The study of disproportionately low numbers of Hispanic community college presidents in the United States

by

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B.A., University of Texas, 1999
M.A., St. Edwards University, 2002

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to understand the disproportionately low numbers of Hispanic community college leaders in the president/CEO position. With half of the Hispanic population enrolling in community colleges, it is imperative to address the low numbers of Hispanic presidents leading those institutions. Studies from the past 30 years have established priorities to support minority students in post-secondary education. Hispanics students report having minority leadership on campus helps to create a supportive environment which helps a student feel connected and to thrive academically.

This study employed a grounded theory approach to understand and analyze the lived experiences of Hispanic executive leaders employed at a two-year higher education institution. The researcher using a qualitative search design focused on understanding the challenges and opportunities Hispanics face when aspiring to become a community college president. Fifteen Hispanic community college leaders were drawn from a purposive sampling, which included community college senior leadership across the United States. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured, open-ended interview protocol. By using this fluid structure, it allowed the researcher to collect data that gave insight to Hispanic leaders in the community college world. The research questions that guided this study included: 1) What are the experiences that Hispanic leaders face on the pathway to the presidency? 2) What are the cultural practices/norms that impact Hispanics in their quest for the community college presidency? 3) What has been the contribution of the Hispanic network in preparing for the presidency?

The following themes emerged from the findings: support and mentorship, leadership programs, lack of mobility and time commitment, positive attributes of the Hispanic culture, and the pipeline of Hispanic leaders who are ready to lead. This group of leaders have faced many of the same challenges that their predecessors faced over 30 years ago; however, the findings show that

70% of the participants in this study are ready to take on the path to the presidency. Critical strategies divided into four notable areas for the advancement of Hispanic leaders include: being prepared, establishing relationships, being intentional and taking responsibility. Intentional hiring practices of two year institutions; the need to attend leadership programs to gain social capital and mentorship; preparing oneself with a doctoral degree; learning one's craft; taking responsibility for self and other Hispanic leaders to build and strengthen the pipeline were mentioned as important components of the strategies. Recommendations for future development of Hispanic leaders include creating new programs and increasing current programs that support the advancement of Hispanic leaders in higher education; and, creating stronger mentorship programs for individuals interested in executive leadership early on in their careers.

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Dedication

To all the Chingonas out there…….Ponte las Pilas.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The American Council on Education (ACE), American College Presidents study catalogued information regarding the president/CEO position in community colleges and monitored the demographics and information regarding the individuals holding the position of president/CEO (Espinosa, Gagliardi, Taylor, & Turk, 2017). The 2017 ACE report provided feedback from 239 active CEOs and indicated "one-third of sitting CEOs will retire within five years, and 80% of sitting CEOs will retire within the next ten years" (Phillipe, 2016, p. 3). While these numbers pose a monumental challenge for the higher-education community, this challenge can also be seen as an opportunity to prioritize diversity in searches for community-college presidents.

> It can be argued that Hispanic leadership in higher education brings a socially marginalized experience that, by emphasizing social justice, can yield a broader, more inclusive view of democracy and of the role of higher education in a democratic society than can the experience of the dominant group. (Martinez, 1993, p. 7)

If a new generation of presidents is to be cultivated, what can be done to increase the number of Hispanic leaders to the president/CEO position?

In 1986, ACE conducted the first American College Presidents Study series. The ACE survey examined presidential demographics, search and selection processes, career trajectories, and duties and responsibilities. In the 1980s, the demographic profile of a typical campus leader was a white male in his mid-50s. Other dominant characteristics included that the individual was married, Protestant, and had children. Most presidents/CEOs had doctoral degrees and averaged six years in the presidency (Cook, 2012, p. 12). Bryan Cook, Director of ACE's Center for Policy Analysis, noted that while college campuses are prioritizing diverse student bodies, the racial profile of college presidents has remained the same. In 2008, ACE also examined the minority composition of chief

academic officers (CAO) and attributed the lack of diversity in administration positions to a possible reason for a lag in diversity within the president/CEO role. Minority administrators accounted for 16% of administration, and ten percent of CAOs were people of color. "As students, faculty, and staff become more diverse, developing a more diverse pool of senior leaders will only gain importance," acknowledged Cook (p. 12).

In 2017, the ACE reports documented little to no change in the ethnic makeup of leadership. The average associate degree institution president/CEO is 60 years old, white, and male. Approximately 13% of community college presidents are younger than the age of 50. Key responsibilities include spending more time outside of academia in areas such as fundraising, budget, and finance (Gonzalez-Barrera, Lopez, & Lopez, 2017).

While studying Hispanic leadership in the early 1990s, Aguirre and Martinez (1993) found that very little research had been conducted regarding leadership roles for Hispanics in higher education. Their study found that there were higher expectations for Hispanic presidential candidates, which often made promotions more challenging. Despite the barriers, many Hispanic leaders persisted and rose to leadership roles, especially in the community college arena. Studies around the pioneering group of minorities in higher-education leadership depict a collection of shared values such as respect, honesty, service, and generosity (Bordas, 2014). Leadership theories such as servant leadership, by Robert Greenleaf, correlated with the importance of community and service to others, such as in the Hispanic culture (Bordas, 2014). In 2018, Dr. George Boggs wrote:

> For colleges and universities committed to closing student achievement gaps, a racial- and gender-diverse faculty, staff, and administration is a critical component. We in academia often say that we want a diverse faculty and staff, but our practices seem to indicate otherwise (Boggs, 2018, p. 2).

Community colleges have an essential role for Hispanic students, as a majority begin their college careers at these institutions. Currently, the community college systems in the United States

enroll half of the Hispanic students seeking postsecondary education (Krogstad, 2016). The U.S. Census, which is responsible for analyzing and reporting relevant population data for the nation, also tracks educational demographics. In 2010, Census briefs focused on important information to educate individuals about the changing diversity of the country. The U.S. Census in 2010 reported that of the 308.7 million people residing in the United States, 50.5 million (16%) were of Hispanic or Latino origin (Albert, Ennis, Rios-Vargas, 2011). As the number of Hispanics continue to rise, the number of Hispanic students is also increasing. From 1996 to 2016, the number of Hispanic students enrolled from K-12 to postsecondary education doubled from 8.8 million to 17.9 million (Bauman, 2017). In the past decade, high school dropout rates for Hispanics have improved, and in 2014, numbers showed a 22% increase in college enrollment compared to 2004 (Krogstad, 2016). Despite the increase in college enrollment, only 14.8% of the Hispanic population age 25 and older have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Given the high number of Hispanics in the United States, this issue no longer becomes about the advancement of one group, but of the entire nation as a whole. Increasing educational attainment in the Hispanic community is imperative for the overall welfare of all American citizens. The community college has proven to be a point of access for underrepresented groups because of the affordability, access, and flexibility that are necessary to support the nontraditional student: low-income, working, and part-time students, many of whom are Hispanic (Liu, 2011; Ornelas, 2002; Sengupta & Jepsen, 2006). However, with increasing numbers of minority students come new challenges. Minority students come from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds with different needs for educational attainment. Issues such as financial support, generational progress, low retention numbers, and achievement gaps have become new focal points (Carnevale 2013; Davila, 2011; MacDonald, Botti, & Clark, 2007).

Research in the higher-education field has set the stage to begin understanding the differing needs of minority students in higher education. If the numbers are going to continue to rise, higher education needs to understand how to prioritize the success within the Hispanic population. Studies

show the importance of having a leadership team reflective of the student population to enhance the success of all students. This is particularly helpful with Hispanic students, who continue to fall behind in completion rates compared to other ethnic groups (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002; Nuñez, 2009).

Tinto's work with the student integration model in the 1970s showed that positive faculty and staff interactions are crucial to Hispanic students' success (Tinto, 1975). Anderson found similar results in his force field model (Anderson, 1985). Both reports discussed the feelings of self-doubt that minority students experience when there is a lack of role models and mentors that reflect their own experiences (Davila, 2011). The hiring of individuals from diverse backgrounds also brings to light the different leadership styles that result from varied experiences and cultural upbringing compared to the majority population. These shared diverse experiences enable administrators to create and foster relationships with Hispanic students.

Higher education continues to have challenges when hiring a diverse administration that reflects the study body. Community colleges have begun to prioritize hiring diverse faculty in their strategic plans. However, studies conducted by the online media company, Inside Higher Ed, and the Gallup Poll show that 58% of current presidents agreed that there are too few minority candidates in the running (Jaschik & Lederman, 2017).

