to build self-awareness | 55 | 25 | 12 | 12 | 1 |
| Stimulating intellectual thought about leadership | 53 | 37 | 13 | 20 | 4 |
| Providing up close and personal interactions with senior leaders | 46 | 19 | 12 | 7 | 0 |
| Personally affirming leadership potential in individuals | 39 | 19 | 12 | 6 | 1 |
| Selecting emerging leaders with identified leadership skills | 37 | 20 | 13 | 7 | 0 |
| Cooperatively developing plans to indicate leadership pathways | 33 | 18 | 10 | 8 | 0 |
| Highlighting individual changes to establish executive presence | 25 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 1 |

Note. I = Interview; A = Artifacts; O = Observations.

Description of Findings and Themes

This study investigates the lived experiences of participants in the LDI of the CCCU to describe how participation supports the development of leadership skills in mid-level leaders in Christian universities. After collecting data, 10 themes were identified. The remainder of this chapter will describe study findings with respect to each theme beginning with the theme with greatest frequency and continuing in decreasing order until all ten frequencies have been addressed. Participant's rich descriptions of their LDI experience will be used to illustrate each finding. Information derived from artifacts and observations add support needed to thoroughly illustrate each finding.

Theme 1: Establishing a Broader Network of Professional Relationships

This study investigates how participation in the LDI through CCCU supports the development of leadership skills in mid-level leaders in Christian universities. The first theme determined that participation in LDI helped them establish a broader network of professional relationships. The theme of Establishing a Broader Network of Professional Relationships was the most frequently occurring theme with a frequency count of 77 and appeared in 30 different sources that were triangulated through all data types (interviews, artifacts, and observations). Thirteen of the 14 study participants spoke positively about a camaraderie developed through LDI participation. This created a basis for establishment of a broader network of professional relationships that participants used to further develop their leadership skills. According to Ibarra and Hunter (2007), creating a network of individuals who provide support, feedback, insight, resources, and information is critical to leadership success (Ibarra & Hunter, 2007). LDI helps participants broaden their network of relationships through developing meaningful

connections based on the shared LDI experience. These connections as a means of broadening one's network of professional relationships. Participant 8 described the network of friends and colleagues that were created as "the most meaningful elements" of LDI and relates that the broad network of professional relationships established at LDI allowed his leadership skills to be made known to others which ultimately led to his current position as Provost.

LDI participants indicated that the use of a cohort model allowed them to develop relationships and create connections needed to build this network of professional relationships. This model brought individuals together for a single purpose and created a bond through joint workshop attendance, discussions around shared readings, meal sharing, and free time events. Leaders who have a broader network of professional relationships gain insight from each other through discussion about common experiences and are able to develop new leadership skills to enrich their professional development and personal lives (Mauritin Cairncross, 2015). As an example, multiple study participants related the story of the bullfrog, a symbol of the LDI network of professional relationships. A pond lies just outside the retreat center where LDI is held, and each night the croaking of bullfrogs can be heard. Participants told the researcher that the beauty of the bullfrogs lies in the fact that while all their voices are different, they come together. This story became a source of support for many LDI participants and surfaced in comments such as this from Participant 4 "it became a community thing ... 'don't forget your bullfrog' ...the uniqueness of you but yet in a community." The researcher easily observed bullfrogs sitting on the desks or in the bookshelves of several participants

who pointed out that these reminders of the broad network of relationships established at LDI and the leadership skills developed as a result.

LDI participants felt that a broader network of professional relationships supported their development of leadership skills through exposure to people and institutions outside of their immediate sphere, support from other professionals who currently hold a similar professional role, and through being known by others who have the ability to advance participants into future leadership roles. Prior to attending LDI, some participants were unfamiliar with the scope of Christian higher education beyond their individual institution and were initially surprised to find others in similar roles and/or circumstances to their own. Emerging leaders who aspire to greater leadership roles within higher education need a broader network of professional relationships to look outside the domain of their own institution and develop an awareness of the leadership in different contexts (Ibarra & Hunter, 2007). Participant 9 embodied this idea stating that she felt her LDI experience gave her “an introduction outside of [redacted school name] that there’s a plethora of schools under this umbrella and there are a lot of people similar to me ... in positions at similar institutions...some of these schools I had never heard of.” The vertical structure of higher education promotes individuality both inside and outside of institutions, which results in a fairly siloed organization. The interview of Participant 6, a diversity leader on her campus, shows her understanding that being “connected to a world that was bigger than my own institution” was important because her vantage point at a smaller university in the northwest may limit her view. Participant 7 described this broad network as a “constellation of relationships” that is not a straight line, but includes many pathways. Establishing a broad network of professional relationships strengthens

the development of leadership skills by providing mid-level leaders new perspectives from others outside the usual view within one's own institution.

On an individual level, participants felt strongly that the network of professional relationships established at LDI provided potential for future leadership opportunities within Christian higher education. Participant 10 is just beginning her journey into leadership having stepped into her leadership role the year prior to attending LDI. Having been tapped by many at LDI as one with potential for the highest role in the institution – University President, Participant 10 understood that these individual leaders would be instrumental in her leadership future, describing this impact as follows:

I firmly believe it is who you know, not what you know. I have a relationship with the President of the CCCU. I have people who are well respected in the field who think highly of me. I know when people talk about President roles and Vice President roles, that they're tapping some of these people. It is so weird to know that they now know me, and that could be a potential factor down the road.

A well-established, broad network of relationships allows a leader to leverage the inside-outside links within the network to strengthen leadership skills development and maximize growth (Ibarra & Hunter, 2007). Through this network of professional relationships aspiring leaders are exposed to people and institutions outside of their immediate sphere, which supports leadership skills development necessary for their current professional roles while also providing access for these mid-level leaders to be known by others with the ability to advance their leadership careers. The vertical nature of higher education makes it difficult to obtain these benefits outside of an organized community, which can leave potential leaders unnoticed and undeveloped. LDI uses this

broad network of professional relationships from across the spectrum of Christian colleges and universities to support leadership skills development, affording mid-level leaders the potential to advance their careers and strengthening the leadership pipeline with well-qualified and prepared leaders of a faith-based background. Table 7 breakdowns this theme and its sources.

Table 7

Theme 1: Establishing a Broader Network of Professional Relationships

| Theme | Frequency | Sources | Source Type | | |
|--|-----------|---------|-------------|----|---|
| | | | I | A | O |
| Establishing a broader network of professional relationships | 77 | 30 | 13 | 10 | 7 |

Note. I=Interviews; A=Artifacts; O=Observations.

Theme 2: Creating Time and Space for Self-Reflection about Vocational Aspirations

The theme of Creating Time and Space for Self-Reflection about Vocational Aspirations had the second highest frequency number at 57, and again 13 out of 14 study participants mentioned this theme during their interview process, and the theme was also evident in artifacts collected. This theme is important to the development of leadership skills in Christian higher education because self-reflection about vocational aspirations allows mid-level leaders to better understand their professional goals and intentionally design a career path to reach them. Mid-level leaders arrive at LDI from different stages and places within their careers. Creating time and space for self-reflection about vocational aspirations is necessary for development of leadership skills since leaders acquire different leadership skills at different levels of development. Although all participants held mid-level positions, some had been in those or similar positions for quite some time while others were just beginning their leadership journey within

Christian higher education. The interview with Participant 13 illustrates how creating time and space for self-reflection about vocational aspirations can be beneficial to the development of leadership skills in mid-level leaders in Christian higher education regardless of their career stage. She was a seasoned leader when she attended a MELDI event, and readily admits she went to MELDI “kicking and screaming,” only agreeing to attend at the insistence of another leader whom she respected. As part of her application, Participant 13 was asked to complete a reflective writing piece about her career aspirations. Her response said “I just want to get through the next years without becoming bitter, broken, and burned out” (Participant 13). The strength of the response surprised Participant 13, and she explained this was the first time she had voiced these thoughts out loud. Elaborating on her thoughts, Participant 13 described one LDI event in which participants discussed these personal reflections about their future career journeys:

I think MELDI provided space to really think about what is next. For others this might have been what is next, what kind of new skills do I need, what kind of new position do I need if I want to be a President, if I want to be a Vice President. For me, what is next was - am I going to stay at [redacted institution name] or not?

This reflective experience brought powerful insight to Participant 13 and gave her permission to move on from her particular institution if necessary to develop leadership skills needed to thrive personally and professionally. Participant 13 related this as “for me, I was in such a process of doing and surviving... I really hadn’t had time to pause and even question my motivation.” Interestingly enough, after being prompted by the reflections at LDI to update her curriculum vitae and prepare herself for a possible move,

Participant 13 remained at her institution and has thrived under the leadership of a new college President. Participant 13's interview reveals that by providing time and space for self-reflection about future career goals and aspirations, mid-level leaders may be able to see leadership paths more clearly, allowing them to strategically develop the leadership skills needed to advance along those pathways or find others.

Other participants told stories about attending LDI while in times of personal or professional transition and related that being in a place away from the daily activities of personal and professional life, free from the temptations and restrictions of technology, and surrounded by the beauty of a natural setting gave space for self-reflection about future goals through prayer, personal time, and counsel with others. Participant 7 said the “whole process makes you go through high self-reflection... Personal time is very, very important as leaders. It is probably the one thing we do so poorly – self-reflection.” The daily press of responsibilities associated with leadership is tremendous and finding time for self-reflection about vocational aspirations is difficult. Time and space for self-reflection becomes especially challenging for mid-level leaders who typically find themselves in somewhat thankless and isolated positions lacking a formal structure of leadership skills development needed to advance within their career (Little, 2016; Rosser, 2004). Understanding this challenge, LDI has intentionally created time and space for self-reflection about vocational aspirations as a means of leadership skills development.

Without knowing where the path should lead, it is impossible to know where one is going. Emerging leaders without clear direction often find themselves in leadership positions unplanned and unaware, being required to develop the necessary leadership skills while on the job (Grotrian-Ryan, 2015). Participant 3 had some difficulty thinking

about herself as a leader. Although she had clearly been in leadership roles, she still had “trouble wearing that label” (Participant 3). During her interview, Participant 3 revealed that for her the

reflective piece was the beginning part of that leadership development; to have an opportunity to look at what I had done in leadership, to think about those areas of growth, and to be more intentional about how the MELDI experience could launch me into the next area of where I want to be. That was really helpful.

Self-reflection was used by Participant 3 to think about her vocational aspirations and create plans for the leadership skills development needed to achieve those aspirations. Participant 6 had a similar LDI experience and also found value in creating time and space for self-reflection about vocational aspirations in support of her leadership skills development. When she attended her first LDI in 2012 (a WLDI), Participant 6 had been employed in mid-level leadership roles within higher education leadership for some time and was then working at a small Christian university on the east coast. The time spent in reflection and discussions at WLDI allowed Participant 6 to reframe her ideas of leadership and opened her eyes to the possibilities of greater opportunities elsewhere for which she was well suited and prepared. She realized “she had become bored” in her current position, and, although there were places where she “still had room to grow” as a leader, “the only way I was going to do that was to get into a larger position where I could actually flex my muscles a little bit” (Participant 6). Both confidence and trepidation were evident as she revealed this in her interview saying,

I think the LDI actually helped me come to the realization that I should be using my gifts and experience at a higher level than I was. It helped me understand that

in my current role and institution, I didn't see ways to move up so that would potentially require me to move institutions. (Participant 6)

Participant 6 determined she was unable to further develop her leadership skills at her current institution, leading her to move out to move up, and she now holds an Associate Provost role at an institution on the west coast. The interview with Participant 6 supports the idea that creating the time and space for self-reflection about vocational aspirations supports leadership skills development in mid-level leaders in Christian higher education.

Table 8 describes the theme, its frequency and the distribution of the sources used in its identification.

Table 8

Theme 2: Creating Time and Space for Self-Reflection about Vocational Aspirations

| Theme | Frequency | Sources | Source Type | | |
|--|-----------|---------|-------------|---|---|
| | | | I | A | O |
| Creating time and space for self-reflection about vocational aspirations | 57 | 20 | 13 | 7 | 0 |

Note. I=Interview; A=Artifacts; O=Observations.

