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PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE OF OKLAHOMA'S REGIONAL UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS

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PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE OF OKLAHOMA'S REGIONAL UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

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DEDICATION

To
Austin, Brett and Blake
Dream Big

ABSTRACT

Regionally focused state colleges and universities present a unique and challenging leadership opportunity to the men and women who have been chosen to serve as president. A literature review showed that the leadership challenges are increasing and the average presidential tenure is decreasing. Yet, there has been little inquiry regarding the professional development opportunities available to prepare current and future presidents for the complex position they hold. This phenomenological study researched the presidential experience and examined how participation in the Leadership Oklahoma program could support their professional development. Interviews were conducted with the four regional university presidents in Oklahoma who have also graduated from Leadership Oklahoma. Several themes emerged focused on the leadership role of the university president. Findings indicated that regional university presidents who participate in Leadership Oklahoma could expect to benefit from an expanded network of professional contacts and a better understanding of Oklahoma's diversity. In addition, this study reveals how these benefits can be helpful in addressing the common challenges facing regional university presidents.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The American landscape is dotted with the names and locations of hundreds of regionally focused state colleges and universities where hundreds of thousands of students attend classes and earn degrees each semester. These higher education institutions are neatly positioned between the community colleges and the land grant/research universities, and form the centerpiece of the U.S. public higher education system. They are designed to serve the states and regions in which they are located by providing quality, affordable and accessible higher education opportunities to all who seek to continue their education. The importance of developing and maintaining an educational system that provides these opportunities to the masses was first introduced to the American consciousness by Thomas Jefferson who concluded that our political and governmental system was dependent upon an informed citizenry. “I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves,” he wrote in 1821, “and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education.”

While the advantages of the American higher education system are clear, today’s regional colleges and universities are facing some fundamental challenges. Dwindling state support, rapidly increasing tuition costs, increasing demands and expectations of external interested parties, competition from for-profit and corporate universities and shifting student desires are all diminishing the ability of these schools to provide solutions to pressing social problems (Amey, 2002). At the same time,

these factors are also whittling away at the fundamental attributes of accessibility, affordability, and high-quality that are traditionally associated with regional colleges and universities (Eckel, 2002). In a 1986 report, the Commission on the Role and Future of State Colleges and Universities wrote the following:

> Without quality in education, the nation loses its strength. Without equity in education, democracy ceases to function. The Commission believes that ways must be found to manage the excellence/equity equation so that the boundaries of our public higher education system are extended, not limited. The state colleges and universities have a pivotal, continuing role as primarily teaching institutions and an emerging mission as centers for basic and applied research and community service. Their continued growth and vitality depend on enlightened academic, fiscal, governance, and management policies developed cooperatively by political and educational leaders committed to the concept that education represents a state's wisest investment in its future. (Report of the Commission on the Role and Future of State Colleges and Universities, 1986)

It is imperative that the men and women who are chosen to lead these most critical components of the higher education structure have the knowledge, experience and professional network necessary to position their institutions to address the needs of their region, their state and their country.

Background of the Problem

America's first higher education institutions were established in the early 1600's during the Colonial Era of American history, and while these institutions were

loosely based on their European forerunners, they featured a uniquely American approach to campus administration (Cohen, 1998). Founded with a combination of public and private control, the American colleges were overseen by a lay board, appointed by the colonial court or legislature, which hired a president who was responsible to it alone (Cohen, 1998). As we begin the 21st century, this model of institutional governance is still the most widely used approach throughout the United States, but the role of the campus president has changed considerably

From the end of the Civil War to the beginning of World War I, higher education changed dramatically and the presidents who led these institutions were "described as 'great men of vision' who led with unchecked authority" (Amey, 2002). As the scope and size of the institutions grew, so too did the power of the president. Following the conclusion of World War II, higher education institutions experienced another surge in the growth of both the size and number of institutions. However, along with this period of growth came the development of a more professional and specialized faculty, who were demanding broadened academic freedoms and a greater involvement in the decision making and agenda setting activities of campus leadership (Amey, 2002). This development has shaped the higher education institutions of today where shared governance is the fundamental expectation (Birnbaum, 1992).

Serving at the pleasure of their institution's governing board and sharing authority with the faculty, college and university presidents are expected to provide campus leadership focused on addressing the external demands while protecting and nurturing the internal learning environment (Amey, 2002) Today, college presidents

find themselves managing these complex academic organizations while simultaneously interlocked in relationships with businesses, community organizations, legislatures and governors. Amey (2002) stated the following regarding presidential leadership:

> Effective team leadership requires skills different from those of the charismatic visionary leaders who dominated the earlier periods of higher education. … Becoming involved in adaptive work that challenges the institutional status quo through collaborative and entrepreneurial efforts presents new opportunities for college presidents to differently influence and empower others within the college environment (p. 482)

As Ann H. Die (1998) wrote in her Reflection on Presidential Longevity, "The sheer number and diversity of the president's constituencies are daunting" (Die, 1998). The constituents can include the governing board, the faculty, the students, the parents of the students, the donors, the alumni, and the community in which the institution is located. "Failure to keep any one of these constituencies sufficiently happy can start a chain reaction that quickly leads to the meltdown of a previously successful administration" (Die, 1998).

Statement of the Problem

The challenge for today's regional university presidents is to clearly define their role within the complex organization that is a college campus and then develop the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to successfully address societal needs while preserving the historical, cultural and educational environment of the university

campus. This challenge comes at a time when the average tenure for a college presidency has dipped from the more lengthy terms of fifteen to twenty years in the late 1970's and 1980's to below six years (Amey, 2002). With 3,300 higher education institutions in the United States and an average presidential turnover rate of 14 percent, estimates indicate that each year approximately 475 college and university boards will be filling vacancies, and as Michael Hoyle (2002) writes: "With this many vacancies, the caliber and character of college presidents are critical to the success of the profession, the colleges and the country" (p. 28). One reason which may lead to this decreasing rate of longevity is the lack of preparation done by first-time presidents. Most college presidents enter academia to pursue a life of teaching and scholarship, and develop their administrative skills with little or no formal training. While experienced presidents may be familiar with the body of literature on university leadership or with the professional development opportunities available through professional organizations, newcomers will not be. Noting this lack of formal training opportunities, Die (1998) expresses concern that, "No matter how well one tries to prepare for the leap into the presidency, he or she will face a host of challenges that can contribute to a short tenure" (p. 34).

Knowing that new college and university presidents will face a gauntlet of challenges including competing and conflicting organizational goals, federal and state controls, increased involvement by the courts, growing internal governance layers, public scrutiny and cynicism, cost containment, accountability, compliance issues, lack of acceptance of authority, changing student markets, and competition from nontraditional academic deliverers (Amey, p. 481), it is imperative that today's

campus leaders have access to and information about alternative training programs, both inside and outside academia that may be helpful in the development of the skills necessary to immediately become successful college presidents.

Current training and development programs for college presidents include regional and national conferences through professional associations like the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the American Council on Education (ACE) as well as national leadership programs like the Harvard Seminar for New Presidents and the National Institute for Leadership Development. These programs however, focus primarily on the general administrative and leadership responsibilities of the presidential position and may fail to adequately provide specific details and information on the local, regional and statewide needs that must be addressed by a regional university president. This failure is most likely a factor in the results of Wallin's (2002) study which found that eighty-seven percent of presidential respondents considered their statewide presidents' meetings to be their most helpful and valuable training and development opportunities.

One possible solution to this need for the development of specific information regarding the challenges and opportunities facing the regional universities in Oklahoma may be the statewide leadership development program Leadership Oklahoma. Since 1985, more than 800 Oklahomans have participated in and graduated from Leadership Oklahoma, which was designed "to create a dynamic network of leaders whose increased awareness and commitment to service will energize Oklahomans to shape Oklahoma's future." Leadership Oklahoma expects to play a significant role in helping Oklahoma achieve its ever-growing potential by

providing leaders who can sustain a strong diversified economy, provide quality career opportunities for its citizens and create an increasingly attractive quality of life. It promises to offer an enlightened perspective of the challenges and opportunities facing the state, to engage others in support of common goals and to hold one another accountable to be persistent, informed, and involved leaders, embracing the common vision and serving as catalysts to build Oklahoma's future.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to describe the experiences of four regional university presidents and explore the value each of them place on their participation and involvement with the Leadership Oklahoma program. This research will then compare the lived experiences to determine if they share similar experiences and judgments of the program.

There are eight regional universities in Oklahoma that serve more than 45,000 students each year. They are located throughout the state to provide educational, cultural and economic development opportunities to every quadrant of the state, and the ability of the people who have been chosen as presidents of these universities to lead their institutions to meeting the challenges they face will prove to be incredibly important to Oklahomans for generations to come. This research aims to develop a baseline data set of the impact of Leadership Oklahoma on presidential leadership so future presidents and other state-wide leaders can assess the effects of participation and whether involvement in the Leadership Oklahoma program will be a valuable use of their time and resources. The research will also add to the research base on community leadership development programs and how they can be used to help local

and statewide communities address the growing need for involved, informed and impassioned citizens.

Research Question

In order to understand the connection between participation in Leadership Oklahoma and the role of being a regional university president, the fundamental question of the study can be expressed as follows: How do regional university presidents perceive the value of their Leadership Oklahoma experience? The study will be based on these research questions:

1. How do regional university presidents perceive Leadership Oklahoma?
2. What value do regional university presidents perceive their Leadership Oklahoma experience has within the context of their professional position?

Significance of Study

The challenges faced by Oklahoma's regional university leaders are multiplying and growing with each successive year. State support is shrinking, enrollment is growing and attempts to raise external funds have been met with only limited success. As Oklahoma attempts to grow and expand its workforce and industry base, the quality and success of the eight regional universities will be paramount. If a positive relationship between the Leadership Oklahoma program and the success of regional university presidents can be shown, this research may lead to a better understanding of a powerful training and development option for current and future campus leaders.

This research will also add to the developing knowledge of community leadership development programs and the understanding of how graduates are able to apply the experience to their chosen profession. By developing this link, this research could lead to increased interest in and financial support of these relatively new programs.

Definition of Terms

Community Leadership Development Programs – are a relatively new phenomenon in the United States and are slowly crossing American borders and showing up in Canada, Australia and Great Britain. The first community leadership development program was implemented in Philadelphia in 1959 and the National Association for Community Leadership now known as the Community Leadership Association (CLA) was established in 1979, "to provide services and support to the growing number of community leadership programs throughout the country." In the mid-1980's, a surge in the creation of community leadership development programs came as community groups such as Chambers of Commerce, United Way, Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs and local Community Colleges saw these programs as a way to improve their community's ability to address public issues and concerns. (Earnest, 1996). Currently, there are 448 CLA member programs; however, this number is only a portion of the active leadership development programs throughout the United States. In Oklahoma, for instance, 48 community programs are registered with and receive support through Leadership Oklahoma, yet, only three of these programs are registered with the CLA. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to believe that there are thousands of active community leadership programs throughout the United States.

Regional Universities - publicly controlled, four-year state colleges and universities commonly referred to as regional comprehensive institutions or by their Carnegie classification as Master's colleges and universities I. Their common characteristics include: (1) publicly established and controlled by state government; (2) predominantly open-access institutions that emphasize equal opportunity; and (3) primarily funded through state taxes, with a tradition of low or moderate tuition charges (Lovell, 2002, p. 566). According to Carnegie classification statistics for academic year 2000-2001, there were 496 institutions meeting this description and serving nearly half of the U.S. higher education student population. These institutions are expected to deliver both undergraduate and selected graduate degrees in a broad range of fields in addition to programs for the cultural, and economic development of their geographic regions.

Oklahoma's Higher Education System - consists of twenty-five colleges and universities, nine constituent agencies and two higher education centers. Within this structure there are eleven schools that are defined as state colleges and universities and eight that are identified by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) as Regional Universities. The functions of these eight regional universities, as assigned by the OSRHE include: "(1) both lower-division and upper-division undergraduate study in several fields leading to the bachelor's degree; (2) a limited number of programs leading toward the first-professional degree when appropriate to an institution's strengths and the needs of the state: (3) graduate study below the doctor's level, primarily in teacher education but moving toward limited comprehensiveness in fields related to Oklahoma's manpower needs; (4) extension

and public service responsibilities in the geographic regions in which they are located; (5) responsibility for institutional and applied research in those areas related closely to their program assignments; and (6) responsibility for regional programs of economic development" (Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, H-2-49, 2002).

Presidential Leadership - Leadership within the terribly complex and often ambiguous world of higher education is difficult to define or characterize. Vast amounts of research about academic leadership have been done, but no consensus has been reached on what type or style is best. Previous research has explored trait theory, power and influence theory, social power theory, social exchange theory, transactional theory, transformational theory, behavioral theory, and contingency theory. As Peter Eckel wrote, the fact that colleges and universities do not have clear and consistent goals and their outcomes are not easily measured have made it difficult to judge the effectiveness of academic leadership, "It is difficult to determine what leadership strategies, behaviors, or styles are responsible for generating particular outcomes" (Eckel, 2002).

While the most appropriate or successful approach to campus leadership has not yet been determined, the typical job responsibilities and expectations of college and university presidents are rather universal. Campus presidents oversee many administrative functions, including finances and budgets; strategic planning; coordinating academic programs; personnel; soliciting donor support; government and board relations; alumni; athletic organizations; and institutional relations with the media, students and community residents.

Summary

Today's regional university presidents are faced with decreasing state budgets, increasing enrollments, expanding and shifting demands from external groups, and pressure to maintain the quality and integrity of the educational process from internal constituencies. They must balance these competing factors while reporting to a lay board and sharing campus governance with the faculty. They are duty-bound to the students, the parents, the businesses that hire their graduates and the communities in which they reside. They have a responsibility to provide cultural enrichment and economic development to the communities of their assigned region and they must accomplish all this within the confines of state and federal rules and regulations. The task is indeed daunting.

In order to maintain this critical component of the national higher education structure, the men and women who are chosen to lead regional institutions must be exceptionally well prepared to meet the many challenges they will face. This study is designed to look at how these challenges are being met based upon how some regional university presidents in Oklahoma have incorporated their Leadership Oklahoma experiences into their leadership approach.

The study will be divided into a literature review, a qualitative case study, analysis of research findings, and the results of the findings. First, the literature pertaining to presidential leadership and community leadership development programs will be reviewed to help establish the historical background of each. Second, a qualitative case study of the four currently serving regional university presidents who have graduated from the Leadership Oklahoma program will be

conducted to explore their experiences. The research procedure and participants will be defined in Chapter 3. Third, an in-depth analysis of the research will be presented in Chapter 4. The themes that evolve from the case study interviews will be illustrated with appropriate quotations. Fourth, the results of the findings will be discussed to see what recurring themes evolve. The significance of the information will be related to the development of regional university presidents through participation in Leadership Oklahoma.

CHAPTER II

The Literature Review

Introduction

Leadership and leadership development have been topics of much research and discussion for hundreds of years, from Machiavelli's sixteenth century books to the current abundance of self-help manuals and biographical works about leaders, and this continual search for a comprehensive understanding of leadership has left those interested in the topic with a great deal of knowledge and insight but very little in the way of clear understanding. Countless theories, descriptions, and definitions have been developed in an attempt to describe leadership, but just like democracy, love, and peace, (Northouse, 2001, p. 2) leadership has proven to be an elusive concept, unwilling to reveal its secrets.

This chapter will first review the background of leadership research and discuss several of the most recognized leadership theories. Previous leadership research has considered early theories such as trait, style, and situational, as well as the two broad categories of transactional and transformational leadership. Each of these theories will be discussed. Second, this chapter will discuss the leadership theories related to the role of the university president and how these leadership theories have been studied in an academic environment. This section will attempt to define the presidential job responsibilities and to ascertain which theory or approach to leadership has proven to be most effective. Third, this chapter will look at the history of community leadership development programs and the research that has been done on them. What is the typical program? What are the program curriculum

options? What are the typical program objectives, benefits and post participation involvement opportunities? These questions will be answered by reviewing the available literature on these programs. Finally, this chapter will look specifically at Leadership Oklahoma and how this particular program is designed and delivered to meet the goals and objectives set forth in its promotional material.

Leadership Theory

In general terms, leadership is a highly valued but difficult to define commodity. Even researchers who have dedicated their careers to the study of leadership have failed to create a single definition that will satisfy every situation. As a result, Stogdill's (1974) comprehensive review of the leadership literature led him to conclude, "there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept" (p. 259). Certainly, a steady stream of new definitions has continued since he made this observation, but while no definitive definition has been agreed upon, some common themes to the study of leadership have developed. The most basic is that "leadership is ubiquitous in human groups and emerges whenever two or more people engage in a collective activity" (Hollander, 1985). Most definitions incorporate the idea that leadership is a process by which one person influences other people, often guiding their activities, to achieve an agreed upon outcome. How agreement on the intended outcome is created and the appropriate style or approaches to guiding, however, have proven to be the areas of considerable debate. Some important areas of leadership study include: the differences between assigned and emergent leadership, the differences between strong and weak leaders, and how followers perceive intended outcomes against reality. The

most significant difference in leadership research, however, is regarding the origination of leadership. On this matter there is a clear separation of thoughts and research.

The first category of researchers view leadership as an influence process that occurs naturally within a social system and is shared among the members. This research framework attempts to study “leadership” as a process rather than to study “the leader” and their actions as an individual. Proponents of this view make no clear distinction between leaders and followers and propose that leadership functions may be carried out by different people at different times. They believe that important decisions are made through the use of an interactive process that involves many different people influencing one another (Yukl, 1998).

This research project, however, will fall into the second category of leadership research which identifies leadership as a specialized role where the person expected to perform the leadership function is designated as the leader. This person is initially empowered with the trust and respect of the followers and the opportunity to influence the attitudes and behaviors of all group members (Yukl, 1998). Most often, their approach to these leadership responsibilities will dictate the length and effectiveness of their leadership term. Research in this category has focused on many different approaches or theories and how each can be used to influence a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.