The hiring of diverse individuals for administrative positions does not only affect higher education. With the largest minority population in the country struggling with completion rates (Swail, 2003), this directly affects other areas in society, such as the U.S. economy. Problems with completion rates form a chain reaction to the number of qualified workers in the U.S. workforce. The Center on Education and Workforce estimates that 55 million jobs will be created in the economy through 2020 (Carnevale, & Fasules, 2017, p. 1). This includes 24 million new positions and 31 million positions due to retirements from the Baby Boomer generation (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2013, p. 5) which includes those born between 1946 and 1964 (Rybak, 2016, p. 1). Thirty-

five percent of employment opportunities will require educational qualifications of at least a bachelor's degree and 30% will require some college or an associate's degree. The fastest-growing occupations are in the science, technology, engineering, and math sector; healthcare; and community services. These employment areas will require higher levels of postsecondary education. While the growth rate of the working-age population is expected to decline overall, the number of working-age immigrants and children born in the United States to immigrant parents is expected to grow. The number of workers born in the United States to American parents is expected to shrink from 128.3 million to 120.1 million between 2015 and 2035 (Cohn & Passel, 2017, p. 1).

> Ignoring the potential economic power of the nation's growing Latino and immigrant population only risks the future viability of the American labor force, according to Dr. William Serrata, president of El Paso Community College. We have to increase the educational attainment level of this particular population (Morris, 2017, p. 7).

The National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC) is leading the country by helping to solve the growing need for a diverse economy. Their statistics indicate significant opportunities for minorities in business. However, the numbers directly point to postsecondary education as critical. Postsecondary education is key, according to research by Georgetown University, which states that 60% of all jobs in the U.S will require postsecondary education and jobs with a requirement of a high school diploma will be scarce (Carnevale, et al., 2013, p. 1). Minority-run business is trending to increase by 70% from 2000 to 2045. In 2016, there were 3.1 million multi-cultural-owned firms and an estimated 1.6 million workers in addition to an estimated $268 billion in revenue (Vowels, 2015, p. 11).

Business analysts recognize the impact of the minority business sector as the fastest-growing small business segment. NMSDC reports that by supporting the minority business community, the effects on the U.S. economy will be positive. NMSDC also affirms that the economy cannot sustain

its robust nature without the minority business community. To support the minority community is a catalyst for sustainable growth and prosperity (Vowels, 2015, p. 11).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the disproportionately low number of Hispanic community college presidents. This study examined leadership styles, and cultural practices as Hispanics ascend to the presidency. Additionally, factors that hinder or support advancement opportunities for Hispanics were also explored.

For this study, the researcher focused on Hispanic representation in administration positions within community colleges. Diversity within the advanced leadership of an institution is imperative in the prioritization of the Hispanic academic. The opportunity to succeed educationally is critical to advance in the life of the individual and for their success, their family, and this country. Haro (1995) provided a call to action over 20 years ago when he stated, "It is essential for Latinos to begin questioning their limited numbers in leadership roles in higher education. Why are so few in senior-level academic executive jobs?" (p. 189).

Significance of the Study

The college president of a two-year higher education institution serves as a role model to his/her students, faculty, staff, and community by fulfilling the community college mission. Responsibilities include creating an institutional culture where students are welcomed as an asset to the institution. This requires a supportive environment that promotes student success for all, including Hispanics. Research shows that administrators and staff who reflect the student population can become visible role models and are a resource for Hispanic students (Andrade, Brown, & Santiago, 2004).

One example of this leadership style was documented in the demonstration project led by Andrade, Brown, and Santiago in 2004. Ricardo Fernández, President of CUNY Lehman

College, along with other faculty and staff served as visible role models and resources for the Hispanic student at the college (Andrade, Brown, & Santiago, 2004, p. 3). Also mentioned was James Lyons, President of California State University— Dominguez Hills, who would share his vision during new faculty orientation and set the tone for the institution by reviewing data in the campus student profile and engaging the faculty in conversations about ways to serve their students well (Andrade, et al., 2004, p. 3).

Notable national organizations in higher education, such as the Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities (HACU) and the National Chicano Council on Higher Education (NCCHE), support initiatives to diversify leadership and faculty in higher education. While these organizations have been successful, gains have remained incremental (Rodríguez, Martinez, & Valle, 2016). According to an article in *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, Watson (2017) stated, "Ten years ago, the number of Hispanic college presidents in the United States was about 5%. Today, it is down to roughly about 4 %" (p. 1). Time, influence, and energy have been dedicated to the advancement of Hispanics in leadership roles; yet, the numbers are declining. In 2003, Michael Gutierrez of Mount View College wrote about the issues and challenges Hispanic leaders face in community colleges. Gutierrez, Castaneda, and Katsinas (2003) reported a decline in doctoral degrees for Hispanics. In the past, most presidents/CEOs came from the academic route of professor to provost. There is currently a new group of candidates applying from other areas in the community college as well as non-academics (Gonzalez-Barrera et al., 2017). Now more than ever, presidents/CEOs are spending the majority of their time fundraising, politicking, and engaging in community service (Gilroy, 2003).

With half of the Hispanic population enrolling in community colleges, it is imperative to address the low numbers of Hispanic presidents leading those institutions (Krogstad, 2016). For more minorities to succeed within higher education, institutional leadership must reflect and connect

with students to ensure completion. Regardless of the high number of Hispanic immigrants coming to the United States, the number of Hispanic leaders representing the current citizenship is inadequate. The efforts to cultivate Hispanic community college presidents are limited in scope given the inadequate numbers of Hispanics in the role.

Design of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore disproportionately low numbers of Hispanic presidents in community colleges. This study, through a grounded theory design, focused on understanding Hispanics when aspiring to become a community college president. Fifteen participants were drawn from purposive sampling, which included community college senior leadership across the United States. Initial contact was made by esteemed members of the national community college arena. Once the individual agreed to partake in the study, the researcher e-mailed release forms and confidentiality agreements to the participant. Upon receiving release forms, interviews were conducted from a representative sample of community college leaders, including presidents, vice-presidents, and deans. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured, open-ended interview protocol. By using this fluid structure, it allowed the researcher to collect data that gave insight to Hispanic leaders in the community college world.

Research Questions

1. What are the experiences that Hispanic leaders face on the pathway to the presidency?
    a. What are the obstacles Hispanic leaders face on the path to the presidency?
    b. What are the opportunities for Hispanic leaders on the path to the presidency?
2. What are the cultural practices and norms that impact Hispanics in their quest for the community college residency?
3. What has been the contributions of the Hispanic network in preparing for the presidency?

Limitations

Limitations of the study included the ethnicity and role the researcher occupied in a community college. The researcher is a Hispanic female aspiring to the presidency of a community college. She has a passion for helping students succeed in higher education but also enjoys supporting individual's as they achieve professional milestones through her appreciation for leadership training. As a young college graduate, she was first employed in higher education within a four-year university. Her professional path led outside of academia and she returned to higher education six years ago when she became employed at a community college. The mission of the two- year institution was a natural fit for her desire to embolden future Hispanic leaders in the community. Her relationship to the study may have hindered the assumptions that she had regarding the participants, data, and societal views.

This study was also specific to the community college higher-educational system and could not be generalized to the four-year university-level institution. While there were similarities between the two-year and four-year higher-education institutions, there were also structural and cultural differences involved. The two-year institution, or community college, awards associate degrees in vocational fields and prepares students to transfer to four-year institutions, thus providing a wide array of educational services to their communities. The four-year institution focuses on undergraduate teaching and professional preparation by offering graduate programs (Eckel & King, 2004, p. 5). While both types of higher education institutions rely on student tuition and fees to financially support the institutions, community colleges are structured to collect property taxes in their designated taxing districts which are selected by the state legislature. According to Dr. George Boggs (2010),

> American community colleges are much like the nation that invented them. They offer an open door to opportunity to all who could come, are innovative and agile in meeting

economic and workplace needs and provide value and service to individuals and communities (p. 1).

The mission of the community college focuses on providing access, equity, and responding to community need (Troyer, 2015).