Theme 3: Building Confidence to Lean into Leadership Potential

Building Confidence to Lean into Leadership Potential is the third identified theme and had a frequency number of 56, which was derived from 20 sources, including 12 interview participants. The theme was also evident in artifacts, which were usually workshop notes written by participants. Two study participants provided the researcher with a wooden sign they had made at LDI on which was written the word “Purpose” and surrounded by other descriptive words describing their particular gifts, talents, and leadership skills. Both participants explained to the researcher that this sign was prepared

at LDI and used to build confidence in the individual participant's potential for future leadership. The interview with Participant 10 exemplifies the importance of building confidence to lean into leadership potential as a method for leadership skills development among mid-level leaders at Christian universities. Participant 10 is an emerging leader at a Christian university in the Pacific Northwest that many LDI leaders found to have potential for much larger leadership roles in the future. Her LDI experience at a MELDI in 2017 gave her the confidence she is using to shape her future – a future she believes “was something God had planted and was germinating for a couple years leading into LDI. But, LDI was what blossomed it and gave it substance” (Participant 10).

Participant 10 was not new to leadership roles, having been a student leader in college and having spent her career on the student affairs side of higher education. Her role as a student leader meant she was often provided with encouragement to try new things and move into new positions. Leadership is a common theme when working within student life, but, unfortunately, that conversation can stop once a person moves into other administrative roles. This was true for Participant 10. The contrast between the encouragement she received in her life as a student leader and what she received in her current leadership role became evident to Participant 10 when she attended LDI:

Somehow along the way, I think we forget to do that for the other people we serve with. It becomes all about you and what you do and how can you improve. I find that there is a lack of people who continue to encourage and to call out. So, to have folks who sat there and specifically responded to you as if you had something special to offer was – in some ways – mind blowing.

The encouragement received by emerging leaders attending LDI builds confidence in their leadership potential, sparking an interest in development of the leadership skills needed to pursue more senior leadership roles in the future. Participant 10 expressed that her confidence in her leadership skills grew at LDI. Having always seen herself as “a good number two,” Participant 10 began to realize that she is “more than just a good number two; those skills are actually needed in an executive leader.” Although she understands she may have a long way to go before reaching her ultimate goal as a University President, the goal no longer seems impossible. Participant 10 has developed greater “confidence in her own skill set” and sees herself differently as a result of that confidence, allowing her to lean into her leadership potential.

The experience of building confidence that inspires a participant to lean into leadership potential was evident in the interview with Participant 11. She is a first generation Latina and had not previously known anyone who had attended college, much less become a university leader. As she related it to the researcher, Participant 11’s experience at WLDI “gave me a confidence in what I did because I didn’t know. How would I know? I had never been to college and I didn’t know anyone who had gone to college my whole life growing up.” WLDI provided Participant 11 with leadership examples and mentors who, for the first time in her life, were providing her personal feedback and direction to develop leadership skills needed for her future and building confidence in that future in higher education leadership. Participant 11 internalized that she possessed “the external and the internal skills, fortitude, and characteristics to be a main leader.” This confidence allowed her to lean into her leadership potential and develop the leadership skills she needed to be a leader in higher education. As a result,

Participant 11 became instrumental in helping the CCCU launch the MELDI and has advanced her career into the position of Associate Provost and Chief Diversity Officer. After all her success, she still relates that her first WLDI experience was instrumental in building confidence within her to succeed because it “was like the mystery of pulling back the curtain and the wizard was really not that big” (Participant 11) and she found herself saying “I could do that” (Participant 11). No longer was the future unknown and intimidating; now it was full of possibilities and opportunities that only required the development of leadership skills and confidence. Participant 11’s interview and those of many other study participants directly point to LDI as building the confidence that propelled them to explore leadership skills development for future leadership opportunities. Table 9 outlines Theme 3, its frequency count and sources.

Table 9

Theme 3: Building Confidence to Lean into Leadership Potential

| Theme | Frequency | Sources | Source Type | | |
|---|-----------|---------|-------------|---|---|
| | | | I | A | O |
| Building confidence to lean into leadership potential | 56 | 20 | 12 | 8 | 0 |

Note. I=Interview; A=Artifacts; O=Observations.

Theme 4: Using Ongoing and Systematic Feedback to Build Self-Awareness

The fourth theme found in this study was Using Ongoing and Systematic Feedback to Build Self-Awareness, with a frequency number of 55 derived from 25 sources, including 12 interview participants. The theme was related in participant interviews, and also evident in many of the professional development plans collected by the researcher as artifacts. Throughout study interviews, participants related how ongoing and systematic feedback provided at LDI was used to build self-awareness of

leadership strengths, as well as the areas where further leadership skill development would benefit them as mid-level leaders in Christian higher education. In a study of 50,000 executives, leaders who ranked at the top 10% in asking for feedback were ranked in the 86th percentile in overall leadership effectiveness (Craven, 2018). LDI provides ongoing feedback through the use of the StrengthsFinder assessment, the creation of a professional development plan, and workshops with candid discussions focused on individual perceptions of leadership and leadership skills. Each of these feedback methods is strategically used to build individual self-awareness of skills and talents that may promote or hinder leadership.

The Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment is completed by participants prior to attending LDI. The Gallup organization as administered the StrengthsFinder assessment for over 40 years and theorizes that leaders who are able to recognize and lead from their strengths have both the ability to thrive as leaders and to significantly influence those they lead. The most effective leadership begins by understanding the strengths the leaders brings to the table (Rath & Cochie, 2008). An individual's top five most dominant themes are identified as their Signature Strengths. Each LDI participant brings their Signature Strengths report with them to LDI for feedback and discussion. For many LDI participants, this was the first time they had been introduced to the concept of leading from one's strengths and they related that the feedback about strengths provided a new level of self-awareness about their current leadership skills and the leadership skills still needing to be developed.

An interview with Participant 5 demonstrates the importance of ongoing and systematic feedback to build self-awareness as she discovered how her strengths affect

her leadership in a manner she did not previously understand. Recounting the time she spent with a strengths coach, Participant 5 found this time instrumental in building awareness of how her internal strengths were evident in her leadership and the leadership skills development she needed as a result. Participant 5 related that her Achiever strength creates a strong drive to achieve, enabling her to be quite productive. However, the strengths coach helped her understand that this quest for achievement can also have drawbacks when leading others. Participant 5 now understands her Achiever strength in these words “I tend to process quickly, but I need to try to understand how to help everyone else come into the vision.” As a result Participant 5 worked to develop leadership skills that allow her to bring others together more collaboratively.

Another LDI method of ongoing and systematic feedback to build self-awareness is the professional development plan created by each LDI participant and reviewed with a LDI Resource Leader. Four study participants provided the researcher with copies of their professional development plans as artifacts. In the creation of the professional development plans, each participant self-evaluates their strengths and areas of expertise in the following areas: (a) personal, (b) professional, and (c) relational. This is followed by a personal, professional, and relational self-assessment for areas that need improvement. Each LDI participant had the opportunity to review their professional development plans with various leaders for guidance. For Participant 13, the self-assessment “proved to be revealing and troubling” and would “dramatically change” her understanding of who she was as a leader. For her, the one-on-one conversation with a resource leader about her self-assessment was the “most helpful” aspect of her MELDI experience. For others, the importance of ongoing and systematic feedback became clear

as they worked through their professional development plan. Participant 1, who attended a MELDI in 2017, began to see how feedback he received could be used to direct his future leadership skills development, relating “it is important for me to know my skillset and strengths, and to try to learn what type of institution and positions would be the best fit for me.” The interviews with Participants 1 and 13 illuminate the manner in which LDI uses ongoing and systematic feedback to build self-awareness and expose the need for further development of leadership skills in mid-level leaders in higher education.

For the feedback to be ongoing and useful to building self-awareness, it was delivered during a variety of situations, including workshop discussions with both the entire cohort group and in smaller group settings. Participant 11 related that some of the feedback provided in these sessions was “pretty direct” and hard to hear, but she understood it was important to her life and the lives of others. Participant 11 described one of these direct feedback moments with other cohort members in which she was talking about how “quick” she was, and the discussion leader said to her “the thing about being such a fast talker and quick thinking on your feet is that you can hurt people with your words, your sarcasm.” Her comeback was “... but, I was speaking my piece,” (Participant 11) and the leader replied “but it hurts people and leaves a mark that you just can’t undo” (Participant 11). This was a tough thing for Participant 11 to hear; however, she relates that “it was pretty right on even if in the moment, it really hurt” to hear it. When asked if LDI had created “a safe space” for such direct feedback, Participant 11 agreed that it had, saying that LDI had people “that care enough about you to tell you the truth, even though it hurts, and they do it in a space that is small enough so you can hear

it.” Participant 11’s interview sheds light on how ongoing and systematic feedback is used to build self-awareness of areas in need of further leadership skills development.

This study found that by using ongoing and systematic feedback, LDI is able to build self-awareness of their participants’ leadership strengths and growth areas and use this awareness to inform participants’ leadership skills development. Designed to encourage self-awareness and influence leadership skills development, LDI feedback is individualized to each participant. “No one is apologizing for their gift set...it was very much own who you are (Participant 2).” Participant 3 used this feedback to “identify within yourself who you are at your core – what are your core values and how are you going to leverage that as you lead your organization.” Through ongoing and systematic feedback, LDI participants build self-awareness that is personal to each individual, which allows the individual participant to employ that feedback in a manner useful to the specific leadership skills development they need as a leader in higher education. Table 10 outlines this theme, its frequency count and sources.

Table 10

Theme 4: Using Ongoing and Systematic Feedback to Build Self-Awareness

| Theme | Frequency | Sources | Source Type | | |
|---|-----------|---------|-------------|----|---|
| | | | I | A | O |
| Using ongoing and systematic feedback to build self-awareness | 55 | 25 | 12 | 12 | 1 |

Note. I=Interview; A=Artifacts; O=Observations.

Theme 5: Stimulating Intellectual Thought About Leadership

Another finding from this study led to the fifth theme of Stimulating Intellectual Thought about Leadership. This theme had a frequency of 53 and was found in 37 sources, which is the largest number of sources for one theme in this study. The primary

method used by LDI to stimulate intellectual thought about leadership was through required reading by all LDI participants. The reading resources are provided to participants at the outset of LDI, or as Participant 6 puts it “they handed me a stack of books and said you have to read them.” As higher education professionals, most LDI participants are familiar with the process of aligning practices within the literature; however, several participants were unfamiliar with leadership literature. This is somewhat indicative of a larger problem within higher education generally in that leaders often find themselves in roles unintentionally and with little preparation, having spent most of their time focused on their specific discipline and little time focusing on development of the leadership skills needed in their position (Garza & Eddy, 2008; Inman, 2007; Metheney-Fisher, 2013). Participant 6 epitomized this concept, sharing that she “hadn’t really read any books on leadership prior to LDI. I had been a leader my whole life, but had not really thought about leadership as a set of skills that one could actually cultivate.” Reading selected leadership literature as a means to stimulate intellectual thought about the development of leadership skills in mid-level leaders in Christian universities was evident in the manner in which LDI creators firmly implanted stimulating intellectual discussions about leadership literature into the schedule of events. LDI leaders used workshops to stimulate thoughts about leadership on an intellectual level indicative of a leadership development program created for an academic population. Participant 14’s reflection that, “it was good for me to get back into the literature. I loved the community of scholars that were there” illustrates how the intellectual discussions at LDI inspired these academic participants to deepen their understanding of the leadership skills development needed by mid-level leaders in Christian higher education.

Participant 9 states that LDI contributed to her leadership skills development as a result of the sessions and the accompanying readings. In her words, “you take all the skills, all the tools, all books, all the readings, and the people and you bring that back with you” (Participant 9). After receiving and interacting with multiple resources at LDI, you find you have an “arsenal of tools” which propel you further into your growth as a leader and impacts your work. Another tool used to stimulate intellectual thought about leadership is the professional reading goal contained within participant’s professional development plan. Most participants clearly embrace the importance of continued intellectual discovery on the subject and listed several books on their professional development plans.

In addition to leadership literature, LDI workshops themselves were designed to stimulate intellectual thought as a means of leadership skills development. Whether discussing Design Thinking, analyzing higher education systems, or evaluating the importance of Simon Sinek’s Ted Talk on the importance of knowing “why,” LDI participants were regularly challenged to think outside the box and go beyond the obvious. Case studies were used to “discuss real life examples and talk to each other about how you might handle the situation or write out your thoughts about this” (Participant 11). Session notes taken by Participant 12, a department chair, indicate “we are more alike than we know” and “outside perspective is critical” as she was evaluating some of the restrictors to the current model within her School. The challenge to her previous thinking was also related by Participant 12 when she revealed her shift in thinking as part of a search committee looking for a new dean to lead their school. Her

increased knowledge and understanding of leadership played a role in how she would lead, but also in whom she wanted to lead her.