The rest of this section will review the research on six of the most important leadership theories: trait, style, situational, contingency, social exchange and transactional and transformational.

Trait Theory

Although not a major approach to the study of leadership today, the trait approach was one of the first systematic attempts to study the concept. Introduced in the early 1900's, the trait approach was based on the idea that men were born with innate qualities and characteristics that not only allowed them to be leaders, but caused them to become leaders. The underlying assumption was that some people were natural leaders endowed with certain traits not possessed by other people (Yukl, 1998). Over the years, trait theory moved from our most basic human traits like height, hair color and gender, to more elusive qualities such as tireless energy, penetrating intuition and irresistible persuasive powers. However, the tendency of trait researchers to study each trait alone and ignore the interrelated and interaction aspect of human traits have limited the studies' utility for understanding leadership effectiveness. (Yukl, 1998).

Trait theory began with an emphasis on identifying the qualities of great persons and the critical role these qualities or characteristics play in effective leadership. In 1948, Ralph Stogdill, a professor at Ohio State University, completed the first of two studies that analyzed and synthesized more than 124 trait studies conducted between 1904 and 1947. He identified a group of important leadership traits that differentiated group leaders from group members. The eight traits included: intelligence, alertness, insight, responsibility, initiative, persistence, self-confidence, and sociability. The most important finding in his first survey, however, was that an individual does not become a leader solely because of the traits he or she possesses, but rather that the traits a leader possesses must be relevant to the situation in which

the leader is functioning (Stogdill, 1948). A second survey by Stogdill (1974) and additional research by Lord, DeVander and Allger (1986) and Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) have further molded the list of definitive leadership traits to include: intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity and sociability.

While the trait approach is instinctively appealing and provides us with a comfort level in our selection of leaders, it has many deficiencies and criticisms. The most important of which is that trait researchers have failed to consider the impact of situational factors on leadership success. Most often, trait researchers have used historical figures identified as great leaders to develop their lists of needed characteristics; however, they have failed to look at people with similar traits and explain why these individuals did not become leaders or failed as leaders. Additionally, trait theory limits the possibilities of leadership to only those that posses the necessary characteristics and virtually eliminates the idea of training and development for leaders (Northouse, 2001). While trait theory is no longer a major approach to research, it does continue to be influential in the search for effective leadership in higher education. When describing successful presidents or identifying the characteristics to look for in selecting a campus president, many individuals and boards have a tendency to associate leaders with specific traits or individual qualities. Effective presidents have been described as having a strong drive for responsibility, vigor, and persistence. The perceived effective president also is willing to take chances and can effectively delegate duties. They possess a sense of humor, initiative in social situations, self-confidence and personal style (Fisher, 1984). In searching for new campus leaders, a belief persists that desirable characteristics include confidence,

courage, fairness, respect for the opinions of others and sensitivity, while undesirable characteristics include being soft-spoken, insecure, vain, and concerned with administrative pomp (Eble, 1978). Unfortunately, "no research has shown, for example, that a college president who speaks in an assertive and strong voice will be more effective than a soft-spoken president" (Bensimon, et al., 1989). One study by Fisher, Tack and Wheeler (1988) compared the traits and behaviors of 412 highly effective presidents with 412 representative presidents and came to the conclusion that the effective presidents were strong risk taking loners who were less likely to form close collegial relationships. They also worked longer hours and made decisions easily. However, another study by Gilley, Fulmer, and Reithlingshoefer (1986) found that successful colleges were led by presidents who were people-oriented, and worked feverishly to reduce risk at every step. Thus, there was little parallel overall in the two studies regarding perceptions of the leadership of college presidents.

The conflicting results of these two studies highlight the problems associated with assessing leadership from the trait perspective. Few people can or will exhibit consistent traits under all circumstances and across periods of time. Therefore, it would be possible to accurately describe them by two seemingly contradictory traits or to asses their leadership characteristics differently depending on the time and conditions of the research. At its best, trait theory attempts to describe the ideal characteristics of leaders and provides a more detailed description of how a leader's personality will impact their leadership approach, but the conflicting results of previous trait studies "provide a strong argument for the need to define the

effectiveness of leadership in dynamic rather than static terms" (Bensimon et al., 1989).

Style/Behavior Theory

Where trait theory emphasizes the important characteristics needed in leaders, style theory, conversely, studies and emphasizes the style or behavior of the leader. "In shifting the study of leadership to leader style or behaviors, the style approach expanded the study of leadership to include the actions of leaders toward subordinates in various contexts" (Northouse, 2001, p. 35). Introduced by uncoordinated, but nearly simultaneous studies at Ohio State University and the University of Michigan in the 1950's, style or behavior theory explains that leadership is composed of two types of behavior: task and relationship. Additional research has identified the two types by other names which include the following: concern for production and concern for people (Blake & Mouton, 1964); initiating structure and consideration (Stogdill, 1974); and performance and maintenance (Misumi & Peterson, 1985). By any name, however, the categories include similar behaviors. Task oriented leaders are concerned with goal attainment. By developing an organized, detailed approach to accomplishing the group goals, task leaders provide structure to the work context, define member roles and schedule the activities. Relationship leaders, on the other hand, focus their attention on the needs of group members. They attempt to build member and group relationships and help group members find comfort with the situation they are in. They take an active interest in employees as human beings, value their individuality and give special attention to their personal needs.

Blake and Mouton (1964) may have been most responsible for the advancement of this theory and for developingthe connection between task and relationship leaders with the introduction of their Managerial (Leadership) Grid which first appeared in the early 1960's. Since that time, the grid has been refined and revised several times, most recently in 1991 (Blake & McCanse), and has been used extensively in organizational training and development. The grid has proven to be an effective tool in helping leaders and managers identify their dominant leadership style. Through the application of a questionnaire and plotting the answers on a grid with intersecting axes, researchers are able to identify the participant's level of concern for production and concern for people. With each axis containing nine points, scores can range from a low of 1, with 1 identifying an "impoverished leader," to 5, which identified a "middle-of-the-road manager," to a high of 9, which recognized a team management style. This managerial or leadership grid can then provide leaders with a way to look at their behavior and to understand how and why their approach will or will not be successful in certain situations or with certain groups of people (Blake & Mouton, 1964). By differentiating and emphasizing the different types of leadership styles that can be employed, the leadership grid shows leaders the need to select the right form of behavior for the appropriate situation. (Blake & Mouton, 1964).

The style approach has been important and continues to be important for distinguishing that leaders can and do approach situations from different perspectives, but it does not go so far as to show how the different styles are related to performance outcomes. According to Northouse (2001), "Researchers have not been

able to establish a consistent link between task and relationship behaviors and outcomes such as morale, job satisfaction, and productivity" (p. 53). Another criticism of the style approach is that it implies that the most effective leadership style is the high-high style on the grid while the research findings provide only limited support for this belief (Yukl, 1998).

In the higher education arena, a limited amount of research has been conducted using an adapted form of Blake and Mouton's managerial grid. Blake, Mouton, and Williams (1981) utilized the grid in an academic context to suggest that there are five styles of academic administration - caretaker, authority-obedience, comfortable-pleasant, constituency-centered, and team (Blake, Mouton, and Williams, 1981). The team administration style, which is indicative of leaders who score high on both concern for people and concern for institutional performance, is considered to be the optimum style. Leaders who possess this style, are identified as team administrators. This academic grid has found its most useful place as a tool for self assessment where academic leaders can determine their personal style of leadership (Tucker, 1981).

Additional style theory research in higher education has been conducted by Cohen and March (1974) who used presidents' perception of the similarity of their role to other leadership roles to identify two types of presidents – meditative and authoritative. These categories are comparable to the emphasis on consideration of people and initiating structure of Stogdill's (1974) research. Cohen and March found that meditative presidents tended to define their success based on the relationship they

maintained with their constituencies, while authoritative presidents focused on the quality of educational programs.

Style theory's most significant strength is that it does provide some important insights about managerial effectiveness and how a leader's style can impact followers. Because it allows leaders to understand how they can best influence both the satisfaction and performance of subordinates, it has become a popular management training tool. It highlights the consequences of using specific types of leadership behavior and implies that different situations may require different leadership styles. In doing so, style theory suggests that the most effective leadership approach would be for the leader to apply the most appropriate style for the given situation, which is the basic premise of situational theory.

Situational Theory

Situational theory proposes that different situations demand different kinds of leadership and to be an effective leader, individuals must adapt their style to the demands of the given situation. Developed from the basic concept of style theory, situational theory demands that leaders be able to interpret the needs of their followers and adjust their style to meet those needs.

Situational theory is best illustrated in a model developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1969), where leader behavior is divided into four distinct categories: directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating. Directive behaviors are most often associated with one-way communication and are enlisted to clarify what is to be done, how it is to be done, and who is to do it. Supportive behaviors, on the other hand, involve two-way communication and show social and emotional support to others.

These include asking for input from the group, sharing information about self, and providing feedback on job performance. The four quadrant model indicates that a delegating leadership style offers lowdoses of both directive and supportive behaviors. A supporting leadership style is identified by a high amount of supportive behaviors and low amounts of directive behaviors, while a directing leadership style is the exactopposite. F inally, the coaching leadership style is characterized by high amounts of both directing and supportive behaviors.

A second component of the model is a subordinate development scale, where subordinates or followers will fluctuate based on their commitment, competence and comfort for the assigned task. For leaders to be effective, it becomes essential for them to diagnose where their followers are on the development scale and adapt their leadership style to directly match the needs of the group. This, of course, must be done for each task assigned.

As the first theory to emphasize the need for leadership flexibility and the ability for one person to adjust their style, situational theory offers a tremendous prescriptive value, however, a major concern of the theory is its applicability to group leadership. Should a leader with a group of twenty employees lead by matching his or her style to the overall development level of the group or to the development level of individual members of the group? If they choose the mean development level of the group, how will this affect the individuals whose development levels are quite different? Because subordinates move back and forth along the development continuum, selecting the appropriate leadership approach can be difficult (Northouse, 2001).

On the positive side, situational theory is easy to understand and provides a straightforward approach to leadership application. From a leadership development perspective, situational theory has proven to be a powerful and useful tool for many individuals and a wide variety of organizations. Its prescriptive nature has made it extremely popular for training individuals to become effective leaders.

In applying situational theory to higher education administration, conflicting results have occurred. Floyd (1985), who conducted separate studies using House's path-goal model (1971) and Hersey and Blanchard's (1977) life-cycle model, found that the path-goal model prescribed task-oriented leaders who would do whatever was necessary to drive the group to complete a job, while the life-cycle theory suggested individuals with a delegating and participative style would be most successful. Floyd (1985) concluded that the differences may have been the result of the model's being developed within organizational settings with clearly delineated superior and subordinate roles and that their application to educational organizations may be inappropriate. Bensimon et al. (1989) came to the similar conclusion that presidents have often been observed as egalitarian one day and authoritarian the next, but there has been little done in the systematic application of situational theory to determine under what conditions alternative forms of leadership would be beneficial (Bensimon et al., 1989).

While research results at the highest levels of academic leadership have been mixed, additionalresearch in academic organizations indicates that situational theory can be applied usefully to the leadership of academic departments where decision making is less equivocal than at higher levels of academic organizations (Bensimon et

al., 1989). In this setting, Tucker (1981) used Hersey and Blanchard's (1969) model to develop a questionnaire that would help department chairs determine departmental level of maturity and select a corresponding style of leadership. Also in this setting, Dill's (1982) analysis of studies on the leadership behavior of leaders suggests that faculty members consistently opted for a leader or department chair who acted as a facilitator for the department or group.

Under situational theory, effective leadership occurs when the leader is able to accurately diagnose the development level of subordinates in a task situation and then exhibit the prescribed leadership style that matches that situation (Northouse, 2001). By using Hersey and Blanchard's (1969) model for increasing effectiveness through situational leadership, leaders can learn to accurately diagnose the development of subordinates in a task situation and match it with the appropriate leadership style. Another example of how situational factors impact leadership is presented in F.E. Fiedler's contingency theory.

Contingency Theory

First introduced by F. E. Fiedler (1967), contingency theory incorporates many of the premises of situational theory, but suggests that leaders should not expect to be able to lead in every situation. Within the framework of contingency theory, a leader's style is described as either task motivated or relationship motivated and all leaders are one or the other. Leaders can identify their style by completing Fiedler's Least Preferred Coworker (LPC) questionnaire and scale. Leaders who describe their least preferred coworker in favorable terms, with a high LPC, derive major satisfaction from developing close relationships with fellow workers. High LPC

leaders are designated as relationship-orientated. Leaders who describe their least preferred coworker in unfavorable terms, with a low LPC, derive satisfaction by successfully completing a task. These leaders are designated as task-orientated. They are more concerned with successful task accomplishment and worry less about coworker relationships.

The second major factor in Fiedler's (1967) theory is known as situational favorableness or environmental variables. These are defined by the degree to which a situation enables a certain leader to exert influence over the group. The three key situational factors are leader-member relations, task structure, and position power (Fiedler, 1967). In this model, the leader is in the most favorable position when they have a good or positive relationship with subordinates, the task is clearly defined and when the leader has substantial position power. In this situation, subordinates know exactly what they have been asked to do and because they feel good about their leader, they are willing and able to accomplish the task. On the other hand, the situation is least favorable for the leader when relations with subordinates are poor, the task is unstructured, and the position power is low. When subordinates are not motivated to assist their leader because they lack personal respect for them, and when the leader’s position doesn’t signify any ability to impose disciplinary actions, it will be difficult to generate results. Add to that a task that is not clearly defined or easily measured, and progress toward the goal will be hard to verify, leaving subordinates with opportunities to covertly hinder progress toward the goal (Yukl, 1998).

Using this description of the situation variables and the leader’s LPC score, contingency theory concludes that certain styles and certain leaders will be effective

in certain situations while some others will not. Fiedler's (1967) work explained that task-oriented leaders are most effective when faced with highly unfavorable or highly favorable situations. Relations-oriented leaders do best when situations are "in between" in favorableness.

Under the overarching heading of contingency theory, several research theories provide a more detailed look at the leader-follower relationship. One of the most prominent is House's (1971) path-goal theory, which states that the effective leader clarifies the transactional exchange, and identifies the path the subordinate needs to follow for goal attainment. In essence, the leader's role is to assist followers in attaining their objectives by directing, guiding and coaching them along the path to success. By increasing the number and kinds of rewards that followers can expect to receive and by removing obstacles and roadblocks to success, leaders generate increased motivation among followers. One unique aspect of path-goal theory is the special attention paid to follower's locus of control. Followers with internal locus of control believe that they are in charge of the things that occur in their life, while individuals with external locus of control believe that chance, fate, or outside forces are the determinants of life events. Path-goal theory suggests that participative leadership will be most helpful in working with followers with internal locus of control, while followers with external locus of control will react better to a directive leadership style.

Clearly, a tremendous amount of research has been done on contingency theory and its variations and many of the studies have concluded that it is a valid and reliable leadership approach; however, criticisms of the model and the LPC

questionnaire remain. Researchers are concerned about the difficulty associated with filling out the LPC questionnaire correctly and with the difficult to understand connection between a leader's LPC score and group performance (Fiedler, 1993). Some writers, like O'Brien and Kabanoff (1981), have expressed concern about how the model treats all task structures as a given. "In many situations, especially where work is not highly mechanized or unionized, organizing the work is a major responsibility of the manager. Research suggests that modifying task structure has up to ten times the effect on group performance as leader LPC scores" (O'Brien & Kabanoff, 1981, p. 157).

Regardless of the criticisms, situational theory and contingency theory were important steps forward in the study of leadership. By introducing boundaries to leadership effectiveness and suggesting some very important situational components that must be considered by leaders, these theories moved leadership training beyond simple application and into a model of continual activity.

The three leadership theories discussed to this point assign the responsibility for and control of the leadership process directly to the designated leader. Either because of their physical attributes or due to their skill at recognizing the appropriate style to use given a particular situation, each theory expects that leaders will lead and followers will follow. However, history has shown us that leaders without supportive and motivated followers will most likely fail to achieve even the lowest levels of success. To address this limitation in the previous leadership theories, researchers began to develop theories that would describe the relationship between leaders and followers and the different ways in which leaders can build support and cooperation

with and among the followers. Today, these leadership behaviors are defined by two broad categories: transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership focuses on the exchange of goods, both tangible and psychological, between leader and follower, while transformational leadership describes leadership that advances new cultural forms through emphasizing positive values and goals.

The following two sections on Social Exchange Theory and Transactional/Transformational Leadership will further discuss the definition of each of these leadership styles and some of the prominent leadership theories that are associated with each.

Social Exchange Theory

First introduced in the early 1950's by George Homans' book *The Human Group*, social exchange theory attempts to show that social interaction is an exchange of benefits or favors between the leader and the led and that leaders can use this exchange relationship to reward and punish followers. Homans (1950) came to this conclusion through his research on the smaller social units that make up communities, cities, regions and big organizations. He found these smaller social units to be important because, "When, as grownups, we get jobs, we still find ourselves working with a few persons and not with the whole firm, association, or government department" (Homans, p. 1).

Through common experiences, we understand that an economic exchange exists in a business relationship where employees are paid money for their time and productivity. Homans (1950) concluded, however, that additional psychological benefits can be controlled and exchanged by the leader in small group settings.

Expressions of approval, respect, esteem and affection can lead to "a surplus of the goods that make organizations successful: morale, leadership and co-operation" (p. 454). This reciprocal approach to leadership is the framework of social exchange theory.

In addition to describing the leader-follower relationship, Yukl (1998) expanded social exchange theory to include an explanation of the development of leaders within group settings. He concluded that a member is able to influence the expectations of others about the leadership role he or she should play by demonstrating competence and loyalty to the group. By demonstrating good judgment, an individual accumulates "credits" and is allowed more latitude than other group members. As this individual's proposals prove successful, group trust increases and more status and influence will be accorded to the person (p. 189). This exchange process by which leaders gain power and influence is most likely the same for leaders of large organizations as it is for small groups. The only difference is based on position power, which may initially provide an individual with higher levels of influence. However, bad decisions and questionable integrity will quickly erode this benefit.