Assumptions

The researcher believed that certain assumptions were true and accurate and guided this study: The community college leadership at the time of this study was not adequately balanced to reflect the student population served. The Hispanic population in the United States and the number of Hispanic students entering community colleges will continue to grow. A surge in retirements in the senior leadership of community colleges will occur during the next several years. The small number of Hispanic presidents is especially alarming, as it is disproportionate to the number of Hispanics and other students of color. Hispanics have demonstrated that they are fully capable of leading a college system effectively.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used in this dissertation:

- *Hispanic in the U.S*: The term Hispanic was created by the United States and signifies people from the Caribbean, Central America, Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, South America, Spain, and other countries where Spanish is the primary language. For this study concerning Hispanics, we focus on the common characteristics these people tend to share: language, values, socialization, and cultural heritage (U.S. Census, 2018).
- *Community college senior leadership or executive team*: dean, associate vice-president, vice-president, assistant chancellor, associate chancellor, vice-chancellor, and president/CEO.
- *President*: chief executive officer of an institution (de los Santos Jr. & Vega, 2008).
- *Community college*: a two-year government-supported institution of higher education, the mission of which is based on the needs of the community. Offerings include academic, workforce, and continuing education training (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).
- *Higher education:* Education provided by a college or university.
- *Elites*: idea of a group regarded as socially superior. Those few with the power of decision in various sectors of the polity or economy. These ruling elites include the economic elite (the top entrepreneurs and CEOs as well as the bureaucrats and civil servants who rule the macro environment) and the political elite that governs and operates the executive, legislative, and judicial structures.

Summary

This chapter introduced the statement of the problem and the purpose and significance of studying the low number of Hispanics leaders employed as presidents/CEOs of community colleges. The design of the study accompanied by the research questions, limitations, assumptions, and definitions of terms were also introduced. The next chapter provides a

comprehensive literature review to provide an overview of the history and research that is relevant when studying Hispanic leaders in higher education.

Chapter 2 - Review of Literature

> "Valuing diversity means getting over the issues of race and gender and focusing on the best interests of the institution and the community when selecting a college president."
>
> —George B. Vaugh and Iris Weisman (1998, p. 188)

Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of literature divided into fourteen sections, with each part contributing toward the focus of the study. The first is the History of Hispanics in the United States and Population Growth. The historical context of the term Hispanic in the United States was discussed as well as when the country began counting people of Hispanic descent. The history of studying and counting minorities in the United States set the foundation to understand where Hispanics are today in terms of workforce, education, and leadership.

The second is Achieving the Dream: Hispanic Students in Higher Education. After reviewing the statistics and growth patterns, the author discussed the challenges encountered by Hispanic students in higher education. The third section discussed seminal studies by Tinto, Anderson, and others that illustrated the importance of equal representation of minority leaders to ensure student success. This critical information then led to reports that highlighted this national crisis in leadership. The fourth section of this literature review focuses on the definition of the Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and the challenges that come with the mission as compared to other minority designated institutions. The fifth is the Recurring Barrier: Hispanic Leadership in Higher Education. Hispanics have historically struggled to maintain the status quo. However, in the past decade, the research has uncovered a disturbing truth. Reports such as ACE's American College Presidents Study, identified low numbers of minorities currently in the president role (Espinosa et al., 2017).

The sixth section explores leadership theories and the connection to shares values of the Hispanic culture. These theories serve as the base for community college leadership. The seventh section focuses on Critical Race Theory (CRT), a framework that gives scholars a realistic base to work from, compared to the Critical legal studies (CLS) framework which did not allow for racism within analysis. The eighth section explores Diversity fatigue and defines the phrase created to understand how many underrepresented faculty and staff balanced negative feelings such as frustration and anger due to lack of mentorship. The ninth area of this literature review focuses on the role of mentorship and documents research that shows the importance of mentoring leaders who are on the pathway to a presidency/CEO position within higher education.

The tenth section focuses on the role of women in postsecondary education. Studies from the early 90s to present day catalog the challenges that minority women face when vying for administration positions in higher education.

The eleventh section delves into community college leadership and the qualities that a community college leader must possess in order to be effective. In 2013, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), a primary advocacy organization for community colleges across the United States, developed competencies for leaders to improve upon. Along with competencies, recommendations were given to aid individuals in strategically growing towards a presidency position. The twelfth area shows how Hispanic leadership theories are compared with mainstream leadership theories to reiterate the benefits of diverse leadership to optimize success within an institution. The thirteenth section discusses the current challenges in higher education based on the mass retirements of Baby Boomer presidents. Also discussed is the pipeline to the presidency for Hispanic leaders and the challenges with tracking accurate statistics of Hispanic leaders in higher education.

The fourteenth and final section titled The American Dream: Hispanics in the U.S. Workforce focused on the importance of educating the largest minority group in the country. This subject matter pertains to the U.S. economy and the sustainability of a vital workforce. After the importance of minority leadership in the workforce is established, this piece transitions to the discussion of successful minority leaders and their stories. The cultural significance of a diverse leadership and vital components such as hiring practices among boards of trustees and leadership initiatives transitions this study into the methodology section.

The growth trend for Hispanics, the largest minority group in the United States, is predicted to reach over 100 million by 2065 (Gonzalez-Barrera et al., 2017). In one decade (2000-2010), the Hispanic population grew by 43% (Albert et al., 2011). Despite high population trends, higher-education completion rates for Hispanics remain low. The 2017 Hechinger Report noted disparities between ethnic groups and completion rates in higher education (Kolodner, 2017, p. 1). Completion rates for Whites are 45% while Blacks and Hispanics experience a 32% and 21% completion rate, respectively (Carnevale, et al., 2017, p. 20).

As Hispanic students enter higher education in record-breaking numbers, reports show approximately 50% of Hispanic students chose to attend community colleges for their higher education needs (Krogstad, 2016). In 2017, over four million Hispanic students were enrolled in higher education institutions and half of those students choose to attend community colleges (Ginder, Kelly-Reid & Mann, 2018, p. 9). Despite the large number of Hispanic students attending two-year institutions, the leadership of these minority-serving institutions does not reflect the ethnic makeup of the students. Currently, Hispanic presidents occupy four percent of presidential roles in community colleges (Espinosa et al., 2017.) This number does not reflect the approximately two million Hispanics enrolled in two-year institutions (Krogstad, 2016), nor does it represent the Hispanic

population in the United States, which is currently at 56.5 million, 17% of the population (Gonzalez-Barrera et al., 2017).

Seminal studies from the 1970s and 1980s provide higher-education institutions valuable information when working toward the success of minority students. These studies show that when the college leadership reflects the student population, the student feels connected to the institution and graduates successfully (Tinto, 1975). Twenty years later, Aguirre and Martinez (1993) found little research on the influence of Hispanic leaders in higher education had been continued.

The studies mentioned provide examples of students of diverse backgrounds and their needs to navigate college effectively. Completion rates for minority students continue to be an ongoing issue. Regardless of the information put forth by scholars, the number of Hispanic presidents/CEOs has started to decrease. While many factors affect the success of minority students in postsecondary education, research shows that one of the catalysts for success is a connection to the leadership (Davila, 2011). Leadership is critically important in the community college due to the multifaceted, interdimensional challenges currently facing higher-education institutions. Furthermore, it takes a transformational leader to navigate the challenging times of higher education in today's world.

The responsibility of a college president is to serve as a role model and support the community college mission. One area of responsibility includes creating an institutional culture where students are welcomed as an asset to the institution. This requires a supportive environment that promotes student success for all, including Hispanics. Research has shown that administrators and staff who reflect the student population can become visible role models and are resources for Hispanic students (Andrade, et al., 2004).

Overall, this chapter provides a summary of the literature to illustrate the importance of addressing the decreasing number of Hispanic presidents during a time of phenomenal growth for Hispanic students attending community colleges.

Hispanics in the United States and Population Growth

In the 1970s, the term *Hispanic* was invented by the United States government for the United States Census (Albert et al., 2011). The United States Census Bureau (U.S. Census Bureau), overseen by the Economics and Statistics Administrations along with the Department of Commerce, is the federal government's largest statistical agency. Every 10 years, the U.S. Census Bureau collects current data about people, places, and the economy to create the U.S. Census. The Census Bureau's mission is "to serve as the nation's leading provider of quality data about its people and economy" (U.S. Bureau, 2018). Prior to the 1970s, systemic counting of people with roots in Spanish-speaking countries did not exist. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) identifies Hispanic as anyone whose origins are in Latin America, including people from non-Spanish-speaking countries such as Brazil (U.S. Census, 2018). The U.S. Census Bureau also categorizes Latinas/Latinos as persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, South or Central American, or other Spanish descent regardless of race. The author has chosen to use the term Hispanic for consistency and clarity in writing this thesis.

Data from the Census provides insight into the diversity of the country. In 2010, over 300 million people were living in the United States, and 50.5 million (16%) were of Hispanic descent. From 2000 to 2010, the two most significant subgroups to increase were the Mexican population, which increased by 54%, and the Cuban population, which had a 44% increase (Albert et al., 2011). The highest concentration of Hispanics in the geographical United States continues to be in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. Overall, Hispanics accounted for over 50% of total population growth in the United States from 2000 to 2010. According to the Pew Research Center, the latest population projections predict by 2065, the nation's Hispanic population will be 24% of all Americans (Bialik, Lopez, & Radford, 2018).