LDI sessions were designed to stimulate critical thinking of leadership between both practitioner specifics and academic discourse. The value of the resources provided at LDI provided lasting impact beyond the weeklong experience in Washington and even further than the 12-month professional development plan. Stimulating intellectual thought and spending time in knowledgeable discourse about leadership topics grounded in researched literature allowed participants to develop leadership knowledge beneficial to their leadership skills development. Participants used this intellectual thinking as instrumental within their current leadership roles and as the basis for leadership skills development needed for future leadership growth.

The theme was evident in interviews, artifacts, and observations, and the details of theme five and its sources are provided in Table 11.

Table 11

Theme 5: Stimulating Intellectual Thought About Leadership

| Theme | Frequency | Sources | Source Type | | |
|---|-----------|---------|-------------|----|---|
| | | | I | A | O |
| Stimulating intellectual thought about leadership | 53 | 37 | 13 | 20 | 4 |

Note. I=Interview; A=Artifacts; O=Observations.

Theme 6: Providing Up Close and Personal Interactions with Senior Leaders

Each LDI brings together senior leaders and emerging leaders for the purpose of developing leadership skills within individuals for the benefit of CCCU institutions. The sixth theme in this study is Providing up Close and Personal Interactions with Senior

Leaders and reflects the importance of this collaboration. This theme has a frequency of 46 and is found in 19 sources.

Each LDI brings together senior leaders and emerging leaders for the purpose of One of the unique aspects of the LDI experience is the opportunity to shadow a senior leader on another campus. After completing a week at the retreat center in Washington, LDI participants have an opportunity to shadow a person in a senior leadership position at a university other than their own. Various interviews, as well as a thorough review of the shadow reports provided by several study participants, point to this shadow experience as the highlight of LDI participation for several participants. The opportunity to shadow someone in a senior leadership position allowed participants “the ability to have some modeling” (Participant 3) for a role to which they aspire. Allowing participants the opportunity for up close and personal interaction with senior leaders supports the development of leadership skills by providing role models and examples of those who have achieved the goals desired by many LDI participants.

The importance of providing up close and personal interactions with senior leaders to inform the leadership skills development is exemplified in the interview with Participant 10. Participant 10 was selected to shadow a president, which, as she said, gave her an opportunity to both “pick the brain of someone who is in the role of president,” but also allowed her to receive “the discernment and feedback of others to guide and redirect my goals and ambitions.” Participant 10 recounts her shadow experience as nearly three days of extreme access to the person holding the highest role in the institution. He took her into meetings with faculty, alumni, and others, and gave her “space for a lot of questions” (Participant 10) to discuss what she had seen and heard.

He even gave her access to his personal life, inviting her over to his home for coffee and a chance to speak to his wife about the “personal side that crosses over into the profession” (Participant 10). The ability to have meaningful dialogue with a person at this level of senior leadership was the most impactful part of LDI for Participant 10. Unlike Participant 10 who traveled across the nation for her shadow visit, Participant 8 shadowed a Provost at another university just up the freeway from his institution in California. Participant 8 shared that his experience was “with faculty and academic leaders in southern California - same region, but two very different experiences” and it gave him “a whole new vision of what Christian higher education could be.” The differences he described were broad in the scope of their reach, covering everything from the manner in which meetings were handled to managing email to not wearing a suit and tie each day. In the words of Participant 8, his shadow experience “completely blew my mind.” Study participants repeatedly shared that providing up close and personal interactions with senior leaders was critically important to their leadership skills development because it provided interaction with leaders who had achieved the goals they desired and gave participants knowledge of the leadership skills they would need to develop for these senior roles.

LDI provides time with senior leaders outside of the shadow experience as well since many are personally involved with the LDI experience. These up close and personal interactions with senior leaders are beneficial to leadership skills development and growth due to the different forms these interactions take. In addition to “one-on-one time” with a resource leader used to discuss participant’s professional development plan, all of the LDI experiences use Resource Leaders who are in senior leadership positions

within their institutions. These presidents, vice presidents and chief diversity officers spend the week leading sessions, having discussions, and sharing meals with the emerging leaders at the retreat center. These conversations move beyond leadership skills and behaviors needed for effective leadership, these senior leaders are “sharing their story, their leadership story...sharing components of their personal story...and how that has influenced their leadership” (Participant 3). The opportunity to have such up close and personal interactions with senior leaders leaves a significant impression on LDI participants. “Hearing the stories of those who had already walked some of those paths and achieved some of these senior positions made a huge, huge impact” (Participant 12), and many participants find this access to senior leaders at the weeklong LDI particularly useful. LDI’s intentional use of up close and personal interactions with senior leaders is significant to the development of the leadership skills and abilities of the mid-level leaders it serves because the access, availability and vulnerability of senior leaders provides context for leadership lessons. Many LDI participants arrive at LDI with feelings similar to those of Participant 12 who describes herself as someone in middle management who was “grasping for an example of how to construct herself as a leader.” Whether at a *Fireside Chat* session or across the table at dinner, the opportunity to hear from senior leaders is impactful to participants because, as Participant 4 described it when talking about one session with a Provost, “it was much less about the curriculum of leadership; it was the personal testimony of her leadership and her personal journey.” Participant 8 best described the impact of these up close and personal moments with senior leaders as a means of leadership skills development:

It was personal for us and what made it meaningful to me was that it was coming from leaders – current leaders – in the CCCU and in Christian universities and colleges. So, they were actually doing the work of being a leader. This wasn't a university class, and I wasn't talking with a Professor who had not been in leadership. These were real Provosts, real presidents, real deans that were speaking to us... So, that was really, I think, valuable. To have that kind of insight, that kind of expertise represented – especially for those of us who were relatively new to Christian higher ed. To have those who were a little older, more experienced, and speaking out of their actual context and experience was really, really helpful.

Table 12 describes this theme and its sources.

Table 12

Theme 6: Providing Up Close and Personal Interactions with Senior Leaders

| Theme | Frequency | Sources | Source Type | | |
|--|-----------|---------|-------------|---|---|
| | | | I | A | O |
| Providing up close and personal interactions with senior leaders | 46 | 19 | 12 | 7 | 0 |

Note. I=Interview; A=Artifacts; O=Observations.

Theme 7: Personally Affirming Leadership Potential in Individuals

The seventh theme is Personally Affirming Leadership Potential in Individuals. This theme had a frequency of 39, and was found in 19 sources, including interviews, artifacts and observations. The high frequency of this theme is not surprising since the goal of LDI is to develop future leaders, which allows for an easy assumption that a component of LDI would include an affirmation of leadership potential. Personal

affirmation of leadership potential in individual participants supports the development of the leadership skills needed to achieve that potential.

Personally affirming leadership potential in individuals is a key component in the development of leadership skills in mid-level leaders in Christian universities. The LDI creators understand this, and even first-time participants arrive at LDI with an understanding that they were selected to attend because of the leadership potential evident in their application packet. LDI affirms leadership potential in individual participants in the workshops and sessions provided. Sessions such as *What are the Qualities I Think I Have?* or *Embracing the Identity of Being a Leader* allow for small group discussions specifically designed to focus conversation around leadership skills, talents, and identity. These sessions provided a natural situation for others to recognize and affirm leadership potential in LDI participants. The affirmation from both LDI leaders and cohort peers shapes how these emerging leaders view themselves as LDI works to create a community of support and affirmation for future leadership. “You have all these people who have poured into you. It enhances and brings out the potential in you that you maybe you didn’t even see completely” (Participant 9).

Personal affirmation of leadership potential is used by LDI leaders to intentionally acknowledge the leadership skills and abilities possessed by participants and identifies the manner in which these talents can be used at the next level of leadership. For Participant 5, the importance of this recognition occurred during a review of her professional development plan with an LDI resource leader. As she met to talk about her future as an academic leader, Participant 5 found that the leader “affirmed my gifts but also provided good questions for me to consider as I continue a process of discernment.”

Participant 4 also found her LDI experience to be one that affirmed her leadership potential and helped her understand that development of her leadership skills gave her potential for something greater. She said that it became clear after her LDI experience that “leadership will look so different in how you do it” (Participant 5) but the potential to lead was most important. Participant 4 “kept feeling a sense of assurance and affinity” that validated her own professional journey and exposed her to avenues she may want to explore in the future. The comments made by Participants 4 and 5 during their interviews point out the manner in which personal affirmation of leadership potential encourages development of leadership skills among mid-level leaders in Christian universities.

The support gained through personal affirmation of leadership potential received by attending LDI motivated participants to further their leadership skills development as mid-level leaders in Christian higher education. Participant 9 felt that it opened her eyes to ideas she had not previously considered. She said, “because you have all these people who have poured into you, it enhances and brings out the potential in you that maybe you didn’t see completely” (Participant 9). This realization made a significant impression on Participant 9 because she is the director of a college career center and spends her days pouring into others about their potential. She thrived in a situation in which she found herself on the other end of this scenario by having others affirm the leadership potential in her. When personal affirmation of leadership potential is from senior leaders or those you respect, it can take on new significance and meaning. “It’s just really good to have someone outside your system see you and say - you can do this” (Participant 2).

The LDI experience is filled with opportunities for affirmation about an individual’s leadership potential and their ability to serve as a leader within Christian

higher education. This was the story of Participant 7 who described it as “you need to have people who believe in you and say you need to be a leader. Because you possess this, you do need to be a leader.” Having others recognize and affirm your leadership potential and aspirations serves as a catalyst for many to continue in the development of the leadership skills needed for the next level. After Participant 7 received affirmation of her leadership potential at LDI, her vision for that future grew significantly. It opened her eyes to new possibilities, and she is now a Vice President at a college in California. As she said, “you need people who believe in you and can take your dream to the next level and imagine what that could look like for you” (Participant 7). The personal affirmation of leadership potential moves an individual’s leadership goals from dream to possibility to reality. Table 13 outlines this theme and provides a breakdown of its sources.

Table 13

Theme 7: Personally Affirming Leadership Potential in Individuals

| Theme | Frequency | Sources | Source Type | | |
|--|-----------|---------|-------------|---|---|
| | | | I | A | O |
| Personally affirming leadership potential in individuals | 39 | 19 | 12 | 6 | 1 |

Note. I=Interview; A=Artifacts; O=Observations.

Theme 8: Selecting Emerging Leaders with Identified Leadership Skills

Study findings also showed that LDI supported the development of leadership skills in mid-level leaders in Christian institutions through the process of selecting emerging leaders with identified leadership skills, which has been identified as Theme 8. This theme had a frequency count of 37 and was derived from 20 sources. LDI is intentional about who is selected to participate and uses a nomination and application

process to identify and select emerging leaders who may have some leadership experience or possess an affinity toward leadership. By focusing efforts on emerging leaders with identified leadership skills, LDI is able to best utilize its efforts to support the development of leadership skills to strengthen the leadership pipeline within Christian higher education.

The theme of Selecting Emerging Leaders with Identified Leadership Skills is revealed through a review of resumes and curriculum vitae of LDI participants. Nearly every participant held some type of leadership role when nominated to participate in LDI such as directors, department chairs, and, perhaps, an assistant dean. Participant 7 was asked to apply because someone had “noticed she was very involved in leadership with the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities and one of the few women in a leadership role at [redacted institution name].” For Participant 11, her LDI participation was the result of a conversation with the President and Provost at her institution about her future leadership interests about a more “leadership focused position” and their suggestion that LDI was a good means for developing the leadership skills needed to advance to a more senior leadership level. Selecting emerging leaders allows LDI to concentrate leadership skills development on those who have already been recognized as having leadership potential.

By selecting emerging leaders with already identified leadership skills, LDI capitalizes on the leadership skills participants bring with them to their LDI experience. As Participant 1 relates “I did a little bit of everything, which meant I had a lot of management experience from that. I brought all of that with me.” Participant 9 understood that all the participants at her MELDI event were “already in leadership on

their campus” and that when reviewing nominations, they select people who we already see so much potential and strength.” She took these thoughts further, saying that by selecting emerging leaders who already demonstrate leadership potential LDI chooses “people who already in leadership and who bring a lot of leadership to the table...it then enhances that leadership.” Theme 8, Selecting Emerging Leaders with Identified Leadership Skills, is best described in the words of the CCCU President and LDI Founder included in the welcome letter provided by Participant 13. In welcoming participants to LDI, the President writes “those who reviewed the application pool were excited and encouraged about the breadth of experiences and talents reflected in the group that will come together for this wonderful opportunity of professional and personal development.”

Study interviews and artifacts show that selecting emerging leaders with identified leadership skills supports the development of leadership skills in mid-level leaders because individuals with a known history or interest in leadership may be inclined toward further leadership within Christian colleges and universities. A breakdown of this theme and its sources can be found in Table 14.