Under the social exchange model, several research theories provide a more detailed look at the leader-follower relationship. Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory, for example, describes leadership as a collection of one-on-one relationships between a leader and his or her followers. By developing relationships with each member of the group they lead, leaders have the opportunity to exchange or negotiate with subordinates "to do certain activities that go beyond their formal job

descriptions, and the leader, in turn, does more for these subordinates" (Northouse, 2001). While this simplistic description implies a very transactional approach to leadership, the focus of LMX is for the leader to develop an open, honest and trusting relationship with subordinates that allows followers to have input into their responsibilities and input into the direction of the organization. Relationships that fall into this pattern of exchange and support are called high LMX relationships and would be categorized as "in-group." Relationships that do not develop this in-depth level of communication are called low LMX relationships and are classified as "out-group" relationships. In-group members will have more responsibility, decision influence, higher satisfaction and greater access to valuable resources. There is increased trust and support, as well as agreement on shared goals and initiatives beyond the everyday job requirements. Out-group members, on the other hand, experience low levels of support from the leader, and the member has less responsibility and less ability to influence decisions. Lack of trust, few shared goals, and few rewards are a result of this out-group status. Research by Graen & Uhl-Bien (1985) and Linden, Wayne, & Stilwell (1993) found that high-quality leader-member exchanges produced many positive outcomes including less employee turnover, greater organizational commitment, better job attitudes, and greater participation, among others.

Social exchange theories have proven to be extremely effective and useful in explaining and understanding the relationship between leaders and followers. In higher education, the impact of social exchange leadership has been shown in studies that downplay the charismatic and directive role of presidents. Gilley, Fulmer and

Reithlingshoefer (1986) observed that success at the presidential level was closely related to the individual's ability to gain the acceptance and respect of key constituencies through low-key, non-controversial actions early in their term. Hollander (1987) followed with a study that employed the idiosyncrasy credit (IC) model to study how academic organizations reacted to new leadership. The study concluded that followers will be more accepting of change if presidents will initially engage in behaviors and actions that will demonstrate expertise and an understanding of the group's expectations.

Social exchange theories were the first theories to explore the tangible and psychological exchanges that can motivate and encourage followers to maintain loyalty to the group or organization. By following the suggestions and recommendations of this research, leaders will be able to motivate followers to contribute more to the organization and the work environment than their job or position description would indicate is necessary. However, because social exchange theory is still very task specific, leaders should look to the contrast between transactional and transformation leadership for a guide to improving follower commitment to the goals and objectives of their organizations.

Transactional/Transformational Leadership

Transactional leadership is defined by Kanungo (2001) as "being concerned with the routine maintenance activities of allocating resources, monitoring and directing followers to achieve task and organizational goals" (p. 257). Bass (1990) describes transactional leadership as the initializing and organizing of work through a transaction with employees. He writes that this exchange – "this promise and reward

for good performance, or threat and discipline for poor performance – characterize effective leadership" (Bass, p. 20) under the transactional model.

Transactional leadership is defined as occurring when the leader rewards or disciplines the follower depending on the adequacy of the follower's performance. Beyond this basic description, researchers have categorized the types of transactional leadership depending on the type of reinforcement, either positive (contingent reward) or negative (active or passive forms of management-by exception) (Yukl, 1998). A contingent reward refers to the leader rewarding employees for task accomplishment. With this method, the leader assigns or gets agreement on what needs to be done and promises rewards in exchange for satisfactorily carrying out the assignment (Bass, 1990). Management-by Exception (MBE), on the other hand, refers to the leader who chooses to punish the followers for failure to accomplish the task. This corrective transaction may be active (MBE-A) or passive (MBE-P). In MBE-A, the leader arranges to actively monitor deviances from standards, mistakes, and errors in the follower's assignments and takes immediate corrective action to eliminate continued deviations. MBE-P implies waiting passively for deviances, mistakes, and errors to occur and then taking corrective action to eliminate deviations on future tasks (Bass, 1990).

College and university campuses provide a unique organizational framework for the study of transactional leadership due to the number and variety of constituencies capable of wielding power and influence. While college presidents can control access to information, budgetary support and faculty and administrative appointments, other groups can also control or obstruct portions of the campus.

College trustees or board members have the power to make and implement policy while faculty members have the professional authority to conduct their scholarship and teaching free from administrative interference. Students have the inalienable rights to freely express their opinions and concerns on everything from tuition to campus food service. Alumni, donors, community members and business leaders also can organize sufficient opposition to undermine the best intentioned presidential leadership (Die, 1998).

Transformational Leadership

The flip-side of the transactional leadership coin, however, is transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is an encompassing approach to leadership that can be used to describe a wide range of leadership, from very specific attempts to influence followers on a one-to-one level to very broad attempts to influence whole organizations and even entire cultures. James MacGregor Burns popularized the concept in the late 1970's and wrote about leaders as the individuals who have the power to tap the motives of followers in order to better reach the goals of the leaders and followers (Burns, 1978). Distinct from transactional leadership, transformational leadership "refers to the process by which an individual engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and follower. This type of leader is attentive to the needs and motives of followers and tries to help others reach their fullest potential" (Northouse, 2001). By articulating a vision or a mission, the transformational leader increases the psychological value of goal accomplishment. Going beyond a transactional leader's specifying and clarifying of the goals, the transformational leader presents the

organizational values within the goals. Accomplishment of the goals then becomes more meaningful and consistent with the self-concepts of the followers. (Bass, 1990)

First described by Burns (1978) and more fully developed by Bass (1985), the purest form of transformational leadership does not depend on directive and controlling processes, rather, on mutual goals of leaders and followers. The best transformational leaders have learned to build the followers' expectations by articulating a mutually desirable future and describing how it can be attained. They encourage teamwork and call for meaningful actions; they articulate the goals of the organization and unite the organizational members in pursuit of them. A transformational leader demands that followers become a part of the transformation process and "inspires their members to become committed to and a part of the shared vision of the organization" (Northouse 2001, p. 138).

The fundamental strength of transformational leadership is that it views leadership as a process that occurs between followers and leaders. Not one that is directed from leaders to followers. And because parties have input into the goal setting process, leadership is not the sole responsibility of a leader. Instead, it emerges from the exchange between leaders and followers (Bryman, 1992).

Other strengths of transformational leadership include the development of goals that followers want to attain, as well as goals that lift people out of their anonymity and unite them in the pursuit of objectives worthy of their best efforts (McClelland, 1975). Transformational leadership stimulates enthusiasm among subordinates for the work of the group and does things to build confidence in their ability to successfully attain group objectives. It provides a broader view of

leadership and elevates it above the management function. And, finally, it places an emphasis on a higher standard of moral responsibility and motivates followers to transcend their own self-interests for the good of the team, organization, or community (Howell & Avolio, 1992; Shamir et al., 1993).

Many of the criticisms of transformational leadership are based on the fact that it is so broad based and requires the leader to possess such a wide range of abilities. Can one person really create a vision, motivate the members, build organizational trust, nurture the followers, and guide the change process all at once? It is also criticized because it focuses only on the top of an organization and ignores the management responsibilities of leadership. One slogan suggests that managers are only concerned with doing things right, while leaders inspire others to do the right thing. Can transformational leadership be applied equally to CEO's and production managers? This criticism seeks to find the balance between management responsibilities and leadership responsibilities, and determine if the two can coexist.

The transforming leader in higher education seeks to encourage the campus community to accept a vision that he or she has created. Keller (1983) calls this the "poetic part of the presidency" that challenges the faculty and staff to pursue great intellectual and artistic adventures and tackle the most critical issues of our time (p. 25). Yet numerous studies have concluded that the college campus is not the appropriate place for transformational leaders. Cohen and March (1974) concluded that good leaders do change their institutions, but not through transformation and the articulation of new goals and values. Instead, they employ a transactional approach that emphasizes selected values that are already a part of the institution. Birnbaum's

(1988) research indicates that it is the organizational structure of colleges and universities thatmakes the exercise of transformational leadership so extremely difficult. The only exceptions he found were institutions in crises, of very small size or of poor instructional quality. He explains, “Because the goals and enduring purposes of an academic institution are likely to be shaped by its history, its culture, and the socialization and training of its participants, rather than by an omnipotent leader, attempts at transformational leadership are more likely to lead to disruption and conflict than to desirable outcomes” (Birnbaum, 1992, p. 29). Additional research by Bensimon (1989) concluded that even at institutions in crisis, new presidents who used transactional means were more successful in attaining transformational effects than leaders who reflected a pure transformational approach.

Transformational leaders are change agents. They are good role models, able to develop and convey a new direction for their organization. They energize and empower others to achieve new levels of success and they model behaviors that create high levels of trust and admiration among their followers. Great leaders like Ghandi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Winston Churchill are recognized for using a transformational approach to change, elevate or motivate society. They created a readiness for change within their community, they overcame the resistance to change by using non-threatening actions, they articulated new vision, generated commitment to the goal, and guided people to the successful attainment of that goal (Bensimon et al., 1989).

While Bass’ introduction of transformational leadership appeared to bring new clarity to the understanding of leadership, the approach has proven to be a

difficult fit in higher education institutions. With a shared governance approach to leadership and a long history of organizational goals, change on a college campus is a difficult process, and higher education leaders have discovered that institutional progress requires not only great vision but also some give and take among the various constituencies involved. Most often, the goals and enduring purposes of an academic institution have been shaped by its history, culture and participants, and most attempts by omnipotent leaders to alter any or all of these characteristics lead to disruption and conflict rather than desirable outcomes. However, pure transactional leadership in higher education is also rare. College presidents have generally reached their positions because they are highly motivated, self assured, and extremely successful, therefore, they are seldom content to be figureheads. They understand that they must help the institution run smoothly, but they are also interested in making institutional progress at the same time. Most often, "they help their institutions change, not through transformation and the articulation of new goals or values, but through transactions that emphasize selected values already in place" (Birnbaum, 1992, p. 30).

Leadership Summary

Prior to the introduction of Burns' (1978) transformational leadershipt he majority of leadership theory and research has concentrated on leadership as a transactional exchange between leaders and followers. Since that time, research findings have described the best leaders as those who can integrate a highly task-oriented and highly relations-oriented approach (Bass, 1990). The general findings have been that the best leaders are both transactional and transformational. The key factor in determining which approach is most appropriate may, according to Bass

(1990), prove to be the environment within which the leadership takes place. Organizations where the technology, workforce and environment are stable have proven to be more appropriate for transactional leadership. On the other hand, organizations that are facing an unstable environment are best served by the transformational leadership approach. These organizations need to be flexible. They need to be agile, able to meet new demands and market changes as they occur. According to Bass (1990), transformational leadership is the only approach that can enable a firm to do this successfully.

University presidents have found that leading an educational institution within the historical parameters of its mission requires the support, cooperation and input of every constituency. To survive in this environment of shared governance, they must be willing to build partnerships and alliances through the exchange of goods. However, they also come to the position with goals and objectives and while they do not want to revolutionize the system, they are seldom content to be figureheads. As Birnbaum (1992) noted, "They understand that the president's role involves not just helping the institution run smoothly but making institutional progress at the same time" (p. 29).

To better understand the leadership challenges and the expectations of presidents within the higher education arena, we will next look at the role of the university president and the environment in which he or she works.

Presidential Leadership

America's first higher education institutions were established in the early 1600's during the Colonial Era of American history and while these institutions were

loosely based on their European forerunners, they featured a uniquely American approach to campus administration. Founded with a combination of public and private control, the American colleges were overseen by a lay board, appointed by the colonial court or legislature, which hired a president who was responsible to it alone. As we begin the 21st century, this model of institutional governance is still the most widely used approach throughout the United States (Cohen, 1998).

Since this foretelling beginning, the American institution of higher education has endured tremendous change in both its size and its mission, yet the executive leadership structure remains remarkably intact. Without knowing that the following words were written by a professor in 1902, it would be impossible to know that the description was not of a modern day president.

> Unfortunately, very few of our college presidents have taken a preliminary course to qualify them for the position. Indeed, it must be confessed that ability to superintend educational work has not been regarded in all cases as the essential prerequisite; in some cases that appears to have been thought less important than a supposed ability to collect money. But at the best no one man is able now to understand all the phases of university or even college work. … The best of presidents becomes weakened by the overwhelming importance of the financial side and comes to look upon increasing numbers as the sure proof of success. He soon finds himself between the upper millstone of the trustees and the nether millstone of the faculty, the former insisting upon numbers, the latter upon a high standard, so that in an honest effort to perform his duty, he is in danger of receiving censure from both. (Gray, 1998, p. 105)

Even the description of the first college presidents as presented by Cohen (1998) as “ministers who taught classes, raised money, recruited and disciplined students, and presided over all college functions” (p. 44) creates very little distinction between what was expected then and how the job might be described today. In fact, Cohen (1998) describes the role of the president during the contemporary era from 1976-1998 as remaining all purpose. Presidents must be responsive to the board, attentive to the faculty, in service to the students, connected with the alumni and responsive to the local community. And, as always, Presidents remain involved with fundraising and campus politics.

So, while thegeneral description of the presidential job may have changed little over the course of the past 350 years, it is important to understand that these descriptions fail to fully incorporate the tremendous changes in the higher education endeavor which account for the undeniable changes in the responsibilities, expectations and requirements of today’s college presidents. As Shapiro (1998) adequately stated, “the nature of the American university presidency – its particular bundle of authority and responsibility – grew directly out of the special history of American higher education” (p. 68). And while the symbolism and reporting structure of the college presidency has remained quite stable, the roles and expectations of those who fill the position have evolved, along with the institutions themselves, a great deal. Over the last 200 years, the university faculty has acquired tremendous academic freedom in their classrooms and in most cases complete control of the academic activities of the institution. Student populations have exploded, boards and trustees have become more political and governors and legislatures have attempted to

exert influence and control over the activities of the schools they fund. Today, college and university presidents must be able to provide a good flow of information, the distribution of rewards and punishments, the building of morale, the handling of conflict within the institution, the protection of institutional autonomy, the definition of and defense of organizational integrity, and the production of results (Kerr and Gade, 1986).

The most significant changes in the requirements and responsibilities of today's college presidents come from the much wider portfolio of both responsibilities and constituencies that the college or university must now deal with (Muller, 1988). Where early college presidents were most likely responsible for fewer than one hundred students, today's average college campus will host more than 5,000 and some presidents lead campuses that exceed 50,000 students. Where early college presidents were charged with the promotion and nourishment of a particular set of religious and social values and traditions (Cohen, 1998), today's college president must oversee a community that allows and encourages academic freedom and the acceptance of an organized and disciplined opposition to any public or institutional policy (Shapiro, 1998). Today, colleges and universities are expected to educate and train the professional world and university presidents are expected to "secure the necessary resources, protect the required environment, champion the interests and aspirations of the academic community to the broader society and play a role in ensuring that the academic community is in touch with society's interests and needs" (Shapiro, 1998, p. 69).

College and University Presidents – Who They Are

The most recent survey of college and university presidents, conducted by the Chronicle for Higher Education for inclusion in their 2002-2003 Almanac, showed that just less than 80 percent of the positions were held by men. Over 85 percent are between the ages of 51 and 70 with the median age rising to 58 years. Caucasians fill 87 percent of the jobs and more than 83 percent of the population is married. Only 55 percent have earned a Ph.D. but the percentage grows to over 82 percent when Ed.D's, M.D.'s and J.D.'s are included.

Twenty percent of the presidents moved into their current position from another presidency, while 40 percent rose through the academic structure of higher education. Twelve percent were elevated from the administrative side of higher education, while nearly 15 percent came to the position from outside of higher education. Nearly 63 percent of the presidents moved to another institution to take over the leadership post. The median tenure for college and university presidents is five years, but over 41 percent have served in their current position between 6 and 15 years.

College and University Presidents – What They Face

No other group of individuals within the academic community will have a greater impact, either positively or negatively, on the fortunes of higher education than the men and women who serve in the presidential role, and over any given ten year period of time, approximately 5,000 people will accept this challenge (Kerr and Gade, 1986). With this in mind, two important studies of the academic presidency were commissioned by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges;

the first in cooperation with the Carnegie Corporation in 1984, and the second in cooperation with the Hewlett, Irvine and Kellogg Foundations in 1996. Both studies were conducted by commissions who reported their findings in separate reports to the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. The research included more than 800 interviews with current and past presidents, board members, people who had refused presidencies and executive search consultants. They covered all major segments of higher education and each region of the country. Their findings shed considerable light on the general responsibilities and challenges of the presidential position and offered some recommendations on how current and future presidents can better prepare for the job.

Both commissions concluded that the job itself is becoming more and more difficult and they expressed concern for many areas including:rising costs, increased tuition, diminishing resources, accelerating technology demands and infrastructure disrepair. They noted the conflicting expectations of students, parents, communities, business leaders and state and federal government, “There are now so many expectations, coming so rapidly from so many different quarters, that meeting them all becomes extremely difficult” (Report of the Commission on the Academic Presidency, 1996, p. 5).

The most pressing concern raised by the reports was connected to the strength of the academic presidency to meet these mounting challenges. The report noted that presidents are similar to chief executive officers from private industry in their responsibilities, but very dissimilar in the source and reach of their authority. The two biggest differences between the campus president and the corporate CEO are in the

number of constituencies to which they are held accountable and in the lack of clarity in their results. “The corporation has one bottom line and it is precise – current profits; while the college or university has many bottom lines, not all of them are precise, and some of them can be calculated only after 10 or 20 years and then imprecisely” (Kerr and Gade, 1986, p. 39). Chapter one detailed some of the objectives and goals assigned to colleges and universities. Included among them were: quality instruction, public service responsibilities, applied research, and economic development.