However, discrepancies with Census data create uncertainty in the numbers. In recent studies by the Pew Research Center, 11% of American adults with Hispanic ancestry did not identify as Hispanic (Gonzales-Barrera et al., 2017). The trends discussed assume that Hispanics will continue to self-identify considering the many changes in the Hispanic culture. Growth of self-identified Hispanics could slow even further, and the nation's own sense of its diversity could change as fewer Americans of Hispanic ancestry self-identify as Hispanic. Third-generation Hispanics (the third generation born into a country) are less likely to identify as Hispanics and are less likely to marry a person of Hispanic descent. Almost 100% of immigrant adults from Latin America or Spain and 92% of second-generation immigrants report having a Hispanic spouse. However, by the third generation—77% of a group made up of the U.S.-born children of U.S.-born parents and immigrant grandparents—do not self-identity as Hispanic, and by the fourth or higher generation (U.S.-born children of U.S.-born parents and U.S.-born grandparents, or even more distant relatives), just half of U.S. adults with Hispanic ancestry identify as Hispanic. Studies show that only 35% of the third-generation Hispanics are married to a Hispanic. This compares to first-generation Hispanics whose marriage rate to another Hispanic is at 91% (Bialik et al., 2018).

The sheer population growth of Hispanics and the challenges of categorizing people within the Hispanic culture is a testament to the diversity of a nation whose ancestral roots run deep. The data show the importance of acknowledging the social, educational, and economic power of the second-largest group in the Unites States. While the growth rate of the working-age population is predicted to decline overall, the number of working-age immigrants and children born in the United States to immigrant parents is expected to grow. The number of workers born in the United States to American parents is expected to shrink from 128.3 million to 120.1 million between 2015 and 2035. These foreseen challenges are of concern to the economic leaders of this country. By 2020, 65% of the jobs in the United States will require postsecondary education. Regardless of the strides being made, a majority of Hispanics, 55%, work with some high school credits or a high school diploma.

One major issue occurs when Hispanics are categorized as a homogenous group. There is a substantial difference in educational attainment once the subgroups are divided. Only 10% of Hispanics born in the United States do not have a high school diploma. However, for Hispanics not born in the United States, the number jumps to 39% (Carnevale & Fasules, 2017). As previously discussed, it is challenging to find solutions for a very diverse cultural group from different countries at different generational stages in the United States. To find solutions that increase educational attainment for an entire group is daunting, especially when there are different needs between the groups.

In the 1990s, authors of the ACE report stressed that statistics for Hispanic subgroups should be maintained separately. Also noted, was keeping separate statistics regarding immigrants vs. Hispanics born in the United States (Duarte, 1994). Hector Garza, Director of the ACE's Office of Minorities in Higher Education, stated:

> We can't lump everyone together as if everyone were having the same problem. We are finally beginning to see the aggregation of data by subgroup. This way we can begin to provide very specific services to address these problems. This is something we have been saying for over a decade (Duarte, 1994, p. 13).

Achieving the Dream: Hispanic Students in Higher Education

Hispanics in the United States have dealt with negative stereotypes such as being viewed as dirty and lazy. During the Second World War, many Anglos held these negative opinions and felt that Hispanic children were not elite enough to learn in the classroom with their Anglo classmates. This language was used as an excuse to segregate "Mexicans" into separate schools (MacDonald, 2013, p. 310). A turning point occurred during the 1920s-1940s, with the creation of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), in Corpus Christi, Texas. LULAC gave a voice to Mexican American children fighting for equality in their own country's school system by

representing minorities in school desegregation cases. One example was the *Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954* and the creation of teacher training colleges or community colleges (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954). During the fight for equality, many elite Hispanic families chose to send their children to Catholic universities for higher education. The mission of the private Catholic higher-education institution was in line with what a majority of Hispanics valued. They taught Spanish language, culture, sex segregation, and religion distinct from the public universities emerging during this era. Many of these Catholic colleges started first as academies to provide high school preparation before students reached collegiate status and accreditation (MacDonald, 2013, p. 314).

When community colleges opened for business, working-class Hispanic families now had an opportunity to send their children to college. Higher education was no longer just for the elite Hispanic families. The community college connected with the value system of traditional Hispanics, who preferred to keep their families in close proximity. In the mid-20th century, many Hispanic parents still adhered to the traditional rule that women in the family did not leave home until they were married. To live on their own was scandalous and a rarity. Parents who valued education but wanted to keep family values intact could send their daughter to a junior college while keeping her close to home. During the 1920s, in Brownsville, Texas, a primarily Mexican-American community (across the border from Matamoros, Mexico), high school students had the opportunity to attend the Junior College of the Lower Rio Grande Valley (currently Southmost College). In 1935, Del Mar College in Corpus Christi was founded and continues to serve the South Texas area today with an enrollment of approximately 12,000 full-time college students (MacDonald, 2013, p. 314).

Similar to other minority groups, advancement for Hispanics began to rise in the 1960s with the civil rights movement. During that time, activists called for "curricular changes that reflected the fluctuating composition of student populations, college faculty and staff to serve as role models for aspiring scholars, Hispanic culture and research centers, and financial means to realize these goals"

(MacDonald et al., 2007, p. 475). By the 1980s, the higher-education numbers began to reflect the fight for access. Between 1976 and 1998, the number of traditional-aged (18-23 years) Hispanic students attending a higher-education institution increased by 165%. The number of traditional-aged Hispanic students doubled in just eight years, from 400,000 students in 1990 to 800,000 students in 1998 (MacDonald et al., 2007). Similarly, with the rise in enrollment was the increase in college degrees attained by minority students. Hispanics in higher education had arrived. However, despite advancements during the mid-century and the astronomical growth in the late 1990s, the educational gap has continued to widen with the significant influx of Hispanics to the United States.

In 2018, the nation's largest ethnic minority group continued to have the lowest number of postsecondary educational attainment (Boggs, 2018, pg. 2). A significant concern with economic analysts is that the U.S. economy is dependent on the success of this all-encompassing group (Cunningham, et al., 2005; Nieto, 2007; Oguntoyinbo, 2009; Robles, 2009). While high school completion rates are improving for Hispanics in the United States, they are still lagging behind their Black and Anglo counterparts. In 2016, the high school completion rate for Hispanics in the United States was 83%, compared to 61% in 1992 (Carnevale, et al., 2017, p. 1). However, for Anglos and Blacks, completion rates are higher at 94% and 90%, respectively. A positive finding by researchers at Georgetown University Center on Education and Workforce is that Hispanic college enrollment rates continue to increase (Carnevale, et al., 2017, p. 6).

While the U.S. Census gave the country statistics to show the growth of minority populations, research on minority student higher-education success rates was limited until the early 2000s. During that time, researchers began studying challenges for minority students and tools to help them become successful in academia. Studies found that high-achieving Hispanic students encountered many challenges, including cultural and financial issues that served as barriers to completion (Gandara, 2006).

By the 2000s, Hispanic enrollment in higher education was consistent. First time in college enrollment increased significantly by 93%. During the same 10-year period, Blacks had a slight increase of 14%, and Anglos had a decrease of nine percent (Carnevale & Fasules, 2017, p. 12). Enrollment for Hispanics in selectively tiered schools who base enrollment on high academic criteria, also increased rapidly; yet, a majority of Hispanic students continue to choose community colleges as their first point of entry into higher education. Hispanics are enrolling and completing postsecondary certificates but are still falling behind when it comes to overall educational attainment (Carnevale & Fasules, 2017, p.12) (see Appendix D). Persistence rates of Hispanic students remain alarmingly low, which transitions to low numbers for postsecondary degrees. In the early 2000s, 13% of Hispanics over the age of 25 had obtained a bachelor's degree, compared with 33% of Caucasians, 47% of Asian-Americans, and 20% of African-American adults in the same age bracket (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). During that timeframe, Hispanics earned four percent of all master's degrees and two percent of doctoral degrees in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

While approximately 50% of Hispanic students chose to attend community colleges for their higher-education needs (Krogstad, 2016), studies report low numbers of Hispanic presidents at these institutions. Hispanic presidents currently occupy four percent of presidential roles in community colleges in the United States (Espinosa, Gagliardi, Taylor, & Turk, (2017). This number does not reflect the demographics of the Hispanic population in the United States, which is currently at 56.5 million (17%) (Bialik et al., 2018).