Table 14

Theme 8: Selecting Emerging Leaders with Identified Leadership Skills

| Theme | Frequency | Sources | Source Type | | |
|--|-----------|---------|-------------|---|---|
| | | | I | A | O |
| Selecting emerging leaders with identified leadership skills | 37 | 20 | 13 | 7 | 0 |

Note. I=Interview; A=Artifacts; O=Observations.

Theme 9: Cooperatively Developing Plans to Indicate Leadership Pathways

The theme of Cooperatively Developing Plans to Indicate Leadership Pathways has been identified as Theme 9. With a frequency of 33 and located within 18 sources,

this theme conveys the perception by study participants that creating clearer pathways into leadership is important to the leadership skills development of mid-level leaders in Christian colleges and universities.

The theme of Cooperatively Developing Plans to Indicate Leadership Pathways supports the need for leadership skills development in Christian higher education because many find themselves in leadership roles by accident with little preparation (Garza & Eddy, 2008). Yet, existing research indicates higher education has been slow to embrace the intentional development of clear pathways toward leadership for mid-level leaders and other academic professionals (Betts et al., 2009; Bisbee, 2007, Womack, 2009). LDI participants have opportunities to work cooperatively with an advisor (another person in leadership within Christian higher education) to review their leadership history, create a pathway toward leadership, and determine the leadership skills development needed to follow their leadership plan. Collaborating together provides context and knowledge allowing both the participant and advisor to “pay attention to the career path and where individuals are on that career path” (Participant 8) to gear their LDI event and shadow experience to the individual’s level of needed leadership skills development.

Although data for Theme 9 was collected through interviews and artifacts, a significant amount of data resulted from the professional development plan created by study participants. The professional development plan is prepared by participants as part of their LDI preparation and includes a plan outlining the individual’s professional goals and objectives over the 12 months following LDI participation. During LDI, the professional development plan is expanded and updated as awareness of leadership skills development is drawn from specific sessions and discussions. A LDI leader works

together with the participant to cooperatively develop a plan indicating the leadership pathway and a strategy for development of the leadership skills necessary to advance in leadership in Christian colleges and universities.

The professional development plan is specifically aligned to assist in the development of leadership skills in mid-level leaders in Christian higher education by identifying a leadership goal and indicating the leadership pathway and leadership skills development necessary for attaining that goal. Since the leadership goals of each individual are unique to the individual, each professional development plan is also unique to the participant's individual leadership skill development. For example, Participant 13's professional development plan included one-year objectives that were broad in scope such as "read more deeply on leadership and diversity, network on my own campus and beyond, ... explore vocational opportunities..." while Participant 4's plan was much more specific and included items such as "re-design the content delivery for Foundations of Leadership Course (September 2013)...develop academic writing skills through partnership with [redacted institution name] faculty ... on-going self-directed writing assignment... read the following books." Participant 14's professional development plan was even more specific, indicating to "be hired into a new position at the Provost/NPAA level." Regardless of the level of specificity in the professional development plan, each participant reviews their goals and objectives with an LDI leader allowing them to, as indicated by Participant 3 indicated about her MELDI experience,

Think ahead to areas we had to work on in ourselves identifying where we thought our strengths lie, where we thought we needed some additional work, and how we thought MELDI could help with that" and to "be more intentional about

how the MELDI experience could launch me into the next area of where I want to be.

Determining professional goals and working with a more senior leader to cooperatively develop a leadership plan and pathway for attaining those goals supports the development of leadership skills in mid-level leaders in Christian higher education by creating a more strategic leadership trajectory.

Cooperatively developing plans to indicate leadership pathways is also evident in LDI. As one study participant who now holds a LDI leadership role indicated, understanding the career aspirations and goals of participants allows LDI “to almost gear the LDI and WLDI to that level” (Participant 8). This intentionality is evident in some of the titles of LDI sessions such as *Next Steps in Your LDI Experience* (LDI Year 2008) or *Articulating a Compelling Vision Personally and Professionally; Your MELDI Year and Action Plan* (LDI Year 2017). These sessions are designed to encourage participants to think strategically about the manner in which their leadership skills development can be used to further achieve their leadership goals. Working with other leaders who have walked the leadership path in Christian higher education provides direction to participants and allows each to consider, as stated by Participant 11, “to think about how I can be strategic in my professional development.” Cooperatively working with others to develop a plan to indicate a leadership pathway supports mid-level leaders within Christian colleges allows individuals to be more strategic and deliberate about leadership skills development.

The LDI benefit of cooperatively working with leaders from Christian colleges and universities in the development of leadership goals and indicating a pathway to attain

these leadership goals provides support to participants' leadership skills development through opportunities to explore leadership aspirations with others and the ability to process through these aspirations to develop clear pathways for the leadership skills development needed to attain chosen goals. Although this process begins at LDI, it does not end there. The ability to “meet one on one with mentors during LDI week to talk about our ambitions” (Participant 6) and to be provided with feedback that was “wonderfully encouraging and wise...but also provided good questions for me to consider” (Participant 10) is important to leadership growth of participants. As Participant 9 related, LDI provides you with tools, books, people, and resources, and then “they go back through with you to ensure your plans will allow you to reach your goals.” She further stated that after LDI, they follow up with you because “they make sure you have really followed up with what you said you were going to do” (Participant 9). Participant 9 summed it up as follows: “it’s not just what happened at the LDI, but it’s the continued relationship of that and - through her leadership - the continued development of me.” Participant 9’s interview illustrates the benefit of cooperatively developing plans indicating leadership pathways and the value of this support to the continued leadership skills development of mid-level leaders in Christian colleges and universities. A breakdown of this theme and its sources can be found in Table 15.

Table 15

Theme 9: Cooperatively Developing Plans to Indicate Leadership Pathways

| Theme | Frequency | Sources | Source Type | | |
|--|-----------|---------|-------------|---|---|
| | | | I | A | O |
| Cooperatively developing plans to indicate leadership pathways | 33 | 18 | 10 | 8 | 0 |

Note. I=Interview; A=Artifacts; O=Observations.

Theme 10: Highlighting Individual Changes to Establish Executive Presence

The final theme, Theme 10, is identified as Highlighting Individual Changes to Establish Executive Presence, which had a frequency of 25 and was found in nine sources spread across all forms of data collected, interviews, artifacts, and observations.

Although this is the 10th and final theme with the lowest frequency, those who spoke into this theme were extremely enthusiastic about the impact it made on their development of leadership skills. Two of the seven individuals who mentioned this theme in their interviews said they have given the LDI resource book titled *Executive Presence* to others in their universities. Two others spoke of this theme as the most important aspect of their LDI experience and at least one participant listed it in his professional development plan as an area for further growth. The ability to exude a “sense of being competent” (Participant 1) and to understand “perception management” (Participant 14) is achieved through highlighting individual changes important to the establishment of executive presence and is a critical aspect necessary for the development of leadership skills in mid-level leaders in Christian colleges and universities because it is significant to how one is viewed as a future leader.

Highlighting Individual Changes to Establish Executive Presence was noticeable in a few different areas of the study. In his interview, Participant 1 described the importance of this theme realizing that his tendency toward introversion means he must be aware of the need to present himself as a leader, and further sharing that LDI helped him intentionally work to highlight and develop the changes he needed to establish the leadership skill of executive presence and prepare him to bring “a presence into these spaces with these different top-level managers and leaders.” Participants 1, 9, and 10

each mentioned the LDI session *Executive Presence: Putting on the Mantle of Leadership* as being an important part of their leadership skills development. Participant 10 gave the example that “as an Asian American woman one of my challenges is being seen or overlooked. You know, you need to speak up. I can be loud but it is not always my preferred method.” Understanding the importance of how she is perceived by others and the manner in which her executive presence impacts her leadership was particularly evident in her interview when Participant 10 related:

It was really helpful because when you’re in mid-management, you’re primarily thinking about what are you getting done and the skill sets are time management, being able to multitask, keeping on top of things, being consistent and following through - those kinds of things. Those are still important at an executive level, but it was good for me to shift and reframe some of my thinking around leadership into the space of while those are important things to carry, so much of how you are viewed when your leader has to do with perception...

Participant 10 made specific and individual changes and she believes she now “approaches her job and steps into these spaces differently now.” She no longer believes it is enough to “just hunker down in my role...the presence piece has changed that for me” (Participant 10). Establishing executive presence is important to leadership skills development because the manner in which a person presents himself or herself has an impact on how he or she is perceived as a leader and that, in turn, can impact leadership ability. Participant 3 understood the impact of executive presence as a part of her leadership communication, stating in her interview that she is now “being mindful of how I am presenting myself and realizing that it is part of my messaging.” LDI supports the

development of leadership skills through highlighting the individual changes needed to build executive presence and helping participants understand the importance of “working on a more dignified presentation” and “perception management” (Participant 14).

For some participants the individual changes were quite specific, such as professional image, leadership demeanor, and appearance of credibility. During her interview, Participant 11 explained that these changes were highlighted during fairly frank conversations with individuals such as “you didn’t get the job you think you deserve even though you have all the credentials because this [look and demeanor] is not going to get you there.” Participant 7 reiterated these ideas in her interview, saying,

you are brilliant, you have strategic mindset, but you lack all the executive presence you need to be successful. You don’t dress the way you need to, you don’t present well, you don’t come across trustworthy – it’s in those kinds of characteristics that leaders sometimes fail.

For Participant 7, these are critically important changes of which aspiring leaders need to be aware. “If someone isn’t brave enough to call it out on them, where are they going to learn it?” (Participant 7). LDI creates a safe environment in which trusted and respected leaders and others can highlight the individual changes needed to establish the executive presence required by mid-level leaders in Christian colleges and universities. In response many participants echoed the sentiments of Participant 10, that “I have been working at trying to carry myself differently...with a different authority...I’m just trying to carry a different presence.” The interviews of study participants illustrate that LDI supports the leadership skills development of mid-level leaders in Christian colleges and

universities by highlighting individual changes needed in participants to establish an executive presence necessary for their success as leaders in Christian higher education. A breakdown of this theme and its sources can be found in Table 16.

Table 16

Theme 10: Highlighting Individual Changes to Establish Executive Presence

| Theme | Frequency | Sources | Source Type | | |
|---|-----------|---------|-------------|---|---|
| | | | I | A | O |
| Highlighting individual changes to establish executive presence | 25 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 1 |

Note. I=Interview; A=Artifacts; O=Observations.

Summary

This study revealed the results of responses from semi-structured interviews with 14 participants in a qualitative, phenomenological study. The research questions were designed to describe the lived experiences of participants in the LDI through the CCCU and their perspective of how that participation supports the development of leadership skills in mid-level leaders in Christian universities. Triangulation of data collection by the researcher included in-depth interviews with 14 participants, 42 individual artifacts collected from study participants, and observations of all 14 study participants on their campuses and resulted in 10 significant themes.

Nearly all of the participants expressed the perspective that establishing a broader network of professional relationships critically supported the development of the leadership skills needed as mid-level leaders in Christian colleges and universities making it the top theme with a frequency of 77. Themes 2 through 5 each had a frequency of over 50 and were also cited by participants as influential to their development of leadership skills. Participants described Creating Time and Space for

Self-Reflection about Vocational Aspirations (Theme 2, Frequency 57) and Building Confidence to Lean into Leadership Potential (Theme 3, Frequency 56) as being critical to their ability to achieve future leadership goals. Theme 4 (Using Ongoing and Systematic Feedback to Build Self-Awareness) and Theme 5 (Stimulating Intellectual Thought About Leadership) had frequencies of 55 and 53, respectively, and were mentioned by participants as providing an awareness of the leadership skills needed by each mid-level leader in the study to further their development as future leaders in Christian higher education.

As scholars and leaders in Christian higher education, the recognition of the importance of this study is best described by Participant 7:

If we are going to grow in those areas, we need to look back and ask what kind of people do we need and innovate programs that allow people to grow so they can get your school to that destination... what kind of talent pool do you need and how are you going to build it.