The first study, directed by Clark Kerr (1986), focused a great deal of attention on the leadership approaches used by university presidents and the environment in which they worked. They concluded that all academic leaders inherit institutions that have established goals for research, for undergraduate and graduate teaching, for contributions to the cultural and economic interests of the many attached communities and for reasonable compatibility between what the institution does and what the most relevant college publics want. They also found that, within this environment, “many administrations make only marginal adjustments to the goals they have inherited; and some make none at all” (Kerr and Gade, 1986, p. 52).

They went on to identify six skills necessary for any president to be successful. First, it takes the ability to work with the board and the government leadership. In this case, it requires a willingness to concede to higher authority. Second, leaders must be able to hire and administer a talented and loyal executive staff. Third, it requires the ability to work laterally with faculty members who maintain academic freedom and are often tenured. Fourth, presidents must be able to

handle conflict and confrontations. A fifth requirement is the ability to work with a variety of individuals and small groups that encompass each constituency that is affected by the campus. Finally, the report identified the sixth requirement for presidential success as the need for a personality and charisma capable of inspiring trust and confidence among the faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends of the university. In identifying these six skills, the commission cautioned presidents to not think in terms of acquiring specific skills such as understanding budgets or contract law or dealing with the media. Instead, they encouraged presidents to examine their skill set and find training and development opportunities that can enhance the areas where they are weak. (Kerr and Gade, 1986).

Finally, the commission created four broad categories into which presidents could be grouped for the purpose of analysis. These categories were based on the strategies, tactics and personalities employed by the presidents interviewed.

Pathbreaking Leaders

The first category is pathbreaking leaders, whose success is dependant upon both vision and the ability to persuade others to support the vision. Pathbreaking leaders were identified as seeking to make revolutionary changes in the existing institutions and turning them in new directions. Pathbreaking leaders were described as having the capacity for vision, the courage to advance it, the persistence to pursue it, the personal power to overcome resistance and a willingness both to endure and to inflict pain along the way (Kerr and Gade, 1986).

Managerial Leaders

Managerial leaders were identified as being more concerned with the efficient pursuit of what is already being done. These leaders can choose to manage any number of campus aspects, and they are often defined by which areas they choose. While they may help to marginally change the direction of the institution, their most significant contribution is to improve the operational efficiency of the university (Kerr and Gade, 1986).

Survivors

Manipulators who play politics to keep their positions and adapt to the changing power structures of the environment were identified as survivors or timeservers. These leaders were described as having no intent to make their institutions either more efficient or more effective; instead, their goal is to remain in their presidencies for as long as they can or to use one presidency to jump to another. They welcome detailed state and federal regulations and encourage the board and faculty to make all decisions. “They survive by their docility and good temper; and if the price of survival is to do nothing, that is a price they are quite willing to pay” (Kerr and Gade, 1986).

Scapegoats

The final category for presidential leaders is the only one that no president begins their service expecting to be in; unfortunately, many become the institution’s scapegoat. Campus constituencies tend to pass their problems up the line just as boards often pass their failures down, and the president becomes the likely target of both. By concentrating the blame on one person who can then be eliminated, the

institution as a whole can be absolved and the decision makers are released of any sense of guilt. The commission notes that all presidents experience some element of scapegoating due to their position, but suggest that for a few, it becomes their full-time occupation.

The commission found that most of the college and university environments studied favored the managerial leaders, but that there were a few times when pathbreaking leaders could emerge. “There are very few situations that permit successful pathbreaking leadership,” they wrote, “the resources are too few and the constraints too great” (Kerr and Gade, 1986, p. 71).

These leadership categories, as outlined by the commission, clearly have common characteristics with the previous discussion of leadership research. In Burns’ (1978) terminology, pathbreaking leaders would be recognized as transformational while managerial leaders would be transactional. The study also confirms and highlights the findings of Bensimon (1989) and Birnbaum (1988) that came to similar conclusions that the nature of colleges and universities make transformational leadership extremely difficult and that a leadership approach that conforms to the group’s norms while also seeking to improve them will be the most successful. While different in name, research on transactional or managerial leadership, where college presidents provide leadership by coordinating the activities of others, making timely decisions and representing the institution to its various publics, has proven this approach to be most common and more often than not, most successful. Pathbreaking or transformational leadership, on the other hand, has been found to meet the needs of higher educational environments only on a limited basis. While college presidents do

have the opportunity and sometimes the expectation to influence the entire institution through symbolic acts and by articulating a vision of the college in idealized form, it is rare that a president can dramatically change or alter an institution. In fact, most of the available research on higher education leadership confirms the applicability of Bass' contention that the best leaders are both transactional and transformational (Bass, 1990).

Presidential Leadership Summary

While the conception of the college presidency remains similar to its founding status, today's college presidents are much different than their earliest predecessors. Today, they must think beyond the narrowly defined scope of early educational institutions and be aware of their university's connection to not only its community, but also to our society. Today's president must realize and comprehend the role the institution must play in addressing the issues of our time while remaining true to the responsibility of maintaining and safeguarding the unique environment and function of our higher education institutions (Muller, 1988). Due to this continuing evolution in the expectations and responsibilities of the college or university president, society should be concerned with developing people who possess the necessary skills and knowledge to lead our institutions of higher education through the coming decades of this young century. In today's world of greater participation, shared influence, conflicting constituencies, and assorted other complexities, those who become college and university presidents must be prepared to lead in the complex and confusing academic environment and to lead their institutions to their ultimate objectives (Birnbaum, 1992).

Community Leadership Development Programs

Community leadership development programs are a relatively new phenomenon in the United States and are slowly crossing American borders and showing up in communities throughout the world. The first community leadership development program was implemented in Philadelphia in 1959 and the National Association for Community Leadership now known as the Community Leadership Association (CLA) was established in 1979, “to provide services and support to the growing number of community leadership programs throughout the country.” Soon after, in the mid-1980's, the country experienced a surge in the development of community leadership development programs as communities began to face changing demographics, social and technological change and threats to their quality of life (Langone & Rohs, 1995). Community groups such as Chambers of Commerce, United Way, Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs and local Community Colleges saw these leadership development programs as a way to improve their community’s ability to address public issues and concerns” (Earnest, 1993). It was believed that by creating a well connected network of informed and interested citizens, community boards, governments and organizations would have a new pool of talent from which to draw as they were faced with increasing demands and obstacles to growth.

Currently, there are 448 CLA member programs, however, this number is only a portion of the active leadership development programs throughout the United States. Leadership Oklahoma, a statewide leadership development program formed in 1986, is among the CLA members listed on the website, however, only three other Oklahoma based community leadership programs are registered. This is in contrast to

the 48 community leadership programs thatare registered with and receive support through Leadership Oklahoma. If this example indicates a pattern among all the states, it would not be unreasonable to estimate that there are thousands of active community leadership programs throughout the United States.

As these programs have grown in activity and notoriety, researchers and academicians have been involved in the evolution, but Galloway (1997) was correct when he expressed his concern over the dearth of professional journal articles dealing with the subject. While there have been several attempts to discover if the programs were actually improving the leadership qualities and abilities of the participants, many have focused on the curriculum used rather than the outcomes experienced by the participants.

Taylor (1997) compared Georgia Community Leadership programs to determine if a difference in selected leadership practices existed based on the type of curriculum employed by the program. Two types of program curriculum were identified, one based on leadership skill development and another based on issue discussion and networking. Using Kouzes' and Posner's (1993) Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) to sample alumni from each type of program, Taylor concluded that there were no statistically significant differences between alumni who completed community leadership programs using skill-based curriculum and alumni who completed leadership programs using issue-based and networking curriculum. While no difference between the curriculum categories was found, Taylor's research did indicate that alumni of either curriculum type had increased their use of

transformational leadership practices. She concluded that either curriculum is effective in promoting these leadership practices.

Earnest (1996), examined leadership programs in Ohio to determine the impact thatthe programs had on participant's leadership skills. He also employed Kouzes' and Posner's (1993) Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) in a pre- and post participation assessment. His results indicated that participants improved both their leadership skills and their leadership practices. Participants were more willing to challenge the status quo, more aware of their responsibility within the community, and more confident of their ability to become actively involved in community affairs.

But only Langone and Rohs (1995) have attempted to discover the extent to which program alumni actually apply their new skills, knowledge and attitudes. Using a comprehensive multi-method design that included aspects of Patton's (1990) layered-analysis design, Yin's (1989) embedded case study, and Merriam's (1998) inductive multi-site study, the researchers "investigated the extent to which alumni of community leadership programs in Georgia become involved in their communities and to identify factors which affected the extent of alumni involvement" (Langone & Rohs, 1995, p. 254). The results of their study show that a broad range of community members have become involved in leadership activities including: (1) Conducting leadership classes, (2) Forming alumni associations, (3) Supporting existing community organizations and forming new organizations, and (4) Serving in local, regional and state government positions.

The remainder of this discussion of community leadership development programs will focus on what constitutes a typical program, what is included in the

program curriculum, the program objectives, the benefits to program participants, and post-participation opportunities for program graduates.

Typical Programs

The typical community leadership development program has anywhere from 30 to 50 participants, generally correlating to the size of the community, and as described by the CLA, a community is more than simply an interdependent group of people who live in close proximity to one another and rely on each other to provide essential goods and services. In their more global definition, a community refers to any group that shares common interests, goals and affiliations. Community citizens are invited to apply to participate and attempts are made to include both established and emerging leaders and to diversify the class as to profession, gender, race and age. Nearly all programs charge a fee for participation, generally ranging from $200 to $1,000. This fee is most generally paid by the participant's employer, which has been cited as a concern by those who feel self-employed and small business leaders are often under-represented in these programs. The typical program meets one full day per month over a period of nine or ten months and includes issue discussion, guest speakers, field trips to observe specific situations and question and answer sessions with area leaders (Galloway, 1997).

Program Curriculum

Nearly all leadership programs fall into one of two types with regard to curriculum. The first is based on leadership skill development; the second is based on issue discussion and network development. Taylor (1997), compared the two approaches in her study and concluded that either format, when structured properly

and planned accordingly, can provide unique opportunities for program participants. Under either format, participants must work collaboratively, learn from mentors, and think globally and cross-culturally. A skill-based curriculum provides structured and planned experiential activities that provide hands-on practice with collaboration, conflict resolution, appreciating diversity, and making decisions. Issue-based and networking curriculum often offer the same opportunities, however, these programs most often rely on numerous consultants/trainers/speakers from the corporate/business environment and often the issue discussions are driven by guest speakers who are experts on the subject with little opportunity for participants to wrestle with the conflicting values often present in issue-based discussion (Taylor, 1997).

Program Purpose

In looking for the most appropriate curriculum for leadership development programs, Earnest (1996) studied programs in California, Michigan, Montana, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Georgia. In each case, the purpose or goals of the programs were similar. In Colorado, the Colorado Rural Revitalization Project had three goals: 1) to increase broad-based citizen initiative with local problem solving and improvement efforts; 2) to improve citizen's understanding, organization and effectiveness with accomplishing the tasks they set; and 3) to increase the interest, capacity and coordination in state service institutions to better support such citizen efforts (Kincaid & Knop, 1992).

In Georgia, the Georgia Cooperative Extension Service initiated its Community Leadership: A County Perspective Program in response to what they

described as a critical need for leadership. The program objectives were to develop basic leadership skills, identify major issues and concerns that affect a county, understand local government function, improve the quality of life in the county, and help build a solid community leadership base for the county (Langone & Rohs, 1992).

Michigan's Expanding Horizons Community Leadership Development Program had similar objectives, including, awareness of leadership styles and ways to improve organizational functioning, understanding the dynamics of groups and processes of group action, improving self confidence and commitments to participate in community affairs, and improved understanding of the community (Kimball, Andrews, & Quiroz, 1987).

In Ohio, the University/Community Team Leadership Program established goals to develop University and community relationships through which leadership in the many constituencies could be identified; leadership participation in the University/Community activities could be encouraged; cooperative ventures could be increased; and to provide participants with the opportunity to develop team leadership skills (Seely, 1981).

Program Benefits

Over the past 20 years, researchers have separated the beneficiaries of the community leadership programs into two clear groups, the first being the program participants, and the second being the communities that sponsor the programs. Rohs and Langone (1993) clearly make this distinction after looking at Georgia's Community Leadership: A County Perspective program. They reported that those who participated in the program were more confident about promoting causes, better

able to motivate people, and better prepared to make informed decisions on public issues. They also improved their skills associated to working with people, leading a group, and dealing with local leaders. In addition, they also concluded that the county benefited by the strong bond formed among each county's program graduates and their continued activity in community service areas (Rohs & Langone 1993).

Whent and Leising's (1992) 20-year evaluation of the California Agricultural Leadership Program concluded that the majority of benefits were received by the participants. They cited increased personal contacts and interaction with classmates, increased leadership skills, travel experience, interaction with government and agricultural leaders and increased awareness and understanding of other societies and cultures among the primary personal benefits associated with program participation. They went on to say that the program not only positively affected participants' career and leadership development, but it also "improved participants' family and peer relationships and increased their understanding of other societies" (Whent & Leising 1992).

The Evaluation Committee for Washington's Leadership Tomorrow (LT) Program found that participants rather than the community, received the most direct impact of the LT program. Networking opportunities and exposure to issues and individuals were the most frequently mentioned personal impacts (Leadership Tomorrow Evaluation Committee, 1991); however, the committee also reported that 44% of the participants increased their volunteer activity as a result of their involvement in the program.

Kimball's (1987) study of Michigan's expanding Horizons Leadership Development Program reported that participants "rated the programs as helping them gain knowledge of their communities and to understand personal leadership styles and organizational effectiveness." Kimball's follow-up study found that the average involvement in organizations increased per participant from 2.6 to 2.8 organizations 18 months after participating in the program and that program graduates become involved in more government and community service oriented organizations.

As a part of Earnest's (1996) study, interviews were conducted with four leadership development program directors to gain insight into the personal and community benefits attributable to the programs. Teamwork and cooperation were stressed by two of the directors and all agreed that moral, team spirit and communication among co-workers improved tremendously as a result of participation. They also agreed that participants benefited from a greater awareness of their community and their ability to be involved and active participants in the decisions that shape a community's future. Three of the four felt that participants improved their understanding and use of leadership theory and improved their interaction with others. These same directors believed their communities benefited in several ways from the program. Most importantly, there was the increased sense of teamwork. One director commented that participants learned "that we can work better as we work together" (p. 33). Another classified the participants as "a brotherhood of sorts. It's been fascinating to watch some of the relationships that have developed" (p. 33). A second community benefit described by the program directors was the development of local leaders. "Participants felt much more qualified to go out and be

a part of the leadership" (p. 33), stated one director. Communities also found success in addressing and completing community projects. In fact, one director commented that he was having a more difficult time finding community issues or projects to use as teaching opportunities.

Earnest (1996) also met with program alumni focus groups to gather data regarding their perceptions of the personal and community benefits of the programs. Alumni felt the leadership program had improved their ability to communicate and was an excellent opportunity to become acquainted with people in the community who were in leadership positions. In addition they learned about various existing organizations and were able to network with other program participants. They identified a higher awareness of community issues and learned how government officials interact with the public and work together. They were pleased to have gained a better understanding of the business, education, service organizations, government structure and resources available in the community.

The alumni also identify personal traits and skills that were improved by participation in the program including: self-confidence, public speaking, expressing their opinion and being more perceptive and understanding of different leadership and personality styles. The alumni said the program "opened their eyes to different ideas," and made them more aware and sensitive to peoples differences and perspectives. They enjoyed the improved teamwork and better recognized the positive relationship between team building, cooperation, trust, comradery, and group success. One alumnus summed the program benefits by saying, "the leadership program helped me to understand better the way I lead; helped me to look at other people's perspectives;

be open-minded to a broad spectrum of what's going on; and being comfortable when soliciting other people's opinions" (Earnest, 1996, p. 39).

One final personal benefit expressed by the alumni was an increased ability to solve problems. Many alumni commented on the changes they made in their approach to community problem solving. One alumnus commented, "if all of us had this kind of background, we could probably work through a lot of problems better than we do" (Earnest, 1996, p. 41).

In regard to the community benefits of the program, the alumni were unanimous in their belief that the development of community networks and deeper insights into the decision making process would allow the community to make better informed and more accurate decisions (Earnest, 1996).

Post Participation Involvement

Langone and Rohs' (1995) study is one of the few to discuss the extent of alumni activity after participating in a community leadership program and the factors that affected their involvement. In their study, they divide the ways in which alumni continue to participate in community development into five categories.

The first manner in which alumni participate is by conducting leadership classes. Whether for adults or youth, in many cases, alumni put their effort into conducting more community leadership development. Often the target is general adult leadership, however, almost half of the classes sponsored and directed by alumni are focused on special audiences, i.e. agri-business leaders, college students, disabled persons or youth (Langone and Rohs, 1995).

A second popular way to stay active and involved in community leadership is through the development and participation in a leadership program alumni association. These associations served as opportunities for program graduates to refine their skills, network with new graduates, and discuss key community issues and goals while addressing local problems (Langone and Rohs, 1995).

A third popular opportunity for continued involvement is through support of existing organizations. Finding a place within organizations like the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary or Kiwanis Club or church groups was a popular choice among alumni. Yet others, chose a fourth option, which was to create a new community organization. In some cases, organizations like the Chamber of Commerce did not exist and alumni worked together to charter such organizations. Examples of groups created by leadership program alumni include; Clean and Beautiful Commission, Historic Preservation Society, Project Literacy, Sister City Committee, Education Mentor Group, Dropout Prevention Committee, Jaycees, Downtown Merchants' Association, Commission on Children and Youth, Quality Education Committee, Citizens for Fair Government and Tourism Board. Alumni were instrumental in developing the mission statements and by-laws of these new organizations, as well as in the election of officers, recruitment of membership and planning and implementing of activities (Langone and Rohs, 1995).