Community colleges have an extremely important role for Hispanic students as a majority begin their college careers at these institutions. In the past decade, high school dropout rates for Hispanics have improved, and in 2014, numbers showed a 22% increase in college enrollment compared to 2004 (Krogstad, 2016). Currently, 14.8% of the Hispanic population, age 25 and older, have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Census, 2018). Increasing educational attainment

in the Hispanic community is imperative for the overall welfare of all American citizens (Albert et al., 2011). Given the high volume of Hispanics in the United States, this issue no longer becomes about the advancement of one group, but of the entire nation.

Seminal Studies on Student Success

Seminal studies from the 1970s and 1980s that focused on nontraditional, minority students have shown that when the college leadership reflects the student population, the student feels connected and persists to graduation (Tinto, 1975). This research illustrates the importance of having a leadership team reflective of the student population to enhance the success of all students. This is particularly helpful with Hispanic students, who continue to fall behind in completion rates compared to other ethnic groups (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002; Nuñez, 2009). Tinto's work with the student integration model in the 1970s exhibited that positive faculty/staff interactions are critical to Hispanic students' success (Tinto, 1975). One of Tinto's unifying themes revolved around the student's social environment and the importance this element had to success in college. In later studies by Tinto (1993), he found that a sense of belonging at the institution occurred within the academic and social environments of the college, which includes positive interactions with faculty and staff. Tinto also recognized that not all students fit a particular mold. He began researching the different needs of diverse groups which led to researching the difference between traditional and nontraditional students. What Tinto found was that a large majority of the Hispanic population fit the nontraditional student profile. Nonacademic responsibilities often kept them from traditional types of involvement in college. Information emerged that was relevant to the success of the nontraditional student. Studies that focused on the nontraditional student gave insight into the necessary elements for success.

The Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI)

The significant growth of the Hispanic population in higher education led the U.S. Department of Education to classify colleges as HSIs. As defined by Title V of the Higher Education Act, the HSI is "an institution of higher education that is (A) an eligible institution; and (B) has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25% Hispanic students at the end of the award year immediately preceding the date of application" (HACU, 2016, p. 1.) In 2016, there were 415 HSIs in the United States, according to the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities. One challenge noted by Cross (2011) was the mission of an HSI is not solely based on serving the Hispanic student but all students. In 2003, HSIs accounted for 45% of the total Hispanic college enrollment across the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). However, colleges that solely prioritize the Hispanic student have never been actualized.

In comparison, the mission of historically black colleges and universities is specific in the success of the minority population that they serve. There is also advocacy by other minority-serving institutions, which were created to support specific groups in higher education. These groups include tribal colleges and universities (TCU) and Asian American and Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AAPISI) (U.S. Department of the Interior, 2019; E.O. 13515 of Oct 14, 2009). The TCUs allow American Indians to attend a higher education institution within their own culture and community and focus on graduating American Indian students who needs are not met by predominantly white institutions (Ridingin, 2008). The current mission of the TCU is to counterbalance the suppression of the American Indian within the U.S. and are unique in ensuring a trusting relationship between the native nations and the federal government, which makes the foundation different than the other minority serving institutions (MSIs) (Tribal Colleges, 2019).

The Recurring Barrier: Hispanic Leadership in Higher Education

For decades, the typical community college president has been an Anglo male over the age of 60. When Tomás Rivera (1985), a migrant farmworker from Texas, became the first Hispanic CEO in a university system in 1979, he broke the barrier for minorities to aspire to the highest leadership role in higher education (Acevedo, 1979). Upon completing his Ph.D. in 1971, Rivera started as an associate professor and elevated to the administration ranks in higher-education institutions. As associate dean at the University of Texas in San Antonio, Rivera was promoted to vice-president and then executive vice-president at the University of Texas in El Paso. In less than a year, he was hired to serve as chancellor for the University of California-Riverside. However, after Rivera, it took until 2002 for the next wave of Hispanic leaders to succeed in securing a presidency/CEO position (Perez, 2005). The pioneering research by Haro (1995) found that Hispanic leaders who secured a finalist position, would encounter negative perceptions by search committee members. For instance, the institution where the Hispanic candidate obtained their doctoral degree was scrutinized at a higher level compared to their Anglo counterparts (Martinez, 1993, p. 11). During interviews with search committee members, Haro captured negative perceptions regarding Hispanic candidates. Search committee members labeled candidates as "emotional, unpredictable, wimpy, and coddled when describing Hispanic candidates" (Haro, 1995, p. 203). Haro (1995) pointed out, "they were held to a much higher level of preparation and achievement than either white males or females" (p. 203).

Research on Hispanic Leaders in Higher Education

Ruiz (1990) conducted a study on leadership behavior where he identified unique problems as perceived by Hispanic community college presidents. He found that family values and institutional values had a strong influence on the leader's philosophy and behavior. In addition, the issue of ethnicity was noted to cause role conflict for Hispanic presidents, thus,

adding responsibilities to their already complicated lives. Ruiz (1990) also found that to be successful, Hispanic presidents must balance both ethnic and organizational matters.

In 1997, Mata conducted a multi-method study regarding leadership development with 40 Hispanic community college presidents. Mata found "luck, making geographic moves, Hispanic consciousness, encouragement, and mentors" (p. 57) led to the presidency. Challenges reported by the presidents included a lack of cultural capital, as well as other cultural and systemic barriers. A decade later, Rodríguez (2005) explored the experiences, events, and circumstances that provided four Hispanics the opportunity to become the president of a community college. Specifically, Rodríguez's goal was to capture the individual experiences of the four Hispanic community college presidents who came from working-class, immigrant families as they ascended to the presidency. Seven themes emerged from the study: (a) the influence of family, (b) a sense of struggle and resilience, (c) positive connections to schools and learning, (d) quality mentoring experiences, (e) participation in leadership development programs, (f) a strong commitment to public service, and (g) the impact of race, culture, and gender (Rodríguez, 2005, p. 163).

Silva's (2007) dissertation also examined the career development of successful Hispanic administrators in higher education through the Delphi method. The Delphi study utilized a panel of administrators who served as vice-presidents, presidents, and chancellors in higher education from across the United States. Four research questions guided the study (Silva, 2007, p. 9):

1. What are positive experiences encountered by Hispanic higher-education administrators that enabled them to be successful?
2. What strategies did Hispanic higher-education administrators utilize that enabled them to be a successful?

3. What recommendations do Hispanic higher-education administrators make for future Hispanic administrators to be successful in higher-education?
4. What strategies will be critical for future Hispanic administrators to use to be successful in higher education?

In response to research question one, the panel of experts indicated sustaining personal motivation, having the ability to work with others, learning from personal mistakes, developing interpersonal skills, and earning multiple degrees as experiences one needs to be a successful administrator. When the participants were asked what strategies they utilized to be successful, they indicated personal skills, focusing on students, completing appropriate credentials such as a doctoral degree, maintaining integrity, always following through with commitments, and paying one's dues. The panel also provided a list of strategies needed for future Hispanic administrators to be successful such as developing people skills (emotional intelligence), obtaining a doctoral degree, gaining experience, forming a strong team, learning the trade, and being prepared for opportunities.

Studies targeted at the pioneering group of minorities in higher-education leadership depict a collection of shared values such as respect, honesty, service, and generosity. These values unify Hispanic culture and nurture a collective identity (Bordas, 2014; Rodríguez, 2016). Many mainstream theories correspond with the values shared by the Hispanic culture. Leadership theories, such as servant leadership by Robert Greenleaf, suggest the importance of community and service to others such as in the Hispanic culture (Bordas, 2014). The narratives of the Hispanic faculty illustrate a dismal picture regarding race relations in the United States (Holmes, 2004; Muñoz, 2008; Ramos, 2008). The study of race and its significance in the hierarchy of social capital in American society has been studied and theorized by scholars. The

following section describes Critical race theory and its significance in understanding the need for analysis and theoretical frameworks that acknowledge all races and ethnicities.

Critical Race Theory

Mari Matsuda (1991) defined the Critical race theory (CRT) space as,

> The work of progressive legal scholars of color who are attempting to develop a jurisprudence that accounts for the role of racism in American law and that work toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of eliminating all forms of subordination. (p. 1331).

The CRT framework gave scholars a realistic base to work from, compared to the Critical legal studies (CLS) framework which did not allow for racism within the analysis (Yosso, 2005 p. 71). Scholars such as Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman argued that the CLS critique of the law could not offer viable strategies for social transformation because it did not include race and racism into the analysis (Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). In 2014, these experiences were examined by Lopez, who applied critical race theory (CRT) to study the challenges that minority administrators experience. Lopez used the premise of CRT which states that race and racism are central in U.S. society, and people of color live with this knowledge based on legitimate life experiences (Lopez, 2014). With CRT used as a lens in the research, the struggles administrators of color endured are understood and defined through their experiences, perspectives, and voices (Gonzalez, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Yosso, 2005).