Study participants' perceptions of their LDI experience provided the researcher with insight to inform the discussion of leadership skills development necessary for strengthening the leadership talent pipeline within Christian higher education as it faces pending leadership attrition in the very near future. The 10 significant themes were the result of multiple interview hours in which participants stated with confidence the impact of LDI on their leadership skills development. The experience of study participants is useful to inform future understanding of leadership skills development and the manner in which mid-level leaders within Christian colleges and universities could attain these skills to lead their institutions into the future.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Today's colleges and universities are multi-million dollar entities facing complex issues such as rising tuition costs, changing pedagogy, and an outcome-driven student body (DeZure et al., 2014; Gagliardi et al., 2017). Christian colleges and universities face additional challenges due to the integration of faith and curriculum that may be unappreciated by people for whom spiritual life is not a priority (Adringa, 2007). Christian institutions must develop leaders with the ability to blend the distinctive characteristics of Christian higher education with an understanding of the risks and decisions necessary to sustain higher education in today's climate. Chapter I provided the background and context to understand the critical need for strong leadership in higher education and, more specifically, Christian higher education. To strengthen the pool of available leadership talent in Christian higher education, emerging leaders must develop leadership skills necessary for more senior roles. Chapter II identified relevant research at all leadership levels in higher education with a particular focus on mid-level leadership and Christian higher education. Though some literature regarding faith integration and administrative work on college campuses exists, the majority of said research focuses on senior-level administrators such as presidents, provosts, and vice presidents of universities (Longman, 2012). There is a gap in the research since very few resources explore leadership skills development of mid-level leaders in higher education and studies relating to the development of leadership skills by mid-level leaders at Christian universities are non-existent. Chapter III described the study's qualitative, phenomenological research design and process for selecting participants, gathering data, and developing themes. Chapter IV provides the research findings based on collected

data, including frequency counts, sources, and descriptions. Themes were developed from interviews, artifacts, and observations with 14 study participants at seven Christian institutions in four states. Study participants were all identified as having participated in at least one of the Leadership Development Institutes established by the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities and are all currently serving in higher education leadership positions.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe the participant's perspective of how participation in the Leadership Development Institutes through the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities supports the development of leadership skills in mid-level leaders in Christian universities.

Research Question

The research question for this study sought to answer: What is the participant's perspective of how participation in the Leadership Development Institutes through the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities supports the development of leadership skills in mid-level leaders in Christian universities?

Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

A qualitative, phenomenological research method was chosen to describe the lived experiences of 14 people who have been participants in at least one LDI offered by CCCU. In-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted by the researcher during October and November 2018 captured the experiences described by all study participants. These interviews took place on the participant's campuses in order to ensure a familiar setting that was comfortable for the study participant. Open-ended, semi-structured questions

were supported by follow up questions to clarify responses or elicit additional detail and information (Patton, 2002). The researcher spent time on each campus before or after the interview to provide acculturation to the campus climate.

The interview process was supported by the collection of artifacts from each participant. The number and type of artifacts collected varied by participant, but resulted in a total of 42 artifacts collected for analysis. These artifacts consisted of LDI brochures, LDI agendas, professional development plans created during LDI participation, LDI shadow report forms, job descriptions for positions held by study participants, pictures from participation, and copies of books and resources.

Informal observations were also conducted during the interview process, resulting in field notes from each interview, as well as observations made while on the participant's campus. Direct observation allowed the researcher to view the participant in his or her natural leadership setting and provided additional data with respect to the participant's leadership skills.

Population

A study's population is a group of elements that conform to the study criteria and to which the intent is to generalize study results (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This study investigated the lived experience of participants in one of the LDI conducted by the CCCU. The CCCU offers four versions of the LDI and the study population included past participants in any of the four LDIs offered by CCCU. The population of this study consists of the approximately 500 people who have participated in any LDI since its inception in 1998.

Sample

The group of participants from whom the study data is collected is the sample (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Since qualitative research sampling focuses on depth over breadth, the sample is a smaller group that is representative of a larger group (Roberts, 2010). The sample for this study consisted of 14 leaders at Christian universities who participated as members of LDI cohorts in any of the LDIs offered by CCCU over the last 10 years, or between the years 2008 and 2018. Each member of the sample is either currently a mid-level leader within Christian higher education or was a mid-level leader at the time of LDI participation.

Research Question

The research question for this study sought to answer: What is the participant's perspective of how their participation in the Leadership Development Institutes through the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities supports the development of leadership skills in mid-level leaders in Christian universities?

Major Findings

The study's participants, participants in the LDI through the CCCU, shared their lived experiences and perspectives of how participation in LDI supports the development of leadership skills in mid-level leaders in Christian universities. Based on the participants' interview responses, shared stories, collected artifacts, and observations, six major findings were revealed in response to the research question.

Major Finding 1: Mid-Level Leaders Develop Leadership Skills When They Possess a Broad Network of Professional Relationships

Based on interviews, artifacts and observations of 14 study participants, 13 of 14 (93%) referenced 77 times that mid-level leaders in Christian universities develop leadership skills when they possess a broad network of professional relationships. While many participants enjoyed the camaraderie and community developed at LDI, they also understood the professional benefits of having a network of professionals to offer advice to their current roles and play an instrumental role in their future leadership advancement. The opportunity to network with a broad array of individuals enables emerging leaders to learn from another's leadership journey and interacting with people who have had similar experiences encourages leaders to reflect on their goals and enables them to more fully realize their potential (Maurtin Cairncross, 2015). Higher education's individualistic culture and vertical organizational structure make it difficult to establish connections outside of one's own institution. Therefore, the broad network of professional relationships developed at LDI is valuable to leadership skills development because it offers exposure to people and institutions outside the participant's immediate sphere and provides a broader perspective of leadership.

Major Finding 2: Mid-Level Leaders Develop Leadership Skills When They Allow Time and Space for Self-Reflection about Leadership Goals

Each summer, multiple participants arrive in Washington to participate in LDI. While they all arrive at the same destination, they come from a variety of stages and places within their careers. All LDI participants, including the 14 participants interviewed for this study, arrive with leadership in their background, but some are new

to leadership while others are seasoned veterans. Regardless of leadership background, 93% of study participants indicated that cultivating time and space for self-reflection about their leadership goals was instrumental to their development of leadership skills and growth as leaders in higher education. Study participants agreed that reflective practices allowed them to view their leadership experiences more holistically and in light of future leadership goals. Unfortunately, too many leaders in higher education find themselves in leadership positions unintentionally and are forced to develop leadership skills while on the job (Grotrian-Ryan, 2015). Allowing time and space for self-reflection about leadership goals allows individuals to realistically evaluate their leadership skills, think intentionally about their ambitions, and create plans for developing the leadership skills needed to achieve leadership goals.

Major Finding 3: Mid-Level Leaders Develop Leadership Skills When They Receive Personal Affirmation to Build Confidence in Leadership Potential

Thirteen of 14 study participants agreed that the personal affirmation they received at LDI increased confidence in their leadership potential, which led them to further their leadership skills development and, for some, step into more advanced leadership positions. This major finding is the result of the convergence of two themes. The themes Building Confidence to Lean into Leadership Potential and Personally Affirming Leadership Potential in Individuals had a greater number of co-occurrences than any other combination of themes in this study. LDI affirmed the diversity of leadership skills and experiences participants brought to the table and gave them confidence that these skills were beneficial to their future leadership potential. As leaders in Christian higher education, most participants viewed their leadership through the lens

of gifts and calling. Through this lens, most participants would agree with the sentiments of Participant 6 in that they have been gifted in ways for leadership and were being called into positions of greater influence. Therefore, if they were not actively pursuing advancement into these positions, participants may not be stewarding their leadership gifts well. LDI affirmed participants' leadership skills (or gifts), allowing them to build the confidence needed to lean into their leadership potential and future calling within Christian higher education.

Major Finding 4: Mid-Level Leaders Develop Leadership Skills When They Experience Close Interactions with Senior Leaders

LDI provides participants with multiple opportunities to experience close interactions with senior leaders, and for 86% of study participants, these interactions were critical to the development of their leadership skills. Multiple participants related that the access to senior leaders sharing more than simple professional advice was instrumental to their leadership development. Senior leaders who were willing to be vulnerable and share stories of their personal leadership journeys provided real life examples of all aspects of leadership. Without such real-life, personal examples, LDI would be much the same as any university course on leadership. Instead, participants found meaning and inspiration that led them to continue their leadership skills development in preparation for their own advancement into positions as senior leaders.

Major Finding 5: Mid-Level Leaders Develop Leadership Skills When They Receive Feedback to Build Self-Awareness and Executive Presence

Self-awareness is the essence of effective leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Study participants agreed and 13 mentioned the use of ongoing and systematic feedback as a means of building self-awareness and/or executive presence as important to their leadership skills development. LDI uses a variety of means of ongoing and systematic feedback to build self-awareness among its participants. The use of multiple methods of feedback reveal different aspects about an individual's personal and professional leadership, which can be used to create an awareness of areas of strength and areas needing improvement to establish executive presence. This was important to study participants, and 10 participants mentioned direct changes they made in response to this feedback. Through ongoing and systematic feedback used to build self-awareness and establish executive presence, LDI supports the leadership skills development of emerging leaders in Christian higher education.

Major Finding 6: Mid-Level Leaders Develop Leadership Skills When They Are Identified as Emerging Leaders and Provided a Clear Leadership Plan

It is important that leaders develop the leadership skills needed for the senior leadership roles into which they may be promoted (Mumford et al., 2007). However, higher education has been slow to embrace the process of identifying emerging leaders, providing them with a clear leadership plan, and delivering the leadership skills development necessary to move into senior leadership positions. LDI intentionally selects individuals with leadership potential and 93% of study participants mentioned this as an important aspect of their leadership skills development. However, selection for

LDI participation is not enough to develop leadership skills. Almost immediately after these emerging leaders have been selected for LDI participation, they receive support and direction in the creation of a clear leadership plan needed to achieve their leadership aspirations. Leadership development in the 21st century is about identifying and developing potential (Zisken, 2016).

Unexpected Findings

The researcher found three unexpected findings in the study data. First, there were no institutional administration positions represented within the study sample, nor were there any individuals holding these positions included on the cohort lists or recommendations provided by other participants. The LDI application criteria indicate that preference will be given to individuals who “are recognized as ‘up-and-comers’ with demonstrated leadership skills and the potential for future senior-level leadership” (CCCU, 2018b). Yet, all participants held faculty, administrative, or student affairs positions, and there were no participants holding positions within admissions, human resources, financial aid, registrar, etc. Although traditional pathways to university leadership have followed the routes held by participants, the complexities of leading today’s institutions allow for divergent paths toward senior leadership roles. It was unexpected that individuals leading within administrative positions were not represented.

The second unexpected finding was that participants attended multiple LDIs. Five of 14 participants (36%) had attended more than one LDI and/or were actively engaged in LDI as leaders or resources. At least two other participants also mentioned planning to attend another LDI when institutional funds were available. The high number

of repeated attendees surprised the researcher and demonstrated the positive impact LDI participation has on the emerging leaders selected to attend.

The third and final unexpected finding was that there were follow up gatherings and forums for past LDI participants. These gatherings often occur in connection with other CCCU conferences and allow individuals who have previously attended LDI to come together once again. There is intentionality in the manner in which CCCU builds and supports the LDI network beyond the LDI experience which was unknown to the researcher and unexpected in the findings.

Conclusions

This study explored the lived experiences of 14 individuals who participated in the LDI through CCCU. The study captured their perspective of the impact LDI participation had on their development as a leader. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher was able to draw six conclusions that provide direction to leadership skills development for mid-level leaders within Christian universities.

Conclusion 1: Successful Leaders in Higher Education are Intentional About Broadening Their Professional Network

Based on the finding that mid-level leaders in higher education develop leadership skills when they possess a broad network of professional relationships, it is concluded that successful leaders in higher education are intentional about broadening their professional network. Becoming a successful leader requires a shift from a confining operational network of individuals who guide the functions of one's daily duties to a broader network of professional relationships that allow an emerging leader to multiply knowledge, glean information, and contribute to the success of others (Ibarra & Hunter,

2007). Study participants agreed and 57% were able to utilize their broad network of professional relationships to advance in leadership positions. Using leadership advancement as a measurement of leadership success, it can be concluded that LDI participation allowed leaders to broaden their network of professional relationships that led to advancement in leadership roles, indicating leadership success.

The literature on higher education leadership indicates that the individualized culture within higher education often views leadership as an individual endeavor and those who desire to grow as leaders must find their own pathways toward growth (Amey, 2006; Grotrian-Ryan, 2015). In contrast to the individualized nature of leadership skills development typical of higher education, this study found that a broad network of professional relationships allows leaders to expand their perspective on the leadership skills required to lead within their institutions. Ninety-three percent (93%) of study participants found the ability to move outside the individualized context of higher education and use LDI participation to build a broad network of professional relationships that impacted their growth as leaders and enabled them to move leadership development outside of an individual effort into one that has input from a variety of resources. This study supports Ibarra and Hunter's (2007) assertion that leaders who broaden their network of professional relationships are able to leverage the internal and external ties necessary to be more successful in their careers than those who define their jobs too narrowly within a limited network of relationships. Over half of the study participants were able to advance in leadership positions after attending LDI which supports the literature that broader networks of professional relationships lead to success.