The final way in which program alumni remained active was through community-based efforts. Many programs reported having alumni who had run for elected office or been appointed to local, regional, state or national boards including the Governor's Drug Commission, the state Industrial Development Authority,

Georgia's Environmental Health Board, and the White House Conference on Small Business (Langone and Rohs, 1995).

Langone and Rohs (1995) also identified five factors that affect alumni involvement. The first was participant selection. They suggested that programs which had aggressively recruited participants were most likely the programs with little or no alumni participation. They even suggested that a community that cannot find enough enthusiastic and interested people may want to reconsider if a leadership program is even worth doing in the first place.

A second factor influencing alumni participation was the length of the program. Participants from several programs reported a need to take a break after the programs to balance their commitments. They felt a need to spend more time with their families, on the job or in other community activities (Langone and Rohs, 1995).

Program design was their third factor influencing continued participation. They believed that the activities presented during the class affected the future role of alumni. "In programs which encouraged class discussion and allowed time to deal with local issues, participants were able to get involved and excited about issues." This interest led to continued involvement after the program. The authors also believed that programs that included goal setting and long-range planning activities encouraged participants to become a part of the on-going process of community development (Langone and Rohs, 1995).

Resources to support alumni activities was the fourth factor cited as impacting continuing involvement while the local political climate was the fifth. Controversial

local issues and an unwillingness of positional leaders to involve citizens were titanic obstacles for program alumni (Langone and Rohs, 1995).

Leadership Oklahoma

Organized in 1986, Leadership Oklahoman is a statewide leadership development program formed "to create a dynamic network of leaders whose increased awareness and commitment to service will energize Oklahomans to shape Oklahoma's future" (Leadership Oklahoma, 2003). Employing the issue discussion and network development curriculum format previously discussed, Leadership Oklahoma hopes to tap into the energies of leaders from throughout the state "to initiate positive change for the benefit of all Oklahomans" (Leadership Oklahoma, 2003). Each year, approximately 50 people are selected from a pool of applicants to participate in the 10 three-day program sessions scheduled for various locations throughout the state. Participants are exposed to many of the state's social and environmental complexities "in order to stimulate inquiry, analysis and independent development of solutions" (Leadership Oklahoma, 2003). Issues covered include: military, criminal justice, human services, education, state government, energy, tourism, healthcare, arts, agriculture, multiculturalism, and rural economic development.

Since the beginning of the program, more than 800 Oklahomans have participated in Leadership Oklahoma. Through completing the program, it is hoped that graduates will develop the knowledge and the relationship network necessary to offer "enlightened perspectives on the challenges and opportunities facing the state" (Leadership Oklahoma, 2003), but Leadership Oklahoma also offers graduates of the

program additional opportunities for continued professional development through a series of graduate programs focused on regional, national and international issues. Through these programs, graduates are encouraged to collaborate with other Leadership Oklahoma members to support common goals and develop solutions to the problems they encounter. Even the program's value statement emphasizes continued effort by urging graduates to challenge the status quo and "play a significant role in helping Oklahoma achieve its ever-growing potential" (Leadership Oklahoma, 2003). Graduates of the program are offered the opportunity to remain active members of the organization through participation on program development and graduate activity committees or as members of the board of directors. The goals of the graduate program include educational and development opportunities in addition to the traditional networking potential associated with graduate events.

In addition to their work with program participants, Leadership Oklahoma also serves as a resource and partner to more than 70 active community leadership programs and 7 specialty programs, including Youth Leadership Oklahoma. Funding for Leadership Oklahoma operations comes from participant tuition, graduate membership dues and corporate sponsorship.

Community Leadership Development Programs Summary

Over the past 30 years, the explosive growth of community based leadership development programs has changed the nature by which effective leadership within a community is being developed. Today, thousands of progressivecommunities have formed broad-based leadership development programs to seek out and educate leaders throughout their community. These leadership programs may differ in sponsorship

and format, but their goals are similar – to create an active network of informed, concerned citizens to guide the future and growth of their community. These programs encourage people to be trustees of their communities, to work for a common good, and to become a leadership resource for the entire community. These programs promote a better understanding of the critical issues facing a community and they encourage a collaborative, consensus building and creative problems solving approach to finding solutions. Whether they are rural townships, major metropolitan areas or entire states, these communities have come to the realization that leadership is most often shared by many individuals at various times depending on the situation and these communities are committed to meeting the challenges of changing demographics, advancing technology, social evolution, and economic fluctuations. Fear et al.(1985) concluded that leadership development programs are critical to the future of communities as they attempt to provide an improved quality of life for their citizens.

Summary of Selected Literature

The literature review was divided into sub-categories for general leadership theory, presidential leadership, and community leadership development programs. The section on general leadership theory discussed the strengths and weaknesses of trait, style, situational, contingency, social exchange, and transactional and transformational leadership theory and how each has been studied and applied within the higher education system. This review led to a more comprehensive examination of the role and responsibilities of the college or university president. This section looked at the history and development of the position and the unique expectations

associated with leading an academic organization. It described the characteristics of the people who hold the position and the types of leadership styles that have been employed in the role. The final section focused on the development and goals of community leadership development programs. The section included a review of what constitutes a typical program, what types of curriculum are used, the intended purposes of the programs, the personal and community benefits that have been assigned to the programs, and how program alumni have used their experiences.

In the research discussed throughout this chapter, some common themes have surfaced, and the purpose of this research has emerged. Today's college and university presidents are expected to lead incredibly complex organizations toward the attainment of several ambiguous goals. Presidents are expected to provide a high quality and relevant educational experience for thousands of individual students, work with their local and statewide communities to foster economic and cultural development and preside over a workforce of independent researchers to develop a useful expansion of collective knowledge. To accomplish this, they must employ a variety of leadership styles and incorporate a vast collection of personal skills. The opportunity to develop some of these necessary skills and create a network of professional contemporaries from which to develop practical solutions to shared problems is a powerful reason for college and university presidents to consider participating in a community leadership development program. The literature review has indicted that the possibility for mutual benefits does exist.

Chapter three will discuss in detail the objective of this research and the method that will be employed to study the relationship between college and university presidents and community leadership development programs.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitativestudy is to describe the experiences of four regional university presidents and explore the value each of them place on their participation and involvement with the Leadership Oklahoma program. This research will then compare those lived experiences to determine if the participants share similar experiences and judgments of the program. Specifically, the researcher will conduct in-depth interviews with the four men who satisfy the criteria outlined by the research question in hopes of identifying examples of how these presidents have drawn on their Leadership Oklahoma experience and to see if they perceive the Leadership Oklahoma program as a continuing source of support in addressing the challenges of leading a regional university. The fundamental question to be addressed by the study can be expressed as follows: How do regional university presidents perceive the value of their Leadership Oklahoma experience? The study will be based on these research questions:

1. What is the Leadership Oklahoma experience among four of Oklahoma's regional university presidents?
2. Do Oklahoma's regional university presidents perceive their Leadership Oklahoma experience to have value within the context of their professional position?

This chapter will include information on the qualitative research method employed in this study, describe the phenomenological approach and present an

explanation of why it was chosen. It will also provide a more detailed description of the research participants and the data collection process. Finally, Chapter 3 will conclude with a discussion of the data analysis process.

Background of the Study

The research proposed in this study is grounded in the education discipline and focuses on the enduring need to develop qualified, talented, and prepared leaders for all higher education institutions. Due to the continuing evolution in the role and responsibilities of university presidents, society must be concerned with developing people who possess the necessary skills and knowledge to lead our institutions of higher learning through the coming decades of this young century. One component of this professional development may come from community leadership development programs which are a relatively new, yet promising, approach to introducing community leaders to the issues, concerns and problems contained within their community. This research was designed to study the relationship between the college presidency and Leadership Oklahoma and to examine whether participating in the state-wide leadership development program would be a wise investment of time and resources.

This study is exploratory in nature and employs a qualitative, phenomenological approach. The research was designed to identify as yet unclear relationships and outcomes. A qualitative study in this instance is appropriate given the unknown relationship between regional university presidents and Leadership Oklahoma. More important, this qualitative research may identify possible variables that could simplify the design of future survey based studies.

Research Design

Qualitative research implies "an emphasis on processes and meanings that are not measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). As Merriam (1998) explains, qualitative research is designed to allow researchers to better understand, interpret or explain the social and personal characteristics associated with an event, process or phenomenon, by taking the researcher into the natural setting and using the thoughts, experiences and perspectives of the people involved. While quantitative research attempts to isolate individual components or aspects of a phenomenon so that they can be studied, qualitative research attempts to rise above the level of individual aspects and view and understand how all the components come together to create the phenomenon being studied (Merriam, 1998). In fact, most qualitative projects are designed to discover and understand a phenomenon through the perspective of those involved. The results typically result in the identification of recurring patterns that can be identified across all the data (Merriam, 1998). Building on these concepts, Yin (1994) affirms the utility of a qualitative approach to investigate contemporary phenomena when the phenomena and context may not be clear, and when there are many possible variables of interest deriving from multiple sources of evidence. He suggests that for "how" and "why" questions, qualitative research has a distinct advantage. Using the phenomenological method of qualitative analysis to investigate how regional university presidents perceive the value of their Leadership Oklahoma experience will allow the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the Leadership Oklahoma program and how graduates who serve as university presidents have been able to

apply these experiences to their role. By providing a better understanding of how participants have employed the benefits of the program to their position, this project will help current and future college presidents understand what they can gain from participation in Leadership Oklahoma.

The qualitative approach allows the researcher to conduct the study with the intent of acquiring or receiving knowledge rather than bringing his or her preconceived knowledge or biases to the study. Patton (1990) refers to this element of qualitative research as an inductive process that allows the important dimensions or essences of the phenomenon to emerge from patterns found in the cases studied. To accomplish this assumptionless creation of knowledge about the phenomenon being studied, the researcher must set aside or bracket their prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas about the phenomenon. Osborne (1994) described bracketing as identifying one's presuppositions about the nature of the phenomena and then attempting to set them aside to see the phenomena as it really is. Such an approach to conducting research allows for the reality of the participants' lives to emerge from the data, and requires the researcher to remain flexible with the interrelatedness of the qualitative research elements. Patton (1990) concludes that this inductive design allows "the important analysis dimension to emerge from patterns found in the cases under study without presupposing in advance what the important dimensions will be" (p. 44).

This research paradigm was invoked to attempt to understand the experiences of four regional university presidents and explore the value each of them place on their participation and involvement with the Leadership Oklahoma program. In order

to understand this relationship, four university presidents will be interviewed and themes will be extracted from their individual input. Common experiences and themes will then be synthesized to produce an essence of the phenomenon. This form of data analysis is central to the phenomenological methodology.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is essentially the study of a lived experience of the "life world" as lived by a person. The methodology requires the researcher to venture into the world of the participants and retrieve data from the participants through in-depth interviews, to analyze the data and then to describe the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). Developed by Edmund Husserl in the early 1900's as a philosophic system rooted in subjective openness, phenomenology is concerned with the discovery of meanings and essences in knowledge (Moustakas, 1994). Husserl believed that the essence or experience with an object constituted a person's reality with it; therefore, to truly gain new knowledge, researchers must study the person's experience with the object rather than the object itself. Moustakas (1994) states, "Husserl's transcendental phenomenology emphasizes subjectivity and the discovery of the essences of experience and provides a systematic and disciplined methodology for derivation of knowledge" (p. 45).

In phenomenology, the researcher attempts to examine people's lives from their point of view. By allowing subjects to reflect on their experiences and to express them as central to how they live their lives, phenomenologists hope to generate or create new knowledge. This is accomplished through what Husserl defined as intersubjectivity. Lauer (1967) described the central definition of intersubjectivity as

the method through which the experiences of others become accessible to me. Empathy, he described, is an intentional category comprising my experience of others' experiences. Farber (1943) contended that, by analogy, others' experiences become present to me to the extent that they enter my consciousness, and are co-present to me.

Using this understanding or definition of knowledge, researchers believe that it is possible for people to learn about and experience a phenomenon by incorporating the experiences of others into their consciousness. To accomplish this goal, phenomenological researchers must create thick, rich descriptions of the experiences so that the important or meaningful aspects of the experience can be transferred from the subject of the study to the reader of the research. Merriam (1998) defines rich, thick description as "providing enough description so that readers will be able to determine how closely their situations match the research situation, and hence, whether findings can be transferred" (p. 211).

Methodology

The main research tool employed to reveal the lived experience of the regional university president was the interview. In fact, the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee is a significant part of this research project, making it a shared work in which there is a possibility of discovering something through collaboration that was not previously known (Yow, 1994). Learning about the university presidency and the Leadership Oklahoma experience from those who have been there was the goal of this study.

In a phenomenological study, the researcher becomes an essential part of the study (Bogdan & Bilkin, 1998, Langenbach et al., 1994). Therefore, the capabilities of the researcher become an important issue. Prior to this study, the researcher had worked 13 years as a public relations and advancement professional at two regional universities in Oklahoma: Southeastern Oklahoma State University and Northeastern State University. During this time, he had worked directly with one of the study participants and had developed a friendly working relationship with the other three participants. The researcher currently works at Northeastern State University and is a direct report to the president of the institution. He shares an office suite with the president and interacts with the president on a daily basis. Contact with two of the other three presidents is infrequent, but generally takes place during meetings of the Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges. The fourth president and the researcher were both working at SOSU at the same time but have had a limited number of contacts over the past seven years. Because of his professional interest in and contact with university presidents, the research questions were of particular interest to the researcher. This interest and background in the real world of the university presidency assisted him as he led the interviews and collected other data.

A limitation of the study may be the inability of the researcher to "bracket" out preconceived ideas (Langenbach et al., 1994). In addition to his experiences and knowledge of the university presidency, reviewing the literature prior to the interviews could also hinder researcher interpretation. On the other hand, the life experiences of the researcher should assist in gaining a holistic overview of the phenomenon under study, and in knowing what questions to ask during the in-depth

interviews. Therefore, personal experiences may be seen as a value rather than a limitation to the research, because it is easier to understand the lived experience of the university president if the researcher has had the opportunity to witness the president on a day-to-day basis. However, along with the value of the researcher having a knowledge base of the university presidency, it is important that he set aside his preconceived ideas regarding the university presidency and the Leadership Oklahoma experience.

A phenomenological study has a limited number of participants and requires the researcher to conduct in-depth interviews and in depth analysis to be able to report and illustrate the themes with rich descriptions and quotations. The sample, therefore, is small yet directed in purpose. Data can be compared across the sample but is not generalizable to the entire population of regional university presidents or Leadership Oklahoma graduates.

Selection of Participants

After reviewing the Leadership Oklahoma alumni listings, it became evident that it would be useful to focus on one type of higher education institution: comprehensive, regional, or community college. In reviewing the literature on college and university presidents, the researcher found a clear delineation between presidents serving at four year universities and presidents serving two-year or community colleges. This differentiation in the research focused on the different expectations, responsibilities and goals of the institutions and how these differences affected the leadership responsibility of the president. Because the reviewed literature tended to group comprehensive and regional university presidents together and community

college presidents differently, the researcher chose to focus on Oklahoma's regional university presidents. The participants were all public regional university presidents who had graduated from the Leadership Oklahoma program. Participants were initially contacted through a written request describing the research project and informing them that their participation was voluntary. A follow-up phone call was used to establish a meeting time and place. After establishing a meeting time, the researcher used the individual university's web sites to collect demographic data and background information on each of the participants. All four are Caucasian males and have each been employed in higher education for more than 25 years. Two serve in the northeastern part of the state, one in central Oklahoma and one in western Oklahoma. Their length of service as college presidents varies from a high of 25 years, to a low of four years. Two of the four have been presidents of more than one regional institution and three of the four attended and graduated from regional institutions in Oklahoma. Two ascended to the presidency through the higher education administration ranks, one through an academic pathway and one was appointed from outside higher education. Two participated in the Leadership Oklahoma program before they became presidents and two participated after they were selected for the presidency. All were in separate Leadership Oklahoma classes, but attended and graduated in consecutive years.

Like the institutions they lead, these four men have many similarities and some obvious differences. Yet they are each charged with the responsibility of developing their institutions in a way that meets the needs of the students and the communities they serve. They are responsible for producing graduates that are

qualified and capable of being productive and contributing members of the general society and the State of Oklahoma.

Data Collection

Each university president related his experience in an in-depth interview that was one to one and one-half hours in length. The interviews were recorded and took place within a one month time frame. Two were conducted during a meeting of the Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges, and two were conducted in the president's office. Each of the participants was asked not to discuss the content of the interview until all had participated. The researcher explained that the content of the interviews and the identities of the participants could remain confidential, but each president agreed to allow the researcher to use their name in conjunction with their statements.

The Interview

The phenomenological interview is centered on the participant's presentation of the material as spontaneously as possible; therefore, the researcher must be very clear about the questions he intends to ask (van Manen, 1990). Poorly developed questions can fail to help the participant being interviewed reveal the phenomenon being examined and/or the poor question can elicit too much or useless information about the phenomenon. Osborn (1993) reminds researchers that being overly intrusive with questions can prevent the individual from presenting the phenomenon in an authentic or spontaneous manner. Packer and Addison (1989) conclude, therefore, that carefully designed and articulated questions will result in a narrative about the experience of the person, and this narrative can then be used as the text of human action and experience from which the researcher interprets understanding of the

phenomenon. While the researcher had a list of questions to use, the interviews each became a jointly-held discussion on the presidents' experiences both as a college president and as a participant in the Leadership Oklahoma program. This approach is in line with Marshall and Rossman's (1989) conclusion that although there may be some structured questions, it is the responsibility of the interviewer to let the participant reveal his or her experience with the phenomenon being examined. The interviews were then transcribed and prepared for the data analysis portion of the research project.

Data Analysis

The goal of data analysis in qualitative research is to make sense out of the information extracted during the interviews. This step-by-step process involves identifying topics or categories of information that are recurring themes among the data sets. The challenge, according to Merriam, "is to construct categories or themes that capture some recurring pattern that cuts across the preponderance of the evidence" (Merriam, 1998, p.179). Phenomenological data analysis accomplishes this by following three important steps: Epoche, reduction, and structural synthesis.