In 2005, Yosso used CRT to show that social capital in the U.S. focuses on the White, middle-class culture, while the backgrounds and values of communities of color are not taken into account. This led Yosso to create a new community cultural wealth framework which focused on people of color and how their culture shapes their social capital. Out of this

framework, six types of social capital were delineated: aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant (Yosso, 2005, pp. 77-80). Examples include:

1. Aspirational capital- people of color exhibit resilience that helps them maintain their hopes and dreams for the future in the face of difficult circumstances.

2. Linguistic capital- for bilingual individuals who serve as translators for their families, achieved social skills and understanding of dynamics or complex situations at an early age, but also signifies a range of communication skills that includes storytelling.

3. Familial capital- motivates people of color to connect with each other and with community resources.

4. Social capital- individuals create support networks and keep close connections to all communities.

5. Navigational capital- people of color learn to maneuver through systems and institutions that may pose many challenges for them because of racism.

6. Resistant capital refers to individuals responding to inequality or injustice by being oppositional (Yosso, 2005, pp. 77-80).

The structure of CRT helped to develop other frameworks specific to minority groups. For example, in furthering the applications of CRT, the development of Latino critical theory (LCT) addressed the specific layers of racialized subordination experienced by Hispanics that were different from the Black-White binary that characterized the traditional U.S. race relations paradigm (Johnson & Martinez, 2000; Yosso, 2005). In 2005, Ladson-Billings and Tate proposed the continuing and significant role of race in education, and thus, the appropriateness of using CRT in exploring educational equity issues in educational scholarship. Furthermore,

Neilson and Suyemoto (2009) proposed that not using culturally sensitive frameworks limits the researcher's ability to understand fully the experiences and realities of people of color.

In summary, research that uses CRT is based on the idea that administrators of color start from an unleveled stratum. CRT does not view administrators of color as deficient because of the realities they face. The value of the individual's experiences creates a lens from which they can guide students through the challenging reality of a world that sees skin color first.

Diversity Fatigue

The term diversity fatigue was first discussed in 2016 during an edition of National Public Radio's (NPR) "Talk of the Nation" (Smith, 2013, p. 60). Starting in the 1970s, U.S. companies invested significant resources to educate employees about diversity. Similarly, U.S. companies expanded recruitment and retention efforts to increase diversity. Notwithstanding, the hiring of qualified minority employees has not progressed at a suitable rate to match the growing diversity within the United States.

In the higher education world, Smith interviewed diversity officers on college campuses, and found negative outlooks about diversity. Feelings of helplessness were common (Smith, 2013) due to the small increase of diverse faculty/staff despite all efforts to create change. Studies showed that companies and organizations noticed employees were often forced to attend diversity workshops. Tackling hard issues was challenging and after training sessions, the work culture was never addressed to optimize cultural differences (Schumpeter, 2016). Mariam B. Lam, associate Vice chancellor and Chief diversity officer at the University of California at Riverside, noted that the commitment to a diverse workplace was not for lack of trying, but instead described the diversity fatigue that occurs to the people who are the most committed to diversity work. Many of the underrepresented faculty and staff balanced negative feelings such

as frustration and anger due to lack of mentorship, uncertain resources and family-care responsibilities (Lam, 2018, p. 1). These issues are common for first-generation scholars, according to Lam.

The Role of Mentorship

Research has shown the importance of mentoring leaders who are on the pathway to a presidency/CEO position within higher education. From a scholarly perspective, the study of mentorship was first introduced in 1978 by researchers studying human development (Levinson, Darrow, Levinson, Klein, & Mckee, 1978). The definition of mentorship can vary depending on the focus area. In the field of education, Cohen defined mentorship as a "one-to-one relationship that evolves through reasonable distinct phases between the mentor and the protégé" (Cohen, 1995).

In 2001, an analysis of the AACC Leadership survey found that mentoring played a crucial role in preparing people for leadership positions. Fifty-seven percent of respondents reported that having a mentor was either valuable or very valuable in helping them obtain their current presidency. Sixty two percent indicated that a mentor was either valuable or very valuable in preparing them for the everyday challenges and tasks of the presidency (Weisman, & Vaughan, 2002). As further evidence of the importance of mentorship, 76% of CEOs who had been on the job for more than three years indicated they have been a formal mentor in developing the career of a community college professional (Shults, 2001, p. 4).

In 2005, a study by VanDerLinden noted that mentoring was the key ingredient to preparing a successful versus unsuccessful administrator (VanDerLinden, 2005). She found that

through the mentoring relationship, role modeling, and sharing information, gave the protégé social capital that was invaluable (Rabey, 2011, p. 28).

While the importance of mentorship has been documented, Duree found that approximately half community college presidents reported having a mentor prior to taking the reigns as a college president (Duree, 2008). This shows that half of the leadership had not been given the opportunity to be mentored along their professional career. Mentoring which may be considered a commodity by leaders was reported as vital for individuals preparing to take on the colossal role of leading a higher education institution.

The Minority Female in Academia

The group that has come to the forefront in recent years in postsecondary education is the Hispanic female. Women of Hispanic descent have higher certificate and associate degree completion rates compared to all men, including Anglos; however, Anglo women continue to have the highest bachelor's degree completion rate. Gorena's (1996) study of 68 Hispanic women within four ethnic groups (i.e., Central/South-American, Cuban, Mexican-American, Puerto Rican) who held senior-level administrative positions in postsecondary institutions provides insight into the perceived experiences of these female administrators. This study examined the perceptions of these women toward factors that positively influenced or hindered their advancement into a leadership position. Gorena (1996) provided four areas to categorize the perceived experiences of these women leaders. The four categories were (a) personal and professional, (b) family, (c) support, and (d) institutional.

Other studies have cataloged challenges minority women experience while interviewing for administration positions. For instance, one minority female administrator in Vaughan's (1990) study was asked questions regarding who was going to take care of her children while she

was performing her presidential duties. Another minority female administrator was asked if she was tough enough to handle other administrators (Vaughan, 1990b; Savala, 2014). Gutierrez, et al., (2002), conducted a study of 16 Hispanic senior-level administrators at community colleges. The participants identified mentoring, leadership development programs, and earning a doctoral degree as ways that they prepared to work in their current positions. Muñoz (2010) examined the experiences of Hispanic women community administrators on their pathways to the presidency. Through a mixed-method study, Muñoz administered surveys and conducted interviews, which showed that 75% of participants were mentored prior to the presidency. The interviews gave insight into the importance of mentoring, support from family, professional development opportunities, and earning a doctoral degree as essential to assuming a leadership position. Hansen's (1997) dissertation examined the challenges that participants identified, such as sexism, prejudice, and family and career balance. These stories, while challenging, also show the strides Hispanic female administrators are making within higher education. Other studies have focused on different ethnic groups of minority women and found similar challenges. In 2007, African-American female administrators reported a strong sense of self and support from their families as well as strong expectations to help them succeed (Chatman, 1991; Williams, 2007). Participants also identified challenges of sexism, prejudice, and trying to balance family and career. These studies illustrate the struggle that all minority leaders continue to face within higher education and our broader society.

Community College Leadership

In 2013, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) produced a list of competencies to guide community colleges to successfully hire a new president/CEO. According to AACC (2013), "an effective community college leader promotes the success of all students,

strategically improves the quality of the institution, and sustains the community college mission based on knowledge of the organization, its environment, and future trends" (p. 6). Competencies include the following categories:

- institutional finance, research, fundraising, and resource management,
- communication,
- collaboration, and
- community college advocacy (AACC, 2013, pp. 8-11).

According to the experts, the emerging leader must work on perfecting leadership skills in a variety of areas. Along with the four competency areas, AACC also suggests obtaining a doctoral degree from an institution with a community college leadership program. This recommendation falls in line with the progression to the presidency in the last twenty years. Research indicates that obtaining a doctoral degree continues to be a vital indicator of the presidency. Approximately 90% of presidents/CEOs in community colleges hold a doctoral degree. In 2003, Gilroy reported in the *Hispanic Outlook for Higher Education*, the challenge for Hispanics is the low numbers of doctoral degrees obtained. Doctoral degree attainment for Hispanics is at four percent, which is below the national average (Gilroy, 2003). The progression of competencies mentioned by AACC are meant to begin with an emerging leader and transition the leader from a successful new CEO to an established CEO. The traditional route to the president/CEO position is no longer the only way to achieve the presidency. In 2017, the *American College President Study* examined survey data of approximately 1500 leaders. A third of the respondents reported transitioning from a dean position to an executive role, which does not follow the traditional provost to president route (Espinosa et al., 2017).