It is concluded from study findings and literature that leaders who broaden their network of professional relationships are more likely to be successful leaders in higher education.

Conclusion 2: Designing Time and Space for Reflection is a Critical Element of Leadership Development

Based on the finding that mid-level leaders in higher education develop leadership skills when they allow time and space for self-reflection about leadership goals, it is concluded that designing time and space for reflection is a critical element of leadership development. The literature reveals that many leaders in higher education find themselves in their leadership roles unintentionally and, thus, lack the leadership preparation needed for these roles (Garza & Eddy, 2008; Inman, 2007; Metheney-Fisher, 2013). Allocating time and space for reflection allows leaders to set goals for leadership aspirations and intentionally focus their leadership skills development to attain those goals. Study data supports this conclusion in that 13 of 14 study participants (93%) indicated that time and space for reflection about their leadership goals was instrumental to their leadership skills development and preparation to lead. Utilizing time for self-reflection to clarify leadership aspirations allows individuals to align leadership skills development with their leadership goals and aspirations. Study results indicate that leaders who are able to intentionally reflect on their leadership aspirations are better able to plan for those goals and develop the leadership skills needed to prepare them for leadership positions.

Conclusion 3: Affirmation Creates Confident Leaders and Promotes Employee Engagement

Based on the finding that mid-level leaders in higher education develop leadership skills when they receive personal affirmation that builds confidence in leadership potential, it is concluded that affirmation creates confident leaders and promotes employee engagement. Research shows that employee engagement requires a confident team of employees (Pati & Kumar, 2010). This study agrees with the research in that 93% of study participants determined that personal affirmation increased their confidence in their potential for leadership. Leadership development in the 21st century is about identifying and developing leadership potential in others (Zisken, 2016). Confidence gained by individuals when their potential for leadership has been identified and affirmed was clear within the data and study participants were motivated to engage more deeply within their institutions. Five of 14 participants accepted added roles within their institutions that required further engagement, and some participants were further engaged with those under their leadership by bringing leadership development activities to them. These results are especially important to mid-level leaders in higher education who are often called the “unsung professionals of the academy” (Rosser, 2004, p. 317), and may not receive the recognition and affirmation of others in higher profile roles. Based on study findings and applicable research, it is determined that affirmation creates confident leaders and promotes employee engagement.

Conclusion 4: Interactions Between Senior Leaders and Emerging Leaders

Strengthen the Pipeline of Prepared Candidates

Based on the finding that mid-level leaders in higher education develop leadership skills when they interact with senior leaders, it is concluded that interactions between senior leaders and emerging leaders strengthen the pipeline of prepared candidates. A majority of study participants indicated that exploring leadership through personal interactions with senior leaders provided them with a truer picture of the leadership skills needed to lead within higher education. The pipeline of prepared leaders is evidenced by the fact that more than half (57%) of study participants moved into more advanced senior leadership roles following their participation in LDI. Study responses are also supported by existing research, which shows that emerging leaders who have close interactions with senior leaders build confidence, are more optimistic about their future within the organization, and acquire critical skills for future leadership (Kram, 1988). When senior leaders authentically involve themselves in the lives of emerging leaders, institutions benefit two fold - senior leaders renew their enthusiasm for their work and emerging leaders become better prepared for upcoming leadership roles. Both of these benefits promote a steady supply of well-qualified leaders that affects the future viability and competitiveness of a university (Trotta, 2013). Study participants recounted benefits to their leadership skills development and the resulting preparation for leadership roles gained from the upclose and personal interactions with senior leaders, reinforcing the conclusion that close interactions between senior leaders and emerging leaders support institutional sustainability by creating a stronger pipeline of prepared candidates.

Conclusion 5: Feedback Raises Awareness That Builds Leadership Confidence and Presence

Based on the finding that mid-level leaders in higher education develop leadership skills when they receive ongoing and systematic feedback to build self-awareness and executive presence, it is concluded that feedback raises awareness that builds leadership confidence and presence. Feedback provides leaders with information about their leadership strengths as well as areas needing development and dialoguing with trusted individuals can teach leaders how to build their executive presence (Bates, 2016). With 86% of study participants citing LDI's use of feedback as a motivator that allowed them to step into leadership roles with confidence and presence, it is clear that an leadership growth and development requires honest information about one's leadership skills. Fifty-percent (50%) of study participants indicated that feedback led to a change in their leadership, and that this change has led them to act more confidently and/or with more presence in their leadership roles. When an emerging leader is aware of his or her leadership skills, the individual can begin to capitalize on these skills within leadership roles. Similarly, awareness of growth areas allows leaders to strengthen those areas for more confident leadership. Successful leaders within higher education know that self-awareness is useful for continuous development of the leadership confidence and presence required to move an institution forward into the future.

Conclusion 6: Clear Leadership Plans Guide Development Necessary for Leadership Success

Based on the finding that mid-level leaders in higher education develop leadership skills when they have been identified as emerging leaders and provided a clear leadership

plan, it is concluded that clear leadership plans guide development necessary for leadership success. By choosing individuals with demonstrated leadership potential, LDI focuses its leadership skills development on individuals known to be interested in leadership growth which allows LDI to capitalize on the leadership skills individuals bring with them to their developmental experience. Ninety-three percent (93%) of study participants understood that their selection to LDI was the result of recognition of their potential as an emerging leader. Beginning the leadership development process with individuals who have already demonstrated interest in leadership moves the leadership development process forward more quickly. The additional support of creating a professional development plan allows leaders to focus on development of the skills needed for leadership success.

This study's findings support Little's (2016) research, which indicated that a clear professional development plan provides emerging leaders with greater opportunities for advancement. If higher education desires to create a continuum of trained leaders, institutions must develop clear plans for those mid-level leaders desiring to enter senior leadership positions (DeZure et al., 2014; Klein & Salk, 2013). People grow and develop at their own pace; holding one back from leadership due to lack of seniority or moving one into a role for which they are unprepared, creates poor leadership in both instances (Sindell & Sindell, 2017). LDI provides emerging leaders with support and assistance by creating individualized professional development plans specifically aligned to leadership skill needs. This preparation was supported by 71% of participants who indicated that the development of their leadership skills was guided by their leadership plan. Providing

future leaders with a plan for leadership growth guides development of the skills necessary for leadership success.

Implications for Action

In light of the findings and conclusions in this phenomenological study on the lived experiences of LDI participants and the need for higher education to develop a diverse pool of well-qualified and prepared leaders able to lead colleges and universities in a complex and changing environment, this researcher recommends six implications for action. These implications for action are aimed at higher education organizations, institutions, leaders, and are not intended to be limited to Christian and/or faith-based institutions, nor are they limited to institutions who are members of the CCCUs.

Implication for Action 1: Institutions Develop Methods for Broadening Professional Networks By Strengthening Collaboration

Based on the finding that mid-level leaders in higher education develop leadership skills when they possess a broad network of professional relationships and the conclusion that successful leaders in higher education are intentional about broadening their professional network, it is recommended that institutions develop methods for broadening professional networks by strengthening collaboration. On a national level, human resource directors should collaborate to form a professional network specifically aimed at mid-level leaders in higher education. This collaborative national network will:

- Offer membership at little or no cost to members.
- Admit all individuals employed in higher education, regardless of position.
- Provide national leadership development conferences for mid-level leaders with intentional focus spent on strategic networking.

- Provide regional networking opportunities to build professional relationships and gain insight through collaboration.
- Provide materials and support to institutions through leadership book clubs, leadership talks, and departmental leadership lunches.

Locally, institutions must intentionally provide opportunities for cross-campus and inter-departmental collaboration seeking perspective and input from a variety of individuals where appropriate. Intentional collaborations will break down traditional siloes within higher education and establish stronger professional relationships that benefit both the individual and the institution. To facilitate these collaborations, institutions should utilize social media to develop opportunities for intentional networking between campus leaders and offices. Creation of intentional virtual networks that include logical campus collaborations and groupings will provide introductions and access to individuals and offices across campus. For example, a Facebook group of admissions, marketing, and financial aid leaders would provide a logical connection and offer an informal means for networking between those individuals on campus for whom access may otherwise be difficult or awkward. These virtual networks and relationships assist with problem solving and decision making by providing different perspectives and input. Cross-institutional input helps leaders appreciate the broader strategic context of a situation based on other's experiences, which leads to better solutions and multiplies leadership capabilities (Ziskin, 2016). A variety of social media should be used to connect and build relationships as most appropriate, including:

- Facebook groups for intentionally connecting individuals in departments that influence and/or support each other.

- Facebook groups for connecting leaders of similar professional interests.
- Twitter Chats to discuss specific topics.
- Twitter Lists to build a network of individuals for interaction.
- LinkedIn Outreach for specific connections.
- Discussion forums, podcasts, and webinars for delivering content and ideas.

Leaders typically rise through the ranks of higher education by doing good work and completing their tasks. However, advancing to the next level of leadership success, requires relationships with a diverse network of current and potential stakeholders on and off campus. The alternative to building this network of relationships is to fail – either in attaining a leadership position or as a leader once the position has been achieved (Ibarra & Hunter, 2007). Given the often overlooked nature of the mid-level leader’s role, professional networking is often unavailable and must be intentionally developed and supplied. By intentionally offering national and institutional professional networking opportunities specifically designed for mid-level leaders in higher education, institutions create access to leadership skills development that has not been readily available to mid-level leaders but is vitally important to leadership success.

Implication for Action 2: Aspiring Leaders Schedule Time for Reflection Aimed at Leadership Growth

Based on the finding that mid-level leaders in higher education develop leadership skills when they foster time and space for reflection and the conclusion that designing time and space for reflection is a critical element of leadership development, it is recommended that aspiring leaders schedule time for reflection aimed at leadership growth. Intentional time for reflection should be scheduled regularly to ensure its

occurrence and may include, among other things, individual retreat days, reading books on leadership, and scheduling time with a leadership development coach. Self-reflection aimed at leadership growth is not a minor afterthought to leadership development. Rather, this study confirms that time and space for reflection creates opportunity for personal growth in individuals, which allows them to be better prepared for leadership positions. Research is clear that most leaders in higher education find themselves in their leadership roles by accident and higher education lacks clear pathways for leadership advancement (Inman, 2007). Since leadership was not the goal, leaders are ambivalent about accepting leadership positions as they arise (DeZure et al., 2014). Intentionally scheduling time for reflection about leadership aspirations and goals creates a stronger interest in leadership, a clearer pathway toward leadership, and stimulates the growth needed to achieve those goals. Therefore, those who aspire to leadership roles should schedule time for reflection aimed at their leadership growth.

This study also calls for institutions to support emerging leaders in their process of self-reflection by providing departmental retreat days, career coaching, and leadership roundtable discussions each semester. It is common practice throughout higher education that aspiring leaders, especially mid-level leaders, must accept responsibility for their own leadership development (Grotrian-Ryan, 2015). Given the rising need for prepared leaders available to step into senior leadership roles, it is in the best interest of colleges and universities to work with aspiring leaders to create the time and space for self-reflection about future leadership goals and aspirations. Institutional reinforcement of time for reflection about leadership goals and aspirations elevates the importance of this practice and enhances the possibility that aspiring leaders will utilize these opportunities.

Implication for Action 3: Institutions Convene a Task Force of Stakeholders to Create a Campus-Wide Growth Culture

Based on the finding that mid-level leaders in higher education develop leadership skills when they receive personal affirmation that builds confidence in leadership potential, and the conclusion that affirmation creates confident leaders and promotes employee engagement, it is recommended that institutions convene a task force of stakeholders to create a campus-wide growth culture. Including stakeholder engagement at all levels of the institution's organizational structure enables input from all areas and enhances the ability to create great culture change. While institutions must determine plans that meet their institutional mission, the following ideas should be strongly considered for their impact on development of leadership skills:

- Use of gamification to help individuals conceptualize complex problems and build decision-making skills. Inter-departmental and cross-departmental virtual leadership development games based on situational case studies and role play promote team building, collaboration, and decision making skills while providing each individual player with the perspective of differing viewpoints.
- Use of digital badges and/or nanodegrees to represent achievement of leadership skills. Digital badges or nanodegrees could be earned for completion of a series of leadership growth expectations pre-determined by the institution.
- Use of points and/or leader boards to track and reward growth by teams and departments, which could result in financial and other rewards. Friendly

competition and incentives can provide extrinsic motivation which may spark intrinsic motivation within individuals.