The beginning point of data analysis was bracketing, or setting aside all prejudgments. This process, also referred to as the epoche (Moustakas, 1994), requires the researcher to set aside his former experiences, and causes him to rely on intuition and imagination to gain an understanding of the university presidency and the Leadership Oklahoma experience (Cresswell, 1998). This ability, to look and see experiences as if for the first time, is a key step to phenomenological data analysis and assures the validity and soundness of the methodology.

The next step in the phenomenological research model was to move beyond the everyday thinking about the presidential and Leadership Oklahoma experience and consider the information the participants shared. This viewing of the participant's personal and professional landscapes in a new way is called transcendental phenomenological reduction. Reduction is the process by which the researcher reduces the phenomenon to its most authentic essence; it is the act of describing the experience in textual language (Moustakas, 1994). By isolating the phenomenon in its purest form, the researcher can then begin to explain and describe the knowledge gained from thatexperience . The reduction process consists of viewing the data over and over again extracting the most relevant experiences, each time being sure to bracket out our previous experience with it in an effort to see it and experience it in a new way. At the beginning every statement is given equal value, but with each new experience, the researcher is able to reduce or eliminate statements that are irrelevant to the topic. This leaves only the experiences or essences that truly describe the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). According to Moustakas (1994), the challenge of phenomenological reduction "is the construction of a complete textural description of the experience" (p. 96). Such a description is the result of beginning with an epoche and going through a process of returning to the data in a state of openness and clear seeing that leads to deeper layers of meaning. This organized and systematic approach to uncovering the nature and meaning of experience is what enables the experiencing person to gain a self-knowledge of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

As the data analysis took place, some of the statements began to stand out as qualities of the experience that did not vary between participants and these statements

began to cluster into themes, so that the researcher could do two things: create an integrated description of these similar textural themes of each individual research participant; and create an integrated description of the group by using those individual textural descriptions. These clustered ideas were what was left over after reduction and elimination of overlapping, repetitive and vague thoughts. At that point, the clustered ideas were grouped into thematic labels, which were the core themes of the experience.

The final step in phenomenological data analysis is "the integration of the fundamental textural and structural descriptions into a unified statement of the essences of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 100) or structural synthesis. Essence, as Husserl employed the concept, refers to that which is common or universal to all who experience the phenomenon - the most basic or fundamental qualities of a phenomenon that make it what it is. The development of structural synthesis is accomplished by first examining the phenomena within persons and then across persons to develop themes, clusters of themes and finally a synthesis of the participants experiences revealing a true meaning of the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998; Osborne, 1994; Patton, 1990). This final synthesis may not correspond directly with each of the participants' experiences; however, it should fit or make sense to each of the participants (Osborn, 1994). This test of "goodness of fit" is an important component of the validity of the research. In order to provide the highest possible levels of research validity, several strategies were used to enhance the possibility that the results could be applied to other situations. First, the research includes a rich, thick description of the people and programs studied so readers can

find similarities with their own situation. Second, each of the participants had the opportunity to review their transcribed interview and provide any clarifying comments or descriptions they felt were necessary. Finally, each of the research subjects had the opportunity to review the results of the data analysis to determine if the reduction and synthesis produced a description of the phenomenon that is in line with their experience.

Summary

In summary, this study described the experiences of four regional university presidents and explored the value each of them place on their participation and involvement with the Leadership Oklahoma program using a transcendental phenomenological design. Using this method of qualitative analysis allowed the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the Leadership Oklahoma program and how graduates who serve as university presidents have been able to apply these experiences to their role. Data analysis, using the processes of bracketing and phenomenological reduction provided insight into the lived experience of a regional university president and how they perceive their participation in the Leadership Oklahoma program. The results of this analysis are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

Results

Introduction

This chapter explores the results of interviews with the four study participants. As discussed earlier, the purpose of this study was to describe the experiences of four regional university presidents and explore the value each of them place on their participation and involvement with the Leadership Oklahoma program. The previous chapter described the transcendental phenomenological research method that was employed in this study. This approach to qualitative research allows the researcher to gain a better understanding, of the social and personal characteristics associated with an event, process or phenomenon, using the thoughts, experiences and perspectives of the people involved. This research paradigm was invoked to understand the experiences of four regional university presidents and explore the value each of them place on their participation and involvement with the Leadership Oklahoma program. Each of the four university presidents was interviewed and the data was analyzed to produce the essence of the phenomenon.

After analyzing the data, the researcher was able to identify five common themes of the presidential experience and participation in Leadership Oklahoma. These five themes were identified by the consistency and agreement of the responses across allth e interviews. These five themes included:

1. The leadership role of the university president;
2. The personal satisfaction associated with the university presidency;

3. The most important personal characteristics of university presidents;
4. The perceived benefits of participation in the Leadership Oklahoma (LOK) program; and
5. The examples of how the LOK experience has been incorporated into the presidential role.

Each of these areas will be discussed independently in this chapter.

Profiles of Study Participants

Each of the presidents who participated in the study was selected using purposeful or criterion sampling techniques. Merriam (1998) describes purposeful sampling as the most useful when the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight. "Therefore, the researcher must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (p. 61). LeCompte and Preissle (1993) suggest that the best approach to accomplishing this goal is to create a list of the attributes or criteria that are essential to the study and then progress to finding a unit or subject matching the criteria (p. 70).

Because each of the subjects in this study agreed to the public disclosure of their participation, it will be helpful to provide a profile of each president and his current institution before examining their responses.

Roger Webb at the University of Central Oklahoma

Having served in the role for more than 26 years, President Webb is the longest serving university president included in this study. He served as the president of Northeastern State University from 1978 through 1997 before being named the nineteenth president of the University of Central Oklahoma in July 1997. Prior to

being named president of NSU, he served as the Oklahoma Commissioner of Public Safety from 1974 to 1978. President Webb is a graduate of Heavener High School, Oklahoma State University and the University of Oklahoma College of Law. At the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO), President Webb oversees Oklahoma's largest regional university with headcount enrollment exceeding 14,000 students.

Located near Oklahoma City in Edmond, Oklahoma, UCO employs more than 400 full-time faculty members and offers more than 90 degree programs in five undergraduate colleges and more than 40 graduate degree programs. Originally established by the Oklahoma Territorial Legislature on December 20, 1890 as the Territorial Normal School in Edmond, the fundamental purpose of the school was to train teachers. On March 11, 1941, Central State became part of the coordinated state system of post-secondary education overseen by the Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education, and joined institutions with similar missions as a "regional institution."

Larry Williams at Northeastern State University

President Williams has served as a university president for more than 17 years, serving as the president of Southeastern Oklahoma State University from 1987 through 1997 before being named the fifteenth president of Northeastern State University. A native Oklahoman, President Williams graduated from Cushing High School and received his Bachelor of Science and Master of Business Administration degrees from the University of Central Oklahoma before earning a Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma. Prior to being named president at SOSU, he served in numerous administrative positions at Oklahoma State University and the University of Central Oklahoma, including as the vice president for administration at UCO from

1980 through 1987. At Northeastern State University, President Williams oversees Oklahoma's second largest regional university with headcount enrollment exceeding 9,500 students. NSU employs more than 300 full-time faculty members and more than 1,000 people at the main campus in Tahlequah.

The University offers more than 70 degree programs in four undergraduate colleges, 18 graduate degree programs and one of only 15 Doctor of Optometry programs in the United States. Established in 1851 as the Cherokee National Female Seminary, NSU became a part of the state system of higher education in 1909 as Northeastern Normal School with a purpose of preparing teachers for the classroom. Today, NSU is a complex, regional university serving students throughout northeastern Oklahoma with campuses in Tahlequah, Muskogee and Broken Arrow.

Joe Wiley at Rogers State University

Dr. Joe A. Wiley became President of Rogers State University on January 1, 1999. Previous to his appointment at RSU, Dr. Wiley served as Executive Vice President and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Southeastern Oklahoma State University (SEOSU) from 1990 to 1998 and also served as the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and as a Professor and Chairman of the Department of Computer Science at SEOSU. A native Oklahoman, Dr. Wiley received a doctoral degree in mathematics from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville in 1979. He completed a Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Computer Science at the University of Colorado at Boulder in 1981. He received a Master of Science degree from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville in 1974 and a Bachelor of Science degree from Southeastern Oklahoma State University in 1972. At Rogers State University,

President Wiley guides the fastest growing university in Oklahoma with a total of 3,302 students at campuses in Claremore, Bartlesville, and Pryor, Oklahoma.

Established in 1909 as a University Preparatory School designed to prepare Native American students for college, the school was closed briefly before being reopened in 1919 as the Oklahoma Military Academy. In 1971, the Oklahoma Legislature replaced the OMA with Claremore Junior College which became Rogers State College until 1998 when the school was granted permission to create and seek accreditation for its own four-year bachelor's degrees, while continuing to offer two-year associate's degrees. President Wiley has led the university during this transition. Today, RSU offers bachelor's degrees in applied technology, biology, business administration, business information technology, liberal arts, and social science as well as associate's degrees in a wide variety of disciplines.

John Hays at Southwestern Oklahoma State University

President Hays serves as the 16th president of Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford, Oklahoma. He is a two time graduate of the school he now leads, completing both his accounting degree and his Masters of Education degree at SWOSU. President Hays went on to earn a Ed.D. in higher education administration from the University of Oklahoma. Prior to being named President in July of 2001, he had served the university as assistant business manager, comptroller, assistant to the president, vice president for administration and as the executive vice president for administration. President Hays is an active member of the Weatherford community serving on numerous boards, committees and councils.

Established by the Oklahoma Territorial Legislature in 1901, Southwestern Normal School was authorized to offer two years of training and four years of preparatory work for students who were not qualified for college admission. In 1920, the preparatory or academy courses were eliminated and two additional years of college work were added. In 1941, the school became the Southwestern Institute of Technology when the college added a School of Pharmacy, degree work in the arts and sciences, and trade schools to its original function as a teacher-training institution, and by 1949 the Oklahoma State Legislature positioned Southwestern as a part of the coordinated state system of post-secondary education overseen by the Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education, and identified the campus as a "regional institution." Today, Southwestern serves more than 4,700 students and employs more than 115 full-time faculty members in 3 colleges, including the professional College of Pharmacy. The university offers more than 75 bachelors and masters degree programs as well as a variety of associate degree and applied science degrees at the Sayre branch campus.

The Leadership Role of the University President

Each of the participants in the study began their interview with a general discussion about their understanding of the role of a college president. Although each president discussed different expectations, there was unanimity on the need for the university president to provide a clear direction for the campus and a strong vision for the future of the university. They agreed that while the mission and function of the university may be or may have been established by the governing boards, it is the role of the president to create an environment, or set a campus climate where those

objectives can be met. President Wiley expressed this leadership expectation in the following statement:

> Different institutions have different values, and the role of the president is to lead the institution toward achieving that set of goals and objectives. Each institution has determined what the student's educational experience should be, if that involves athletics, then you need to lead that. It may involve other things depending upon the culture and the mission of the institution. So, in its simplest form, the president's role is to make sure the university's mission that has been established by its governing board and the function that is established by the state regents is carried out effectively.

Accomplishing this objective requires the president to be engaged and involved with the day to day activities of the university. Each of the presidents expressed this sentiment during their interview and described their institutions as moving and changing organizations capable of being led. President Williams related his experience in leading a campus to driving a car:

> I think it's like driving a car in many respects. You can tell when something is pulling the car to the right or to the left, when the engine isn't as responsive when you accelerate or the brakes are not as responsive when you're trying to slow down. You may not always be the mechanic or know exactly what is causing the lack of responsiveness but I don't think there's any doubt that you can feel it.

> I think you feel it day in, and day out. You feel it at ten o'clock in the morning and you feel it at two o'clock in the morning, at three o'clock in the morning. You sit up nights; you lay awake in bed, wondering how you're going to get this thing just where you think it ought to be.

In describing their leadership role during their interviews, each of the participants focused on the challenges they face and how these challenges shaped their leadership agenda. The discussion of these challenges provided several examples of the leadership a campus demands. The comparison of these reflections found the presidents to be unanimous in their description of two areas that are significant challenges to them in the performance of their job. The first is a general lack of funding. The second is a growing number of external constituencies that demand both time and attention.

Each president commented on two areas related to funding and the frustration of not having the resources necessary to meet the growing list of demands. One area that received repeated comments was the difficulty associated with allocating limited resources on campuses where need always exceeded the available budgets. President Wiley summed up his frustration in the following statement:

> There does not appear to be a real good understanding of how critical the need is for just basic operational dollars on these campuses. I'm not talking only about the three years of cuts that we've had the last three years. If you go back over a fifteen-year period, you see a lessening of the state's commitment to higher education throughout

> that period of time. I spend a lot of time trying to determine where the limited funds that we can spend will have the most impact.

The leadership challenge of prioritizing the needs and allocating adequate resources to properly fix the problems was clearly a daily challenge for the participants. As President Webb noted, "Trying to decide how you allocate resources equitably and fairly and where they will have the most positive benefit is a major challenge for college presidents."

The second area related to funding that was a consistent theme among the participants was the growing need to become more involved in university efforts to raise funds from private sources. President Williams explains:

> More so today than even ten years ago – you have to spend more and more time on development issues and networking. Not in the chamber of commerce sense of networking, but trying to figure out ways to get additional resources for the institution so you can provide the faculty and the students with what they need to do what they do best. Funding is a critical need of every campus.

This expanding leadership role for university presidents requires them to be not only actively engaged in fund-raising events but also involved in setting the goals, direction, and focus of development campaigns. This increasing demand for leadership in the fund-raising efforts of the university was just one of several concerns the presidents listed when they discussed the growing demands on their time. While the presidents appeared to expect and enjoy the on-campus constituencies that require their time, they expressed frustration

with the growing list of external constituencies that had claims on their schedules. President Hays explains:

> The biggest challenge is dealing with the amount of external relationships that you have to deal with. As president, I've been more involved in external fund raising, made more presentations, delivered more speeches, had more contact with legislators, and enjoyed more contact with the regents than in any other position I've held. Added to that are the overwhelming number of community involvement activities that are made available to you and you can see that it becomes very time consuming. You really have to decide which community activities you want to be involved in because you can't do them all, there's just too many.

President Webb, the longest serving president, agreed with this assessment of the external constituencies:

> There have always been some social requirements and obligations associated with being the president both from within the institution and from the community, but there is a growing number of constituencies out there that are making claims on your time. Days, evenings and weekends, nothing is out-of-bounds. And that has been increasing through the years.

The collective experiences of the participants in this study appear to suggest that regional university presidents define their most important function as the responsibility to provide an agenda or vision for the university's future and create a

campus climate or culture that drives the institution toward those objectives that have been prescribed to it by the governing boards. The challenges to accomplishing this goal, which include a lack of sufficient resources and a growing number of external constituencies, provide the arena where presidential leadership is tested.

The Personal Satisfaction Associated with the University Presidency

In addition to the expectations and challenges that accompany the university presidency, the participants in this study independently agreed that presidents are often afforded many benefits by both the campus community and the general public. However, they shared the belief that the greatest benefit comes from knowing that the work they do makes a difference in people's lives. President Hays described "student success" as the most significant benefit. President Wiley said the number one benefit is "seeing the impact you have on their (students) lives," and President Williams offered this description:

> I can't tell you in any way how rewarding it is when you get a telephone call from someone you helped four, six, twelve, or sixteen years ago. That is the biggest benefit, the opportunity to help people; the opportunity to know that the things you're doing today make a difference next year and the following year, and the year after that.

In addition to the opportunity to see their students do well, each of the presidents referred to the opportunity to be involved in the unique environment of a university campus as a special benefit of the position. President Webb illustrated the shared sentiment:

> Campuses are special places and to have the opportunity to be a part of the educational process and live in a learning environment like this, that's an enormous benefit. There are people who spend a lifetime never feeling that good about where they are or what they are doing. Knowing that the work being done on your campus, the work that you're doing individually and that we are all doing collectively has meaning and will have some lasting impact is a great benefit of the job.

Beyond these abstract benefits, the participants also understood that the presidential position comes with tangible and intangible benefits, regardless of the person who holds the position. Tickets to campus events, university branded apparel, invitations to community events and social engagements are among the common tangible perks of the job. As President Williams described:

> If there's something in a community that you want to be a part of or a board of directors you want to be on, all you have to do is just drop a hint and you're on; it's just as simple as that.

While each of the presidents expressed these community service opportunities as benefits of the position, each also cautioned that all presidents must also consider these as challenges of the position. Determining the extent to which they can and should participate in activities beyond the context of their role as the university president was a question each of the participants struggled to answer. As President Wiley concluded:

> It would be possible to spend all of your time being involved in community activities. You could become a full-time community volunteer instead of

> working at the university. But in addition to the time that it takes, you must also consider how successful or engaged you can be before you agree to serve. If you participate, but don't function well or meet the expectations of the community, you can diminish the respect that you, the presidential position and the institution hold in the eyes of the people.

In addition to these tangible benefits, there are also intangible benefits bestowed on the presidents which President Williams most succinctly described:

> In many instances, people treat you differently; a lot of people are intimidated by you as an institutional president. It is a position that, generally speaking, comes with a lot of power. I mean certain recognition, certain power, and certain assumption of power or knowledge. So we're afforded a lot of consideration that we probably should not be afforded, just as we are afforded a lot of criticism that we probably have not earned.

Despite the concerns expressed about some of the benefits, each of the presidents considered the benefits of the position to be both personally and professionally meaningful. They believed that many of the benefits would allow them to do their jobs better and provide the students they serve today and the students who will attend their universities in the future with a more meaningful experience and a better opportunity for success.