In 2001, 13 Hispanic presidents/CEOs were leading higher-education institutions. Five years later, the number had increased to 22 Hispanic presidents/CEOs. In 2008, Del Los Santos and Vega specifically studied the community college president/CEO position and found that 55 of 90 Hispanic

presidents/CEOs in higher education were employed at community colleges (p. 172). This reflects that while the overall numbers of Hispanics leading institutions may be small, a higher percentage thrive in the community college arena.

In 2016, AACC surveyed community college chief executive officers to collect data on views and other information such as financial compensation. The median salary for a president/CEO was reported at $185,000, with over half reporting to a local board. Also included in compensation packages were automobile expenses, housing, and professional dues. The report also noted that Hispanic CEOs were less likely to respond to the survey than their Anglo counterparts. Eighty percent of CEOs reported that they would retire in the next ten years. Hispanic CEOs who responded to the surveys reported higher median salaries than CEOs from other racial and ethnic backgrounds. An explanation noted in the report was that Hispanic males were more likely to be employed at large colleges or colleges with multiple campuses, which was related to higher base salaries (Phillippe, 2016, p. 6) (See Appendix F).

The 2017 American College President Study by ACE confirms the low number of Hispanic leaders in higher education (Espinosa et al., 2017). Even more challenging is the American Association of Community Colleges CEO Survey. Feedback from 239 active CEOs who completed the survey indicated that "one-third of sitting CEOs will retire within five years, and 80% of sitting CEOs will retire within the next 10 years" (Phillipe, 2016, p. 3). While these numbers pose a monumental challenge for the higher-education community, this problem can also be seen as an opportunity to prioritize diversity in searches for community college presidents.

The earliest study known to have focused on Hispanic administrators was in 1977 by Esquibel. The scholarly work studied Chicano administrators in the Southwest: Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. Acevedo followed up two years later in 1979 and studied mid-level administrators in Texas institutions of higher education (Acevedo, 1979). His study identified four situational factors that Chicano administrators believed influenced their appointments within

higher education. These four situational factors were (a) contacts and political involvement of the Chicano administrator; (b) affirmative action plans and requirements; (c) Chicano concentration or the ethnic composition of the institution and the community, in which it is located; and, (d) Chicano pressures and contacts in the Chicano community (Acevedo, 1979). This study set the framework for much of the work that would follow on Hispanic leadership in higher education. Fifteen years later, Esquibel (1992) replicated his study and identified three additional situational factors that Chicano administrators believed influenced their appointments within higher education. The three additional factors included: (a) new initiatives, such as training programs, workshops, incentive programs, lawsuits, and networking; (b) the emphasis the administrator places on maintaining Chicano roots; and (c) pressure by Hispanic students and other staff during the 1970s pushed the affirmative action movement forward. At that time, these trailblazers were lacking mentors being that they were the first to reach those milestones.

While studying Hispanic leadership in the early 1990s, Aguirre and Martinez (1993) found that very little research had been conducted since the 1970s regarding leadership roles for Hispanics in higher education. Their study found that there were higher expectations for Hispanic presidential candidates, which created a challenging climb to the top.

In the 1980s, the ACE's Division of Policy Analysis studied minority roles in higher-education institutions. The study found that 80% of Hispanics employed by a higher-education institution were in non-faculty and non-management positions. Hispanic faculty only represented two percent of the population (Duarte, 1994). Research has shown that increased percentages of minorities in positions of power tend to support the recruitment of additional minority candidates for administrative roles (Opp & Smith, 1996).

With the momentum of acknowledging the need for diversification in higher education, the state of California created the California Master Plan for Higher Education. This state-appointed committee concluded that diversity was critical for the educational development of all students

(University of California, Office of the President, 1989). Similarly, in the Supreme Court case of *Grutter v. Bollinger*, the court relied on information that supported diversity as a substantial benefit for promoting student support in the interest of a diverse and productive workforce (Grutter v. Bollinger, 2003).

A review of the literature in 2008 by Alfredo G. de los Santos Jr. and Irene I. Vega provided a holistic view of the studies focusing on Hispanics and the president/CEO position (de los Santos Jr., et al., 2008). What they found was a limited array of scholarly research that focused attention on Hispanic leaders in higher education. Martinez (2005) noted, "There still is no discernable body of knowledge on the nature and dynamics about Latino leadership in higher education" (p. 17). This literature review concurred with Haro and Lara (2003), who recognized that when the "professional literature is reviewed, there were but a handful of studies prepared on Hispanics in leadership roles in American higher education" (p. 153).

While limited, the research material serves as a tool to understand the opportunities and challenges faced by Hispanic administrators in higher education as they ascend to the president/CEO role. The next section in this chapter expounds on the research from the last 20 years, which has given higher education valuable perspectives from the Hispanic leader.

Leadership Theory

The original mission of the community college combined with the 21st-century federal initiatives detail what lies ahead for community college leaders. "Institutional transformation cannot take place without the development and continual improvement of a college's leadership. The expectations we have of our leaders are different from past expectations; priorities must shift to accountability and improving student success" (AACC, 2013, p. 2).

Bensimon, Neumann, and Birnbaum (1989) reported that despite the many leadership styles and theories, few theories of leadership in higher education had been studied and developed. In the

late 1980s, there were no established theoretical frameworks to guide in this specific area of work (Bensimon, et al., 1989; Gardner, 1995). Many leadership theories can be applied to the community college arena. The theories introduced in this literature review vary in behavior and characteristics, however, they can be directly applied to leadership within a two-year higher education institution. For example, transformational management theory creates a culture of high moral standards with high achieving outcomes (Yukl, 2012). The basis of transformational management theory is to exhibit behavioral characteristics of kindness, care, compassion, and principled centeredness to mitigate issues of institutional turbulence while promoting organizational change (Sarros and Santora, 2001). The second type of theory, spirituality theory, is based on how individuals construct knowledge through symbolic processes. For example, movement toward an authentic identity is related to the notion of metanoia. In the process of metanoia, or change of heart, our view of the world shifts from self to others (Tisdell, 2003).

According to Hellmich (2007), ethical leadership is an approach closely related to various leadership theories such as great man theory and situational leadership theory. Great man theory originated in 1880 from Thomas Carlyle, who proposed the theory in his book *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (Carlyle, 1880). The main ideas revolved around how powerful the world could be if powerful and inspired people were to have the power he thought they deserved. Situational leadership theory is based on the premise that no single leadership style is best. The appropriate leadership style depends on adapting to the situation and the strategies implemented for the most optimal performance (Cherry, 2019).

Schulte (2009) suggested that ethical leadership theory resembles other leadership models and approaches such as leader-member exchange theory, the contingency model, and democratic theory, which focuses on honesty, equality, and the human rights of others. Sernak (2010) noted that democratic leaders demonstrate norms of decency. Decency is the ability to show care, love,

and respect for others (Sernak, 2010). Sernak also stated that a democratic leader must value differences in others, have the ability to engage in dialogue, and function as thinkers. Decency involves the obligation to explore new concepts, ideas, and actions that initiate change (Sernak, 2010).

In 1989, Roueche, Baker, and Rose identified effective behaviors of leaders and built theory that focused on the community college arena. For example, regarding transformative leadership, the major conceptual components associated with the transformational management theory consist of 11 constructs (TMT Coliseum) designed to address various challenges facing the mission of community colleges, specifically concerning strategic organizational management change.

These various leadership theories have characteristics that align with the American Association of Community College competencies for community college leaders. For example, in 2013, AACC's competencies included a leader who is strategic in moving the college in a forward direction, is committed and passionate about student success, and can assess and adapt to the situation (AACC, 2013, pp. 6-8). AACC revised the competencies in 2018 and included a more comprehensive document that focused on developing emerging leaders at all levels. Competency areas for aspiring president/CEOs included the ability to advocate for and motivate others towards a common goal and using data to move the college in a positive direction (AACC, 2018, pp. 3-56). The mission of the community college requires a leader who will advocate for all, have compassion, vision, and is willing to stand up for what is right. The statistics and stories collected over the years on Hispanic leaders demonstrate the attributes described in the leadership theories mentioned above. The traits necessary to lead institutions are essential to the select few who have the privilege to serve as a president/CEO of a community college. The

community college institutional challenges have stimulated a change in basic assumptions in management theory and strategic visioning concerning college wellness. The leadership theories that provide valuable organizational routines that transform an institution are spiritual leadership, ethical leadership, reverence leadership, and transformative leadership. These leadership theories and models can be classified as trait theories, behavioral theories, contingency theories, power and influence theories, cultural and symbolic theories, and cognitive theories (Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006; Carduci, Contreras-McGavin, & Kezar, 2006).