- Use of monthly “golden apple” or similar departmental awards to recognize achievement of growth goals that provide departmental or organizational impact to affirm individual leadership development. Public affirmation builds confidence in one’s individual potential.

Important consideration should be given to the creation of a growth culture that prioritizes learning over individual achievement. A recent Gallup study determined that receiving weekly affirmation for good work encouraged employee growth and engagement (Growth Leaders Network, 2018). Focusing on learning rather than achievement rewards growth at all skill levels, and fits the mission of learning associated with academia. Engaging stakeholders from all areas of the institution in the creation of a growth culture that recognizes contributions from all faculty and staff generates greater employee engagement within all programs and departments.

Implication for Action 4: Seniors Leaders Intentionally Engage with Emerging Leaders Each Year on a Regular and Continual Basis

Based on the finding that mid-level leaders in higher education develop leadership skills when they experience close interactions with senior leaders and the conclusion that interactions between senior leaders and emerging leaders strengthens the pipeline of prepared candidates, it is recommended that senior leaders intentionally engage with emerging leaders each year on a regular and continual basis. These interactions should be purposefully designed to assist emerging leaders in the development of leadership skills necessary for assuming senior leadership positions in the future, including

mentoring, sponsorship, and/or succession planning. In addition to these formal interactions, those senior leaders in the highest positions (presidents, vice presidents, and provosts) are encouraged to regularly hold community or town hall meetings across campus to engage faculty and staff in university-related dialogue and provide a personal view into leadership decision-making.

Experts agree that the identification and development of future leaders begins at the top (Meyers, 2007). The findings of this study concur as participants cited that up close and personal interactions with senior leaders provided role models and examples of leadership roles to which they aspired. Leaders who have made the journey provide inspiration to those who are still traveling the path. Beyond inspiration, however, when senior leaders such as the president, vice presidents, provosts, and deans, invest their time and resources in the development of emerging leaders, it demonstrates an institutional commitment to development of future leaders. Personal investment by senior leaders in the leadership growth and development of emerging leaders strengthens leadership pipelines by ensuring development of people today so they can become the leaders of tomorrow.

Implication for Action 5: A 360° Evaluation and Leadership Coaching be Required of Individuals Holding Leadership Positions of Director and Above

Based on the finding that mid-level leaders in higher education develop leadership skills when they receive feedback to build self-awareness and establish executive presence and the conclusion that feedback raises awareness that builds leadership confidence and presence, it is recommended that a 360° evaluation and leadership coaching be required of individuals holding leadership positions of director and above.

All study participants held leadership positions; yet, the majority of participants reported that feedback received at LDI revealed unknown aspects of their leadership presence and increased their self-awareness. A 360° evaluation is a tool that provides an employee with feedback from subordinates, colleagues, and supervisors, as well as self-assessment of their own leadership. The 360° evaluation provides a leader with knowledge of other's perceptions of their leadership from a variety of perspectives, leading up, leading down, and leading with others. This tool would provide leaders with feedback to understand the perceptions of their leadership impact and effectiveness at multiple levels.

Leadership coaching is an accepted tool for continual development of successful leaders by building on their strengths and addressing gaps in their leadership development (Ziskin, 2016). As an individual advances in leadership position, new responsibilities are assigned requiring different skills. Rather than assuming these leadership skills will be acquired on the job, leadership coaching allows leaders to prepare for scenarios before they arise. Preparing for situations before they are realized, allows aspiring leaders to develop the “leadership muscle memory” needed for use when the situations are encountered in real life (Ziskin, 2016). Evaluation and coaching combine to enhance awareness of leadership perceptions and stimulate leadership growth.

Implication for Action 6: Institutions Budget Funds Toward Leadership

Development Beginning with the Hiring of a Chief Learning Officer (CLO)

Based on the finding that mid-level leaders in higher education develop leadership skills when they have been identified as emerging leaders and provided clear leadership plans, and the conclusion that clear leadership plans guide development necessary for leadership success, it is recommended that institutions budget funds toward leadership

development beginning with the hiring of a chief learning officer (CLO). The CLO is a senior level role responsible for establishing organizational learning objectives aligned to organizational goals, broadening leadership development to more employees and developing clear plans for leadership skills development at all levels. The CLO ensures the development of all employees within the institution.

Creating a growth and learning culture seems an obvious outcome of an industry whose goal is education; however, without intentional direction, professional growth and learning will continue to flounder in higher education as in the past. Leadership development must be an institution-wide initiative giving more people the opportunity to develop the skills needed to advance in their careers (Sindell & Sindell, 2017). The CLO has oversight of leadership identification, skills development, creation and implementation of employee development programs and practices, and assessment of growth and development. Encouraging continual leadership development maintains a strong and diverse leadership pipeline of prepared leaders. Under the direction of the CLO, higher education institutions can exhibit a culture of growth and learning where emerging leaders are identified, career pathways are clearly defined, and leadership skills development is a priority

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends further research in the following areas to expand understanding and knowledge of leadership skills development of mid-level leaders in Christian colleges and universities.

Recommendation 1

Replicate this study in other faith-based institutions that are not a part of the CCCU and may hold differing faith values. Given the importance of faith to the mission of most faith-based institutions and the lack of significant research on the subject, it becomes important to understand what, if any, influence the faith background of the institution plays in the role of leadership skills development.

Recommendation 2

Replicate this study in public institutions to explore leadership skills development within institutions that do not possess a faith component as part of their mission. The results of that study would be available for comparison with the instant study to investigate whether leadership skills development is delivered differently on secular and faith-based campuses.

Recommendation 3

Conduct a comparative study of the Mixed LDI, WLDI, and MELDI to determine whether the impact of leadership skills development is similar or different among the different LDI groups. Understanding the similarities and differences among the different LDI groups would provide knowledge of any benefit to blending and/or separating the groups for future LDI participation.

Recommendation 4

Conduct a study on the lasting effect of leadership skills development on LDI participants who move from Christian higher education into public higher education. It would be interesting to know the level of influence and impact leadership skills

development provided from a Christian perspective has on those leaders who move into leadership positions outside of Christian higher education.

Recommendation 5

Conduct a comparative study of the needs for leadership skills development of academic and non-academic mid-level leaders to determine whether there are different leadership skills needed among faculty and staff within higher education. One of the unexpected findings of this study was the absence of mid-level leaders holding non-academic, institutional administration roles, and it would be important to understand whether they have similar leadership skills development needs making it beneficial to mix academic and non-academic leaders in leadership development programs.

Recommendation 6

Conduct a comparative study examining the leadership skills development needs of male and female mid-level leaders. This study was limited by the number of male participants and further research examining leadership skills development among mid-level leaders from the perspective of gender could further inform this study as well as future leadership studies.

Recommendation 7

Conduct a Delphi study of expert senior leaders in higher education to determine the most critical leadership skills needed by mid-level leaders aspiring to senior leadership roles. While this study explored how mid-level leaders developed leadership skills, it did not ask the question about which skills were most important. A deeper understanding of which skills are most important would enhance the formation of future leadership skills development practices.

Recommendation 8

Conduct a study on leadership development and succession planning in for-profit, non-profit, and public (state universities and community colleges) institutions. Upon completion of the research on other types of institutions, data would be available for comparative analysis to determine similarities and differences in leadership development and succession planning among different types of institutions.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

True leaders don't create followers, they create more leaders

-Tom Peters

When I began this doctoral journey, I was asked to prepare a leadership vision statement that expressed my leadership purpose. I wrote the following leadership vision statement in 2016:

My leadership purpose is to impact culture, both organizationally and globally, through recognizing and maximizing the value and potential in others.

This study has solidified that vision for me. I am a person who truly believes there is potential in everyone; sometimes it is just untapped or hidden. As leaders, it is our privilege and responsibility to help each person in our span of influence find their potential and lead them in a manner that allows them to develop that potential to its fullest.

Given the value I place on maximizing the potential in others, as well as my personal observations of the impact of personal care and attention on individual student development during my many years in educational administration, I was surprised to learn that the literature on higher education leadership was quiet on the subject of leadership skills development. I was curious to know how an environment devoted to the

education and development of students could seemingly overlook the development of those chosen to lead within that environment. How are we to create strong leaders for the future without strengthening the leaders we currently have in place? Asking these questions was the beginning of my exploration into this research.

As a part of this study, I was privileged to speak to people at all levels of leadership. These individuals held a wide-range of leadership roles, worked in a diverse mix of institutions, and were spread across the country. Yet, without exception, each person shared about the influence others have had on their leadership and the manner in which they hope to influence others in the future. Whether it was students, co-workers, or colleagues, these leaders understood that their roles had the ability to change the lives of those around them.

The time I spent on campuses and in interviews with study participants excited me and renewed my hope that the future of leadership lies in the development of the leadership potential in others. I met many leaders who experienced growth, affirmation, and maximization of their leadership potential through participation at LDI. Whether they articulated it specifically or not, it was clear that each leader had been touched in a special manner by their LDI experience. For many, the combination of vocational calling and leadership ability came together with clarity during that week in the state of Washington and in the developmental opportunities that followed.

There is a personal piece to this research as well. As a mid-level leader in Christian higher education who has, at times, aspired to a senior leadership position, I began this research journey with a personal interest in discovering new pathways or insights that were yet uncovered during my time in higher education administration. The

insights I realized from this study held personal meaning as I continue the pathway of leadership. I am one of those mid-level leaders developing leadership skills to benefit my personal growth, influence the growth of the team I lead, and impact my institution.

While I remain hopeful that organizations such as CCCU and LDI will continue to work with emerging leaders on their journey into senior leadership, I am also a bit fearful. Higher education, and especially Christian higher education, is facing many daunting realities in today's fast-changing world. I am fearful that the daily work required to maintain institutional sustainability will cause leadership development to fall by the wayside as a non-priority. Institutions that understand leadership growth as a priority will build a stronger future, but this message can get lost when an institution is simply trying to remain viable.

My hope is this study will be seen by senior leaders in higher education who will be reminded of their own leadership development experience. As they reflect on that experience, I want this study to provide evidence for understanding the importance of investing in the leadership skills development of emerging leaders. People are the institution's most valuable resource. An investment in the leadership growth and development of emerging leaders strengthens leadership pipelines of well-prepared candidates for future leadership roles. I urge the senior leaders reading this study to remember that strong leaders build strong institutions. Investing in the development of people today will ensure they become the leaders of tomorrow.

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APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A

Synthesis Matrix

| DISSERTATION MATRIX | THEMES | HE Landscape | History of HE | Technology | Christian HE | Leadership Movement | Higher Education | Mid-Level Administratio | Leadership Development | Theoretical Framework | Other |
|--------------------------|--------|--------------|---------------|------------|--------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| REFERENCES | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Adringa, Robert C. | | | | | X | | | | | | |
| Ahmad, I., Zafar, M. | | | | | | | X | | | | |
| Arney, M. J. (2006). | | | | | | | X | | X | | |
| Barton, A. (2016). | | | | | | X | X | | X | X | |
| Bass, B. M. and | | | | | | | | | X | X | |
| Bass, B. M., & Avolio, | | | | | | | | | X | X | |
| Betts, K., Urias, D., | X | | | | | | X | | | | |
| Birnbaum, R. (1989). | | | | | | | X | | | X | |
| Bisbee, D. C. (2007). | | | | | | X | X | | X | | |
| Bonvillian, W. B. S., | | | | X | | | | | | | |
| Bryman, A. (2007). | | | | | | | X | | | | |
| Calareso, J. P. (2013). | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| Charan, R. (2008). | | | | | | X | | | X | | |
| Cilburn Allen, C., & | | | | | X | | | X | X | | |
| Looking Back and | | | | | | | X | | X | | |
| Day, D. V., Fleenor, J. | | | | | | | | | X | X | |
| DeZure, D., Shaw, A., | | | | | | X | X | | | | |
| Eckel, P. D. K., | | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Frost, T. (2015). How | | | | | | | | | X | | |
| Gagliardi, J., | X | | | | | | X | | X | | |
| Garza R. L., & Eddy, | | | | | | X | X | X | | | |
| Geiger, R. L. (2014). | | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Gilbert, S. A. (2018). | | | | | | X | | | X | | |
| Gmelch, W. H., & | | | | | | | X | | X | | |
| Grotrian-Ryan, S. | | | | | | | X | | | | |
| House, G. K. (2013). | | | X | | X | | | | | | |
| Hulme, E. E., Groom, | | | | | X | | | | | | |
| Inman, M. (2007). The | | | | | | | X | X | X | X | |
| Kelloway, E. K. a. B., | | | | | | | | | X | X | |
| Klein, M. F., & Salk, R. | X | | | | X | | X | | X | | |
| Kornik, J. (2006). Jack | | | | | | | | | X | | |
| Kouzes & Posner | | | | | | | | | | X | |
| Lafraniere, S. L., & | | | | | X | | | | X | | X |
| Leingang, R. (2018, | | | | X | | | | | | | |
| Leubsdorf, B. (2006). | X | | | | | | | | X | | |
| Little, E. S. (2016). | | | | | | | | X | X | | X |
| Luna, G. (2012). | | | | | | X | | X | X | | |
| Lynch, D. (2007). Can | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| Mather, P. C., Bryan, | | | | | | | | X | X | | |
| Metheny-Fisher, L. | X | | | | | | X | | X | | X |
| Middlehurst, R. | | | | | | | X | | | X | |
| Mintz, S. (2017). 11 | | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Morgan, T. C. (2012). | | | | | X | | | | | | |
| Mumford, T. V., | | | | | | | | | X | | |
| Riccio, S. J. (2010). | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| Vicki J. Rosser, a. | | | | | | | | X | | | |
| Rothwell, W. J. (2010). | | | | | | | | | X | | |
| Selingo, J., Chheng, | X | | | | | X | X | | X | | |
| Siemens, G. G., | | | | X | | | | | | | |
| Siu, A. (2016, | | | | X | | | | | | | |
| Smith, B. L., & | X | | | | | | X | | X | X | |
| Smith, E. C. (2014). | | | | | | X | | X | X | | X |
| States News Service | | | | | X | | | | X | | |
| Stefani, L. (2015). | X | | | | X | X | X | | X | X | |
| Stone, A. G., Russell, | | | | | | | | | | X | |
| The Economist (2008). | X | | | | | | | | | | X |
| The Economist (2016). | | | | X | | | | | | | |
| Thein, J. R. E., Jason | | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Trotta, M. K. (2013). | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| Walseth, T. (2009). | | | | | | X | X | | | | |
| Weiss, E. L. (2016). | | | | | | | | | * | | |
| Wornack, Joseph D. | X | | | | X | | | | X | X | X |