The Important Characteristics for University Presidents

During the interview process, each of the presidents was asked to describe the personal characteristics or traits that they believe are necessary for someone to be

successful in the position. Their responses were relatively narrow in focus and contained many overlapping or similar characteristics, including intelligence and formal education. They also agreed that experience in higher education, while not mandatory, was beneficial. Beyond these fairly predictable characteristics, the presidents also agreed on the two personal characteristics they felt were most important. The first was the ability to make decisions. President Webb answered this most directly when he said:

> Ultimately, you have to make decisions. You avoid those decisions at your peril. They eat away at you and eventually, everyone is unhappy. You walk a fine line between waiting to get all the information and avoiding or stalling the issue. I think the sooner you make your decision, after you have the facts you believe are relevant, the better. You have to make your decision and go on to other things rather than carry it around in your mind.

President Williams' response contained the same sentiment with a word of caution:

> I think you have to be calm and decisive but you have to also be sensitive to what your decisions do and how they impact the various constituencies that they're directed toward. I think the ability to make a decision is good, but I think the ability to make the right decision at the right time is better.

The second characteristic that each of the participants agreed was one of the two most important for university presidents to possess, was the ability to act with integrity and to adhere to a high level of moral and ethical standards. President Hays described integrity as the number one characteristic while President Wiley described

integrity as the only way for a president to maintain a recognizable course of action and gain the trust and support of others. He concluded:

> You have to have a strong sense of the values from which you operate because the ethical dilemmas are a daily challenge. Almost every day there is some sort of ethical or moral issue you are faced with and if you are not strong enough in your convictions and willing to make the difficult decisions that benefit the institution rather than yourself or others, you are going to create problems. Problems that you will not be able to overcome and problems that will hurt the university for a long time.

While there are clearly no personal or physical characteristics that can be used to determine who will and will not be successful as a university president, it was clear from the similar responses of the participants that experience in the job brings an appreciation for certain qualities and skills that are demanded. The ability to make decisions and adhere to a set of moral and ethical standards that place the institution above personal gain were characteristics that emerged as a theme of the study. This information has served as an introduction to the goal of this study, which is to analyze these individuals' perceptions of the value of participation in Leadership Oklahoma in meeting the leadership demands of their position.

In chapter three, the fundamental question to be addressed by the study was expressed as: How do regional university presidents perceive the value of their Leadership Oklahoma experience? To determine the answer, the study was based on these research questions:

1. What is the Leadership Oklahoma experience among Oklahoma's regional university presidents?
2. Do Oklahoma's regional university presidents perceive their Leadership Oklahoma experience to have value within the context of their professional position?

The following two sections discuss the themes that emerged from the individual interviews regarding these questions.

Leadership Oklahoma – Perceptions and Associated Benefits

In their interviews, each of the presidents was complimentary of the Leadership Oklahoma program and expressed a genuine appreciation for their experience as a program participant. They were consistent in their descriptions of the program and in their recollection of the program design and program objectives. As they related their individual stories, several common experiences emerged and the unanimous agreement and remarkable similarities contained within these descriptions provided a high degree of confidence that the core Leadership Oklahoma experience had been captured.

The unanimous perception among the presidents was that Oklahoma, as a state, was better off because of the program and that every Leadership Oklahoma participant, regardless of profession, was better prepared to be or become a leader in their community and on a statewide basis. President Williams expressed this belief:

> I think everybody that wants to assume a leadership role can gain a valuable foundation of knowledge about our state and the opportunities that are out there by participating in the program.

Beyond these positive perceptions of the program and the professional advantages that are available to participants, the presidents were in agreement on what they described as the two most important benefits that can be gained from the program. The first benefit was the development of a network of statewide leaders and the second was obtaining a better understanding of the nature and diversity of Oklahoma.

Network Development

The area identified by each of the presidents as the most valuable and longest lasting benefit of the Leadership Oklahoma program was the development of a network of professional contacts throughout Oklahoma who share a concern for the future of the state and are willing to work together on developing solutions to difficult statewide issues. Each of the presidents commented on this benefit of the program:

President Williams explained how the relationships that are built between classmates can be useful in the future:

> Nothing is more important or useful than the network of people you gain. I'd go so far as to say the network of friends that you make when you participate is something very special. Two years, five years, even twenty years down the line these connections are very important and helpful. Sometimes situations come up and you think oh gee, I remember so and so and he was a lawyer with the IRS and I need to understand something about how the IRS works. Now you've got someone you can contact.

Later in the interview, he talked about how valuable the experience has been for him:

> In the years since I've been in Leadership Oklahoma I would venture to say thatI've made no less than a hundred phone calls to people that I was in class

> with or someone that I knew was in class six or class eight. I've been able to pick up the phone, call them and talk to them about a given issue.

President Wiley also considered the networking and relationship building aspect of LOK as the most beneficial. He talked about the relationships that are developed through the program's year-long schedule describing them as "close personal friendships," and described how the LOK connection transcends the particular class a person is in and extends to other graduates of the program. He explained how "as you meet graduates of the program from other classes, you have an instant connection with them and a genuine appreciation for what they can bring to the table."

In discussing the benefits associated with building a network of friends through LOK, President Hays provided some insight into how this network could be valuable to a regional university president:

> There are probably dozens of examples of how this experience has benefited me in my role. It's hard to remember specifically but at a school our size the president has a relationship with the deans and associate deans and they might mention that they're trying to do something, like bring in a guest speaker or develop a new degree program. When you hear these ideas, you can call on your LOK associates. You may have someone that's perfect for the accounting class or has some ideas about the things that should be included in a new course or degree. It's great to be able to bring that perspective to campus and use it to improve your campus.

President Webb's comments were agreeable with the other participants when he stated, "the opportunity to get to know a lot of people from different walks of life and different parts of our state is a benefit that you can take and use for many, many years." In addition, he offered an optimistic view about how this network of leaders will impact Oklahoma in the future:

> There have been nearly nine hundred or so graduates of Leadership Oklahoma since it started. Another ten years and there could be maybe two thousand graduates, I mean that's a pretty powerful number of people that could accomplish a lot for Oklahoma. I think Oklahoma, as a state, is better off because of it. And will be in the future. This is a group of people who when they come together, with a focus, can get things done legislatively and otherwise.

Although the presidents did not provide a large number of specific examples of how they have been able to utilize the network of individuals they developed during their LOK experience for the benefit of their university, the presidents were unanimous in their opinion that the networking opportunities provided by LOK were among the most important benefits available to participants. They believed that the broad spectrum of experiences, ideas, and professions included in the LOK class, created an opportunity to expand their thinking and challenge their opinions on issues facing the state. This knowledge of Oklahoma's diversity, in both demographics and physical nature, proved to be another common theme.

Knowledge of Oklahoma's Diversity

Each of the participants in this study are native Oklahomans, however, several discussed how the meeting schedule, which included meetings in different parts of the state, allowed them to see parts of the state they had never seen and discuss issues they had never considered. As President Webb described:

> By meeting in different locations, it was informative and educational in that people from eastern Oklahoma generally know very little about western Oklahoma and the issues that are important to them. So you learn the geography and history of Oklahoma in a very effective way.

President Wiley extended this idea beyond the physical features of Oklahoma to include the diversity of the state's population:

> I learned a lot about this state that I didn't know. Even though I am a native Oklahoman, I learned a lot about the people of this state. Leadership Oklahoma provided a good introduction to the geographical diversity that exists in this state. But beyond that, I also gained a better understanding of the diversity of people who make things happen. You realize that we all want the same thing, but there is tremendous diversity of thought as to how we can improve Oklahoma.

President Williams also discussed this exposure to an array of different socioeconomic and political views during his participation in the program when he said:

> I think one of the really, true benefits of Leadership Oklahoma is bringing together a collection of people, democrats, republicans, and independents, that

> all come out with a new understanding of Oklahoma and the issues we face as a state. I think participants go away with a more comprehensive understanding of the state of Oklahoma and a belief that we are all trying to move forward in a positive direction.

This exposure to different people and different philosophies with regard to social and political issues provided the participants with an appreciation of how people approach and solve similar problems differently. Each of the presidents expressed, in similar ways, that they had learned to be more open minded on statewide issues by seeing this diversity in action. President Williams expressed how this aspect of the program has been a benefit to him and can benefit others:

> In Leadership Oklahoma you're going to see issues from maybe fifty or forty-nine other perspectives and you're going to watch how people react and deal with these various and sometimes opposing viewpoints. So you discover that you can't learn if you go into situations or meetings and spend all of your time espousing your opinion and never giving someone else the opportunity to state theirs. Especially if you have a tendency to espouse your opinion and then turn around and walk off or shut down the thought process by never listening to others. During the course of the program, you really develop an appreciation for the value of discovering new ideas, new thoughts and the importance of broadening your perception of how you view the state or view your business.

In identifying network development and a better understanding of Oklahoma's diversity as two important benefits received by participants of the Leadership

Oklahoma program, the presidents described the essence of the experience and long-confirmed previous research findings that participation can be beneficial and useful to individuals. However, the second objective of this research was to determine what value the regional university presidents perceive their Leadership Oklahoma experience has within the context of their professional position. The presidents were able to answer this question by discussing and describing situations where they used the benefits oftheir Leadership Oklahoma experience in their professional capacity.

Using the Leadership Oklahoma Experience

As mentioned earlier, each of the presidents, during their interview, were complimentary of the Leadership Oklahoma program and made vague or imprecise comments about how the program had benefited them and helped them develop as a regional university president. But, in order to gain a better understanding of how the individual presidents perceived the benefits of the programand how they had incorporated those benefits into their role, each was asked to provide specific examples of times when they have called on or employed a benefit of the program. While their examples varied considerably, the fact that each of the presidents was able to recall a specific time or situation where their Leadership Oklahoma experience was helpful provided valuable insight about the ways in which participation can be beneficial.

Several of the participants, when asked to think of a specific example, returned to the idea of network development as a core benefit of the program. President Williams used that idea to demonstrate how a personal relationship,

enhanced by Leadership Oklahoma, has been beneficial to him in his role as a regional university president:

> I know when I went through I had a perspective of career tech that wasn't completely accurate. One of my classmates was Roy Peters who was head of what we called Vo-Tech at the time and he and I were able to enjoy a lot of conversation. We had been friends for many years but neither of us had ever sat down with the other and said let's talk about higher education or let's talk about vocational technical education. But during Leadership Oklahoma we had the opportunity to do that. And now, in my role as president of this institution, we have built very beneficial relationships with our local career tech campuses. The ease of me being able to do that I think came directly as a result of going through Leadership Oklahoma and understanding that there's three facets to public education in Oklahoma: the common schools, the career tech, and higher education. I would not have the relationship today that I do with career tech had it not been for going through Leadership Oklahoma with Roy Peters. The relationship that we have here at Northeastern State University with Indian Capital Technology Center and Superintendent Earl Garrison would not have been possible because of the perceptions I had about what career tech was. Roy was able to help me see the bigger picture and Northeastern State University and Southeastern State University have been better served because I had my opinion changed of that particular segment of education.

President Hays also spoke of a relationship that was created during Leadership Oklahoma and how it helped him and Southwestern in a fund-raising capacity:

> We wanted to write a grant but the company told us that we were not in their service area. Well, I happen to know the head of the development office through Leadership Oklahoma, so I called her up and I said, 'I know we're not in your service area but a lot of our students come from your service area and a lot of our employees live in your service area.' She says, 'well, write all that down and submit the grant.' We do and we get the grant for twenty thousand dollars.

President Wiley also discussed some specific examples of how a relationship developed through Leadership Oklahoma had been beneficial during fund-raising efforts, but he provided a different example of how his LOK experience has changed his approach to communicating with external constituencies:

> Beyond the two examples of fund raising opportunities, the best example of incorporating my experience with LOK into my role as a college president is in how I talk to people about my university. My experience showed me that most Oklahomans had little or no knowledge of the regional universities throughout the state and even less knowledge about our purpose or our quality. Therefore, whenever I speak to individuals or groups, I no longer assume that people recognize the value of RSU or NSU or SWOSU. It really changed the way I communicate with people and the kind of information I provide.

These examples of incorporating the Leadership Oklahoma experience into the professional role of leading a regional university show how each of the participants benefited from the program and shed light on the numerous avenues through which the benefits can be manifested. President Hays discussed the many ways that participants can benefit:

> In my class we had three, four legislators; we had people that are involved in foundations and businesses across Oklahoma. Knowing these people will open doors. But beyond that almost any educational experience is an asset to what you're trying to do. Anybody, whether it's a college president or anybody else, needs to keep learning and keep developing. This program broadens your base as far as understanding what's going on in Oklahoma, and it helps you build a network of people outside of your immediate area, which is a plus. You get some leadership training, which you know either helps you directly or indirectly. Sometimes it helps you without you even being aware of it. It helps you to understand people a little better.

Summary

This chapter reported the themes that emerged from the four interviews with the research participants. It provided their insight into the role of the university president, the personal satisfaction they associate with their job and characteristics they believe will be important for the success of any university president. This chapter also included the participant's perceptions of the Leadership Oklahoma program by comparing the descriptions they provided about the benefits of the program and examples of how they have incorporated those benefits into their

presidential role. The next chapter will offer a discussion of the results, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions, Discussion and Recommendations

Introduction

This phenomenological study examined the professional experiences of four regional university presidents and explored their involvement and participation in the Leadership Oklahoma program. The purpose of the study was to discover how these presidents valued their participation and involvement with the program and if they perceived the experience to have any impact on their professional role as a campus leader.

Phenomenological inquiry is a method designed to determine the essence of a phenomenon (Patton, 1990). Through in-depth interviews with each of the participants, several themes, that revealed the essence of the regional university presidency and the Leadership Oklahoma experience among these presidents, emerged and were reported in the previous chapter.

This chapter will draw conclusions from the themes that were reported. In making these conclusions, the themes along with selected experiences from the individual interviews are connected with the literature review for this study. Although the individual experiences introduced in this chapter were not expressed by each of the participants in the study, and therefore could not be identified as an essence of the experience, they are consistent with previous research on this study's topics and support the researcher's conclusions. Finally, recommendations from the study are presented.

Conclusions

Role of the University President

The study began with a general discussion of the role of the university president, and each of the study participants provided a similar description of the job, the expectations they have for themselves, the expectations they believe others have of them and the challenges they face. From this general discussion and a review of the demographic data, this study's first conclusion is that Oklahoma's regional university presidents are not significantly different from their national peers as described by the reports and articles examined during the literature review. The four study participants define their role as three fold. First, to have a vision of the direction the university needs to move, second, to communicate that vision to all of the university's stakeholders and, finally, to provide the resources and administrative guidance that will develop the proper atmosphere for success on campus.

In his 1998 article, *University Presidents, Then and Now*, Shapiro concluded, "Today, colleges and universities are expected to educate and train the professional world and university presidents are expected to secure the necessary resources, protect the required environment, champion the interests and aspirations of the academic community to the broader society and play a role in ensuring that the academic community is in touch with society's interests and needs" (p. 69). The presidents interviewed for this study described these responsibilities in a number of ways, but hit on each one. President Wiley stated, "Different institutions have different values, but the president's responsibility is to make sure those values are built into the culture of the institution so that the students are able to experience that

while they are there." President Webb added, "I think the most important role of the president is to create an environment on a college campus where faculty can teach and students can learn. You have to create an atmosphere that is conducive for learning and discovery and creativity." This idea is certainly in line with the sixth and final requirement for presidential success as outlined by Kerr and Gade (1986).They concluded that a president must have "a personality and charisma capable of inspiring trust and confidence among the faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends of the university" (Kerr & Gade, 1986).

While each of the presidents believed that serving as a guide and leader for the campus was the most important role they played, they, unfortunately, also expressed concern for the lack of time they have available to focus on this aspect of the position. President Williams lamented that presidents are more often called on to solve campus problems than looked to for direction and inspiration. Although he believes most college presidents know what needs to be done, he expressed concern that most presidents are not afforded the opportunity to take the time necessary to focus on those objectives. Each of the presidents in this study concurred with this assessment of the position and described the large number of constituencies they must deal with as a reason so little time can be devoted to what they felt was the most important aspect of the job.

This feeling of external constituencies taking more and more time is certainly in line with the description provided by Ann Die (1998) in her article *Reflections on Presidential Longevity*. She wrote that the number and diversity of the constituencies are daunting and "failure to keep any one of these constituencies sufficiently happy

can start a chain reaction that quickly leads to the meltdown of a previously successful administration." Muller (1988) also identified this "much wider portfolio of both responsibilities and constituencies that the college or university must now deal with" as a significant change in the requirements for today's college presidents. Eight years later, *The Report of the Commission on the Academic Presidency* (1996) also came to the conclusion that "There are now so many expectations, coming so rapidly from so many different quarters, that meeting them all becomes extremely difficult" (p.5).

Both the Commission on the Academic Presidency (1996) and the National Commission on the Role and Future of State Colleges and Universities (1986), concluded that the presidential job is becoming more and more difficult and they expressed concern for many areas including: rising costs, increased tuition, diminishing resources, accelerating technology demands and infrastructure disrepair. These concerns were shared by the study participants. President Wiley explained how an older campus can lead to difficult decisions:

> We have a very old campus with a lot of old buildings that need a lot of work and we don't have a lot of money. Unless something changes in either our state allocations or our fund-raising efforts we're going to continue to have challenges in this area. So, I spend a lot of time trying to determine where best to spend the limited funds that we have. We have to choose between things like roof repair, replacing old carpet, painting or general maintenance and touch-up of our buildings.

President Webb talked about the role the president needs to play as new technologies become available:

> Over the past ten or twelve years there's been a tremendous change in the role technology has played on our campuses. It has a much greater role in learning than it did prior to that time, and as the president you have to be aware of the capacity and the capabilities of technology in everything that you do from the admissions process, to the business office, to the classroom. You don't have to understand all that's going on, but you have to have an awareness of how to most effectively use technology as an enhancer of the educational environment.