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol and Questions

Interview Date: _____

Cohort Participation Year: _____

Interviewee Pseudonym: _____

Welcome and Purpose of Interview

Thank you for agreeing to spend some time with me today. My name is Joy Karavedas and I am a doctoral candidate at Brandman University in the area of Organizational Leadership. I also work at Azusa Pacific University as the Administrative Manager within their Division of Teacher Education, leading a staff of Program Coordinators and others who serve the students within the division. My interest in Christian higher education has led to this research to determine how mid-level leaders in Christian colleges and universities develop leadership skills. Given the changing landscape of Christian higher education, it is important that leaders throughout the university have the skills needed to lead well within their positions. Also, since Christian higher education is facing a shrinking talent pipeline, it is important that we continue to grow leaders that lead others well while understanding the spiritual component of the mission of a Christian university.

I will be conducting approximately 12 to 15 interviews with others like yourself who have attended one of the CCCU Leadership Development Institutes. Since LDI provides one of the few truly Christian focused leadership development experiences in the United States, hopefully, the information provided by you and others will present a clear picture of leadership development experiences important to the development of leadership skills within Christian higher education.

Informed Consent

Thank you again for your willingness to participate in this study. I would like to remind you any information that is obtained in connection to this study will remain confidential. All of the data will be reported without reference to your name or any institution with which you are connected. After I record and transcribe the data, I will send it to you via email so you can check to make sure I have accurately captured your thoughts and ideas.

You have already received the Informed Consent and Brandman Bill of Rights and have agreed to participate in the interview. Before we start, do you have any questions or need clarification about either document? We have scheduled approximately 45 minutes to an hour for the interview. I want to remind you that at any point during the interview you may ask that I skip a particular question or stop the interview altogether.

For ease of our discussion and accuracy I will record our conversation as indicated in the Informed Consent. Do you have any questions before we begin? Okay, let's get started.

Demographic Questions (*ask pre-interview & confirm at interview*)

1. What is your current position at your college/university?
2. How long have you held that position?
3. Tell me a little bit about your leadership role and responsibilities within this position?
4. When did you attend the Leadership Development Institute (LDI) through CCCU?
5. Which LDI did you attend?

LDI Experience Questions

Transition Statement: LDI is one of the only leadership development opportunities with a focus on Christian higher education, and the next few questions will help me understand this leadership development experience.

1. My understanding is that LDI is by nomination or invitation. How were you selected for participation in LDI?
2. *Central Question:* Participation in LDI is very exclusive and is designed to develop emerging leaders within Christian higher education. I'd like to know a little bit about your experience at LDI.

Follow Up Questions (if not covered in response)

- a. Where was the LDI held and how long were you there?
- b. How many sessions were offered?
- c. How long were the sessions?
- d. Who led the sessions?
- e. What topics were covered?
- f. What types of activities were offered?
3. It appears that LDI provided many opportunities for learning and engagement. Please tell me about one or two sessions or activities that were especially meaningful to your development of leadership skills and growth as a leader.

Follow Up Questions (if not covered in response)

- a. How were sessions/activities designed to develop leadership skills?
- b. What leadership skills were the focus of the LDI sessions/activities?
- c. Who led that session/activity?
4. The LDI experience is designed to individually develop each participant. What other leadership skills or lessons were not addressed through LDI but you believe would have been beneficial to your individual growth as a leader?

Follow Up Question (if not covered in response)

- a. How could this skill/lesson have been addressed?
- b. Was there opportunity for this to have been addressed?
5. *Central Question:* Given the influence of LDI on your development as a leader, what were your greatest takeaways from the overall experience?

Follow Up Question (if not covered in response)

- a. How would you describe your overall experience with LDI?
- b. Was the LDI experience relevant to your development as a leader?

Leadership Growth After LDI Questions

Transition Statement: Since the purpose of LDI is leadership development, I would like to change the direction of our conversation to your personal leadership growth in the time since your participation in LDI.

1. Please tell me about the role your LDI experience has played in any promotions or advancements you have received since you participated in LDI.
Follow Up Questions (if not covered in response)
 - a. If no promotion/advancement so far, do you believe your LDI experience will be important to opportunities for advancement in the future.
 - b. What is your perception of the influence your LDI experience will have on your continued promotion into future leadership roles?
2. Since we know that leadership is not only about position, could you describe how you have incorporated the leadership skills you developed through LDI into your leadership style.
Follow Up Questions (if not covered in response)
 - a. Which leadership skills do you use regularly?
 - b. How did LDI experience guide your perception of these skills?
3. Given the unique nature of Christian higher education, what leadership skills do you believe are most important to those seeking to advance as leaders within Christian colleges and universities?
Follow Up Questions (if not covered in response)
 - a. Why are these skills important to Christian higher education?
 - b. How will these skills be useful in Christian higher education?
 - c. What is unique about Christian higher education that requires these skills?
4. Since LDI participation is designed to develop emerging leaders, how could participation in leadership development programs such as LDI support future leadership within Christian higher education?
Follow Up Questions (if not covered in response)
 - a. Could leadership skills be developed in a different manner?
 - b. What support is provided through leadership development programs?

Interview Conclusion

Thank you again for your time and participation. Do you have any questions or can I clarify anything for you?

As I said before, I will send you a copy of the interview transcription so you can check to make sure I have accurately captured your thoughts and ideas.

APPENDIX C

Brandman University Institutional Review Board (BUIRB) Approval



Joy Karavedas <jkaraved@mail.brandman.edu>

BUIRB Application Approved As Submitted: Joy Karavedas

1 message

Institutional Review Board <my@brandman.edu>

Fri, Sep 7, 2018 at 3:45 PM

To: jkaraved@mail.brandman.edu

Cc: jlee1@brandman.edu, buirb@brandman.edu, ddevore@brandman.edu

Dear Joy Karavedas,

Congratulations, your IRB application to conduct research has been approved by the Brandman University Institutional Review Board. This approval grants permission for you to proceed with data collection for your research. Please keep this email for your records, as it will need to be included in your research appendix.

If any issues should arise that are pertinent to your IRB approval, please contact the IRB immediately at BUIRB@brandman.edu. If you need to modify your BUIRB application for any reason, please fill out the "Application Modification Form" before proceeding with your research. The Modification form can be found at the following link: <https://irb.brandman.edu/Applications/Modification.pdf>.

Best wishes for a successful completion of your study.

Thank you,

Doug DeVore, Ed.D.

Professor

Organizational Leadership

BUIRB Chair

ddevore@brandman.edu

www.brandman.edu

APPENDIX D

**Certificate of Completion of Training by
National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research
Protecting Human Research Participants**



APPENDIX E

Information Letter for Research Participants

Date

Dear _____

My name is Joy Karavedas and I am a doctoral candidate at Brandman University in the area of Organizational Leadership. I also work at Azusa Pacific University as the Administrative Manager within their Division of Teacher Education, leading a staff of Program Coordinators and others who serve the students within the division. My interest in Christian higher education has led to this research to determine how mid-level leaders in Christian colleges and universities develop leadership skills. Given the changing landscape of Christian higher education, it is important that leaders throughout the university have the skills needed to lead well within their positions. Also, since Christian higher education is facing a shrinking talent pipeline, it is important that we continue to grow leaders that lead others well while understanding the spiritual component of the mission of a Christian university.

I am asking your assistance in the study by participating in an interview, which will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes and will be set up at a time convenient for you. If you agree to participate in an interview, you may be assured that it will be completely confidential. There will be no names attached to any notes or records from the interview. All information will remain in locked files accessible only to the researcher. No other person from your university or Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) will have access to the interview information. You will also be free to stop the interview and/or withdraw from the study at any time. Finally, please be assured that the researcher is in no way affiliated with your institution or CCCU.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at jkaravedas@mail.brandman.edu or [redacted]. If you agree to participation, please indicate your consent at the bottom of this letter and return it to me.

Your participation would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Joy Karavedas

APPENDIX F

Informed Consent Form

INFORMATION ABOUT: Becoming Leaders: A Phenomenological Study of How Mid-Level Leaders in Christian Universities Develop Leadership Skills

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Joy Karavedas

PURPOSE OF STUDY:

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Joy Karavedas, a doctoral candidate from the School of Education at Brandman University. The purpose of this research study is to explore the lived experiences of participants in the Leadership Development Institutes (LDI) offered by the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. The study will strive to discover the participants' perception regarding their leadership skills developed through participation in LDI and the impact LDI participation may have had on their leadership growth.

This study will fill in the gap in the research regarding leadership development of mid-level leaders in Christian colleges and universities. The results of this study may assist Christian universities in the identification of emerging leadership talent and the development of a stronger leadership pipeline. This study may also strengthen the ability of Christian colleges and universities to develop clear pathways into senior administrative leadership positions for those who currently hold mid-level leadership positions. Finally, this study may provide direction and benefit to mid-level leaders who seek to advance into higher-level or senior leadership positions within Christian higher education.

By participating in this study I agree to participate in an individual interview. The interview(s) will last approximately 45 to 60 minutes and will be conducted in person. Completion of the individual interview will take place October and November, 2018.

I understand that:

- a) There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the Investigator will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identifying codes and research materials in a locked file drawer that is available only to the researcher.
- b) I understand that the interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will be available only to the researcher and the professional transcriptionist. The audio recordings will be used to capture the interview dialogue and to ensure the accuracy of the information collected during the interview. All information will be identifier-redacted and my confidentiality will be maintained. Upon completion of the study all recordings, transcripts and notes taken by the researcher and transcripts from the interview will be destroyed.

c) The possible benefit of this study to me is that my input may help add to the research regarding coaching programs and the impact coaching programs have on developing future school leaders. The findings will be available to me at the conclusion of the study and will provide new insights about the coaching experience in which I participated. I understand that I will not be compensated for my participation.

d) If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Joy Karavedas at jkaraved@mail.brandman.edu or by phone at [redacted]; or Dr. Jeffrey Lee (Dissertation Chair) at jlee1@brandman.edu.

e) My participation in this research study is voluntary. I may decide to not participate in the study and I can withdraw at any time. I can also decide not to answer particular questions during the interview if I so choose. I understand that I may refuse to participate or may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the Investigator may stop the study at any time.

f) No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent re-obtained. I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-9937.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the “Research Participant’s Bill of Rights.” I have read the above and understand it and hereby consent to the procedure(s) set forth.

Signature of Participant or Responsible Party

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

APPENDIX G

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD Research Participant's Bill of Rights

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.
2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.
3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.
4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.
5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.
6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.
7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.
8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.
9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.
10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the Brandman University Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects.

The Brandman University Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949) 341-9937 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.