And President Hays discussed the time requirements associated with fund raising efforts:

> Maximizing the resources that you have available is really a big challenge. But it is more than how do you maximize your resources; you also have to be aggressively pursuing additional funding. Last fall, we started on our third fund raising campaign. I think I personally made sixty visits. That is a very time consuming process. It can be very rewarding when someone says I'll do this or I'll do that, but you have to be committed to the process.

Because the four study participants expressed their presidential experience in terms so closely aligned with descriptions that have been developed from research projects that used much larger and broader samples, this study has confidence in the conclusion that Oklahoma's regional university presidents face similar challenges, opportunities and rewards as their national peers.

The Leadership Oklahoma Experience

The second part of the personal interviews focused on the president's experience in and with the Leadership Oklahoma program. Each of the presidents described the program in similar terms and outlined the structural nature of the program with identical recollection. Using these descriptions, combined with the expressed personal benefits of the program, and the literature reviewed, this study's second conclusion is that the regional university presidents' experience in Leadership Oklahoma is not significantly different from what other individuals have experienced in leadership development programs throughout the nation.

Whent and Leising's (1992) 20-year evaluation of the California Agricultural Leadership Program made several conclusions regarding the benefits received by the participants. They cited increased personal contacts and interaction with classmates, increased leadership skills, travel experience, interaction with government and agricultural leaders and increased awareness and understanding of other societies and cultures among the primary personal benefits associated with program participation.

The Evaluation Committee for Washington's Leadership Tomorrow (LT) Program (1991) also concluded that participants received the most impact from networking opportunities and exposure to issues and individuals.

Each of these conclusions was supported by Earnest's 1996 comprehensive examination of community leadership development programs. After meeting with program alumni focus groups, he found that community leadership development programs are valuable to the individuals who participate for five reasons. In recalling

their experiences with the Leadership Oklahoma program, the four study participants addressed each of these benefits.

According to Earnest (1996), program alumni felt the leadership development program had improved their ability to communicate effectively and they discussed how their involvement in the program had improved their communication skills. Examples of how alumni characterized their improved communication included: better interaction with others, a better understanding of community issues, stating opinions and positions without being offensive, and coming to the middle ground on issues. President Wiley agreed with the assessment that participation can improve the participant's ability to communicate when he explained, "My experience with LOK showed me that most Oklahomans had little or no knowledge of the regional universities throughout the state and even less knowledge about our purpose or our quality. Therefore, whenever I speak to individuals or groups, I no longer assume that people recognize the value of RSU or NSU or SWOSU. It really changed the way I communicate with people and the kind of information I provide."

Alumni in Earnest's (1996) focus groups also agreed that networking opportunities were an important benefit of the program. By becoming more comfortable with program participants, alumni found that they were able to call on one another with new levels of familiarity and that this benefit was the start of positive community networking. President Hays also found this aspect of the program to be most beneficial. He said, "The most important thing is the networking opportunities. In Leadership Oklahoma you'll develop a friendship with people

throughout the state not only in your class but you also get to know some people in some of the other classes. That networking is invaluable."

A third benefit of the program identified by Earnest's (1995) review was that alumni gained a better understanding of the business, education, service organizations, government structure and resources available in a community. President Webb also identified this benefit during his interview, saying "Because the program meets in different locations, it is a very informative and educational experience. You learn the geography and history of Oklahoma in an effective way, but, beyond that, you also learn a lot about institutions of government, penal systems, social systems, educational systems, military, and various aspects of our society that you may or may not have much knowledge of."

A fourth benefit of program participation identified by alumni was being more aware and sensitive about people's differences and perspectives. Alumni felt they had developed a larger comfort level with different personality styles and a wider scope for viewing issues and understanding how personality styles affect people in their decision making process. Alumni recognized that there are different ways to examine and look at issues and discovered why reaching consensus is so difficult. President Wiley addressed this issue during his interview when he claimed, "You gain a better understanding of Oklahoma and the diversity of people who make things happen. You realize that we all want the same thing, but there is tremendous diversity of thought as to how we can improve Oklahoma."

The final benefit of program participation identified by program alumni was their increased ability to solve problems. One program alumnus stated, "The program

helped broaden my view of what's going on around this community. I see a lot of public decisions being made with inaccurate information or misconceptions due to not seeing a broader picture" (Earnest, 1996, p. 41). President Williams' used similar language during his interview, saying, "I think that if I don't know what's going on from Northeastern's perspective, if I don't know what's happening all around the state and with the other kinds of colleges and universities, I can't make decisions that will benefit my university, the student and communities we serve or the state of Oklahoma. I think the program helps you broaden your base of understanding and knowledge and the broader and deeper you can make that, the more effective you're going to be."

This similarity of experiences shared by the alumni used in Earnest's focus groups and the four participants of this study provide a high degree of confidence in the conclusion that the regional university presidents interviewed for this study experienced Leadership Oklahoma in a similar manner with those who have participated in similar leadership development programs throughout the country. This confidence combined with the conclusion that Oklahoma's regional university presidents are not significantly different from their national peers, provides the foundation from which the final conclusion of this study will be based.

The Value of Leadership Oklahoma to Oklahoma's Regional University Presidents

The ultimate goal of this study was to determine if the participants considered their experience with and in the Leadership Oklahoma program to be beneficial to them in their role as a university president. To assess the extent to which the Leadership Oklahoma experience had been incorporated into their presidential role,

each of the participants was asked if they could illustrate a time or situation where they called on their experience in fulfilling their presidential duties. Two of the participants immediately recalled fundraising efforts which were directly linked to their Leadership Oklahoma experience. President Hays recalled:

> We wrote a grant request to a company that is not in our service area and they responded that they couldn't work with us. However, I happened to know the Chief Development Officer through Leadership Oklahoma, so I called her up and I talked to her about the university and about the fact that while the university may not be in their service area a lot of our students come from their service area and a lot of our employees live in their service area. She says 'well, write all that down and submit the grant.' We did, and we got a grant for twenty thousand bucks.

Beyond fundraising opportunities, the presidents also mentioned some minor benefits such as securing speakers for campus events as well as more substantial benefits such as building partnerships that lead to positive benefits for the university. President Williams recalled how a classmate changed his perspective:

> When I went into Leadership Oklahoma I had what I thought at the time was a very clear and very correct perception of Career Tech. It was a perception that had been developed over a number of years working in the educational system of Oklahoma. But that perception of Career Tech wasn't completely accurate. When I went through Leadership Oklahoma, Roy Peters was head of what we called Vo-Tech at the time and he was in my class. Roy and I had been friends for many years but neither of us had ever sat down with the other and said

let's talk about higher education or let's talk about vocational technical education. But we had the opportunity to do that. I learned a lot and really developed a better understanding and respect for the role Career Tech plays in the system. So, in my role now as president of this institution, I work very hard to build a solid relationship with our local career tech campuses. The ease of me being able to do that I think came directly as a result of going through Leadership Oklahoma and understanding that there's three facets to public education, and realizing that they do a very good job. The relationship that we have here at Northeastern State University with Indian Capital Career Tech and Dr. Earl Garrison, the superintendent would not have happened if I had not gone through class four with Roy Peters. It wouldn't have happened because I already had my opinion about what Career Tech was and you weren't going to change my opinion. As a result of that experience, when I was at Southeastern I had a better relationship with Roy Davis down at Durant who was in charge of the Vo-Tech system and I have a better relationship with Earl Garrison. Northeastern State University and Southeastern State University were better served because I had my opinion changed of that particular segment of education, for the better. I think Northeastern is better served as a result of the fact that we can enter into more cooperative and more productive agreements between Indian Capital and Northeastern State.

The final effort at determining what value the participants placed on the experience came at the conclusion of each interview, when the participants were asked if they would recommend the Leadership Oklahoma program to other regional

university presidents or to those who might aspire to become university presidents. In each case, the participants were highly complimentary of the program and strongly recommended participation for their current and future peers. President Williams was resolute in his praise saying:

> I'm completely convinced of the value of Leadership Oklahoma. From my estimation I think every board should require their presidents to go through Leadership Oklahoma within the first three years of a presidency. I think if someone wanted to be a college president, I think they should go through Leadership Oklahoma and build a good solid knowledge of what our state is about. And if I were a regent responsible for the hiring, I would look for someone who has had the experience or was willing to participate. It is time consuming but anytime you're learning, anytime you're coming up with new ideas, new thoughts and broadening your understanding of Oklahoma, you are making yourself better. My preference would be to see people do this as opposed to going to a conference in Illinois or California or wherever it may be.

President Wiley was also certain in his assessment saying,

> I think Leadership Oklahoma is a valuable experience and has been very useful and influential in my work as a college president. I am convinced that participation in Leadership Oklahoma should be a requirement for college presidents.

Considering the examples illustrated by the presidents, the glowing recommendations and the two conclusions previously reported, this study's final

conclusion is that participation in Leadership Oklahoma would be a positive professional development opportunity for university presidents and would help them address several of the issues that are most prevalent for university presidents, including, external fund raising, regional economic development and communicating with the large and diverse number of external constituencies that have an interest in the university.

Leadership in the University Setting

In addition to the relationship between the Leadership Oklahoma experience and the presidential position, this research also looked at a number of different leadership theories to evaluate whether one in particular was the most effective approach for Oklahoma's regional university presidents and if this leadership approach was enhanced by the Leadership Oklahoma experience. While no specific conclusion can be made regarding these questions, the findings of this study indicate that additional research in this area would be both useful and important. The interviews highlighted the balance that regional university presidents must achieve between managing their universities and leading them toward meeting new objectives.

Each of the participants in this study defined their leadership approach based on the specific challenges facing their institution. They explained how different organizational cultures and histories have shaped unique power structures within the organization and they described how campuses being located in different areas of the state and how the relationship with different communities in their service areas have created unique challenges and opportunities that must be acted upon. These

descriptions are comparable with previous research on presidential leadership by Kerr and Gade (1986) who concluded that all academic leaders inherit institutions that have established goals for research, for undergraduate and graduate teaching, for contributions to the cultural and economic interests of the many attached communities and for reasonable compatibility between what the institution does and what the most relevant college publics want. These goals and objectives have been developed over a long history of public service and assigned to the institutions by their governing boards and state legislative branches. Kerr and Gade found that, within this environment, “many administrations make only marginal adjustments to the goals they have inherited; and some make none at all” (p.52). Birnbaum (1992) added thatin today’s world of greater participation, shared influence, conflicting constituencies, and assorted other complexities, those who become college and university presidents must be prepared to lead in the complex and confusing academic environment and to lead their institutions to their ultimate objectives. These objectives, including quality instruction, economic development, applied research and public service, are vague at best and must be accomplished by presidents who are forced to maneuver within an environment where they share governance responsibility with the faculty and oversee a community that allows and encourages academic freedom and the acceptance of an organized and disciplined opposition to any public or institutional policy. Beyond that, they are also personally evaluated and held accountable to governing boards who reside completely outside the academic organization where the work takes place.

In considering this much different academic organization as compared to the historical descriptions of higher education, Amey (2002) concluded that effective leadership on today's college campuses requires different skills from those of the charismatic, visionary leaders who dominated earlier periods of higher education. She believes that adaptive work designed to challenge the status quo and develop collaborative and entrepreneurial efforts is the path to successful presidential leadership.

The participants in this study discussed how their ability to lead the organization toward a future defined by the president was limited by the university's exposure to external demands and their ability to generate enthusiasm and support among the constituencies that make up the university environment. President Williams described his experience at Northeastern as a difficult mix of outside pressures and internal conflict.

> We had a lot of things that needed to be done here in terms of changing the thought process and culture on campus. We were the classic example of a bureaucracy and morale was not good. But at the same time, we were approaching a war over in Tulsa which was settled froman outside perspective with the legislative session in 1998. Senate Bill 1426 was passed to divide up the University Center Consortium arrangement and allow NSU to build and develop our own campus somewhere else in the Tulsa market. The difficulty I faced was balancing the outside pressure to maintain our presence in the Tulsa market by engaging the community of Broken Arrow while gaining support for this new opportunity among our board of regents and

> university faculty and staff. The downside is that rather than being able to come in here and spend a lot of time on the issue of faculty morale and what we were doing administratively to make sure we were where we needed to be, I spent a great deal of time and effort on Tulsa and Broken Arrow. I had to be responsive to the constituencies, to the people. But it was very trying and it was very difficult. We had a whole host of nonbelievers on this campus and I'm sure in many other areas, even legislatively we had nonbelievers. We had folks here on this campus, we had people here in the institution that were vital that had doubts about what we were doing.

This description of the leadership process is similar to Birnbaum's (1992) results which showed that leading an educational institution within the historical parameters of its mission requires the support, cooperation and input of every constituency. To survive in this environment of shared governance, presidents must be willing to build partnerships and alliances through the exchange of goods. As Birnbaum (1992) noted, "They understand that the president's role involves not just helping the institution run smoothly but making institutional progress at the same time" (p. 29).

In considering which of the leadership theories reviewed for this research would be most applicable to the presidential position, no one answer was clear. The research found that presidents must be able to lead based on the situation they inherit and within the social context and culture of the organization they lead. They must provide the elements of transformational leadership that challenge the faculty and staff to pursue great intellectual and artistic adventures and tackle the most critical issues of our time (Keller, 1983) while also employing the transactional approach to

leadership that emphasizes selected values that are already part of the institution (Birnbaum, 1988). Presidents must inspire, motivate and encourage the entire university community to meet the educational challenges on the horizon while simultaneously building support and cooperation with the faculty, staff, students, parents, and trustees which will bethe necessary elements for progress.

In reviewing the Leadership Oklahoma program, this research found the leadership principles endorsed and encouraged by the curriculum to be analogous with the leadership need expressed by the participants. Leadership Oklahoma encourages individuals throughout Oklahoma to think transformationally about solutions to challenges and opportunities facing the state, while simultaneously building the support and cooperation with the legislators, community leaders, agency directors, corporate executives, small business owners and regional university presidents which will be the necessary elements for progress.

This research has indicated that the possibility for mutual benefit between Oklahoma's regional university presidents and Leadership Oklahoma does exist with regard to the development of the most beneficial leadership style to employ on a university campus, however, further research into the unique leadership requirements of higher education organizations will be required to better determine how Leadership Oklahoma can enhance the leadership success of college and university presidents.

Recommendations

As a qualitative, phenomenological study of four regional university presidents in Oklahoma, generalizing the study's results to a larger population must be done cautiously. The study identified a number of personal benefits associated

with participation in Leadership Oklahoma thatcan be helpful in addressing the most fundamental challenges associated with serving as a university president in Oklahoma; therefore, a broader quantitative study would be useful in determining if this study's conclusion that all university presidents can benefit both personally and professionally from leadership development programs can be supported in other states. This additionalquantitative study may also be helpful in determining if the benefits associated with Leadership Oklahoma in particular and leadership development programs in general can help university presidents address the challenges of leading a broader spectrum of college and university campuses. This study focused primarily on the regional university campus, therefore, additional research on the experience of comprehensive and community college presidents may prove beneficial.

While this study did include two presidents who had participated in the program prior to becoming the president and two who participated in the program as the president, no attempt was made to determine if the difference in position changed the experience. Additional research into the most appropriate time to participate in the leadership development program may be helpful in determining if there is an optimum career point where participation in the leadership development program can be most beneficial.

The study also suggests a number of possible correlations and relationships that may exist with other professions. A quantitative study may help clarify if the benefits of leadership development programs identified in this and other studies can be positively correlated with the challenges thatprofessionals other than university

presidents may face in their respective leadership roles. In looking at the list of graduates, Leadership Oklahoma has been a particularly popular program with lawyers, executive officers of both public and private companies, state and local politicians, and state agency leaders. A study focused on the experiences of professionals in these areas may add additional insight to what we know about leadership development programs.

Summary

By employing a transcendental phenomenological research method this study was able to draw three conclusions about the professional experiences of four regional university presidents and how these presidents value their participation and involvement with the Leadership Oklahoma program. By connecting the data with the literature reviewed for this research, the study concluded that Oklahoma's regional university presidents are not significantly different from their national peers, that the regional university presidents' experience in Leadership Oklahoma is not significantly different from what other individuals have experienced in leadership development programs throughout the nation, and that participation in Leadership Oklahoma would be a positive professional development opportunity for university presidents and would help them address several of the issues that are most prevalent for university presidents, including, external fund raising, regional economic development and communicating with the large and diverse number of external constituencies that have an interest in the university.

Conclusion

The literature on university presidents and American higher education demonstrates that American society and higher education have been connected since the founding of Harvard College in the early 1630's. Over the nearly 300 years in-between, university campuses have become the depository of our cultures' hopes and aspirations, while representing the promise of an educated citizenry. Within this framework, regional universities across the United States have been designed to make the educational experience available to the students in their service areas, unfortunately, some fundamental challenges including dwindling state support, rapidly increasing tuition costs, growing enrollments and aging physical plants are whittling away at the fundamental attributes of accessibility, affordability, and high-quality that are traditionally associated with regional universities.

Today, college presidents find themselves managing these complex academic organizations while simultaneously interlocked in relationships with businesses, community organizations, legislatures and governors, and many of these campus leaders have ascended to their position without the benefit of formal training in university leadership. In fact, most new presidents will be unfamiliar with both the body of literature on university leadership and the professional development opportunities available through professional organizations. Knowing the daunting task facing these new university presidents and the important role universities play in our social and economic development, it is imperative that today's campus leaders have access to and information about alternative training programs, both inside and

outside academia that may be helpful in the development of the skills necessary to immediately become successful college presidents.

Through the transcendental phenomenological reduction that has taken place, this study sought to understand the lived experience of the regional university presidents who have participated in and graduated from the Leadership Oklahoma program. The participants in this study shared their experiences as both regional university presidents and as Leadership Oklahoma graduates. By reflecting on their experiences and relating them to one another, they provided a glimpse into how this leadership development program may be a useful professional development opportunity for both their peers and those men and women who will follow them into the presidency. While a study with this small sample size is not intended to be generalizable to the entire population of regional university presidents, the participant's information was valuable in presenting current issues as well as questions for possible future research.

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