Leaders today have a variety of theoretical frameworks to use when establishing themselves as the next great wave of leadership that is coming to community colleges.

Do the Numbers Tell the Truth?

AACC vice-president Margaret Rivera addressed the specific issue of low numbers of Hispanic presidents in community colleges in an article written in the *Hispanic Outlook on Higher Education*. She stated,

> The pipeline for the presidency has typically been through faculty and academic administration, and it's a fairly long route. We've been trying to track new hires as they come on board, and we are seeing evidence that there is an increase in Hispanics at various levels of administration (Gilroy, 2003, p. 23).

In the 1990s, the *Leaning Ivory Tower* (Gonzalez, 1995) reported on Hispanics and leadership in higher education. The study found significant biases regarding minority candidates. After this, few studies were conducted, which Haro (1990) described as "benign neglect syndrome," and, which scholars define as White indifference regarding problems specific

to minority populations when attaining leadership roles. In the early 2000s, studies began to emerge, addressing the need for diverse, qualified presidential candidates in higher education.

AACC launched leadership 2020 to address the mass exodus of presidents/CEOs projected to retire in the next decade. In 2002, a study published by Gutierrez et al. of Mountain View College showed a decrease in doctoral degrees awarded to Hispanics across all educational fields. This identified a significant issue because the doctoral degree has been recognized as the gateway to the president/CEO position.

In review, 20 years ago, the low numbers of minorities in leadership roles was alarming, however, the higher-education community was aware of the issue. Community colleges and organizations such as AACC, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), and the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE) united to address the issue. (Stripling, 2017). Haro continued with follow-up studies that showed minorities, especially Hispanics, were also lacking the social capital that colleges were looking for in a president (Acevedo, 1979; Haro & Lara, 2003; Lopez, 2014). In 2018, the numbers remained low and unfortunately have decreased (Duarte, 1994; Espinosa et al., 2017; Gilroy, 2003; Jaschik & Lederman, 2017).

Of the many challenges these leaders face, preparing the future workforce for a robust economy is a top priority. The next section delves into the critical role that community colleges have for a workforce that is becoming increasingly diverse.

U.S. Workforce and Economy

In the 1960s, sociologists began focusing on the relationship between social structure and economic development. They examined the consequences of industrialization and development

on social structure and mobility, which had long been avoided by economic theorists (Smelser & Lipset, 1966). What researchers found was the existence of a relationship between minorities and growth as well as elites and growth. Economic growth changes society, altering the composition of wealth, the sources of political power, the residence of people, and the identity of social groups. In all societies, there are leaders or elites. Minorities also are a component of most societies. They are more heterogeneous than elites, but typically are defined ethnically, politically, or economically. Because of their position in society, minorities can be excluded from economic growth, can lead economic growth, or can occupy positions in between (Brezis & Temin, 2003, p. 3).

In 2012, the Center for American Progress took a bold stance on the future of the economy and the need for a diverse workforce. Their report concluded, "Businesses that recruit from a diverse workforce are better able to find the best and the brightest talent needed to compete in an increasingly competitive economy" (2012, p. 1). Their stance of inclusivity and diversity acknowledged the necessity of a diverse workforce for the economic stability of the country. Innovation and creativity thrive within a diverse environment where innovation and creative solutions catapult society into an increasingly competitive economy. A diverse workforce is a catalyst for economic growth (Burns, Baron, & Kerby, 2012, p. 6).

Unfortunately, higher education is not the only sector where diversity within the ranks of the leadership is lacking. The National Minority Supplier Development Council annual report shows the relevance of the minority business community to the economy of the United States and how the economy benefits within local communities where minority businesses are based, but also the nation (Vowels, 2017). In a time of rapidly changing demographics, the minority business sector is arguably the fastest-growing segment of small business. Therefore, it makes

sense that ensuring the success of the minority business community will have significant, positive effects on both the U.S. economy in general, and each of the 50 states covered by the NMSDC in particular. Simply put, the fledgling economies of many of the states under the jurisdiction of the NMSDC cannot reach their full and true potential unless the minority business community in each of the states is growing and reaching its full and true potential (Burns, et al., 2012).

> The U.S. workforce continues to become more diverse. As of June 2012, people of color made up 36% of the labor force. When subdivided by race and ethnicity, approximately 99,945,000 (64%) in the labor force are non-Hispanic white; 24,679,000 (16%) are Hispanic; 18,758,000 (12%) are African-American; and 8,202,000 (5%) are Asian. Approximately 4,801,000 people (3%) in the labor force do not identify with any of these racial or ethnic categories. The proportion of people of color participating in the workforce will only increase as the United States becomes more racially and ethnically diverse. Census data predict that by 2050, there will be no racial or ethnic majority in our country. Furthermore, between 2000 and 2050, new immigrants and their children will account for 83% of the growth in the working-age population (Burns, et al., 2012, p. 2).

By 2020, the labor force is projected to reach more than 164 million people, a six percent increase from today (Department of Labor, 2012). Economists project the labor force participation rate will decrease over the coming decades, as an aging population of Baby Boomers exits the workforce.

Summary

As half of Hispanic college students in the United States continue to utilize community colleges as a gateway to higher education (Krogstad, 2016), the need to employ administrators

who are reflective of the student body is critical. The decrease in Hispanic presidents/CEOs in the past decade is alarming. For future Hispanics in higher-education administration to be successful, participants recommended obtaining a doctoral degree, developing personal skills, maintaining integrity, always following through with commitments, and gaining experience (Silva, 2007). The path of Hispanic administrators in higher education has been documented by few. Regardless of the organizations dedicated to the advancement of higher education, Hispanic administrators in higher education, and the rise of the Hispanic population, there continues to be a sharp contrast in the number of Hispanic presidents/CEOs serving community colleges compared to the Hispanic population in the U.S.

This chapter introduced relevant findings of Hispanic people and how the U.S. government categorizes this large ethnic group. Challenges that Hispanics have encountered when attempting to receive an education in the U.S. and obstacles faced once they became leaders in higher education were discussed. Studies regarding leadership theory and focused studies on minority females in higher education were introduced. The last section addressed the need for an educated workforce and how the success of the Hispanic in secondary education relates to the success of the U.S. economy. The next chapter will focus on the research methodology applied to research the low numbers of Hispanic presidents/CEOs in community colleges.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore disproportionately low numbers of Hispanic community college president/CEOs in the United States by using a qualitative research design structured within grounded theory analysis. This chapter presents the statement of the problem, research questions, and the importance of the qualitative method for the structure of this study. The author explained the importance of using a grounded theory approach and discussed the advantages and disadvantages of gathering data. This chapter highlights the research methodology and design. The author focused on the following research questions:

1. What are the experiences Hispanic leaders face on the pathway to the presidency?
    a. What are the obstacles Hispanic leaders face on the path to the presidency?
    b. What are the opportunities for Hispanic leaders on the path to the presidency?

The information obtained from these questions helped the researcher to comprehend what lived experiences have positioned individuals who identify as Hispanic to succeed in the world of higher education, which continues to be an Anglo-dominated environment. The researcher planned to understand any new obstacles to the presidency for Hispanics that have arisen in the last 10 years. This information helped to analyze thoroughly why the number of Hispanics in presidency roles has decreased from five percent to four percent in the past decade.

2. What are the cultural practices or norms that impact Hispanics in their quest for the community college residency?

This information identified traits within the Hispanic culture that influence positively and negatively when an individual of Hispanic descent ascends to the highest level in a higher-education institution.

3. What has been the contributions of the Hispanic network in preparing for the presidency?

The goal of this question was to gather information that enhances opportunities for Hispanics in higher education. The objective was to understand the influence that these programs emphasized in the advancement of Hispanics in higher education. The procedures for selecting and recruiting participants, as well as data collection and analysis methods, were fully outlined.

Attention was given to the adherence of research ethics to maintain professionalism and integrity during this study. The researcher obtained permission by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct research for the purpose of her doctoral dissertation. Along with IRB approval, the researcher followed principles set forth by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2016). The APA has five guiding principles regarding ethics to preserve the honesty and the transparency for a researcher's work (APA, 2016). The first principle, A: Beneficence and nonmaleficence. The researcher ensured that the research design did not harm any of the participants that agreed to partake in the study. APA also recommends protecting researchers by adding that all professionals involved in the research discuss publication accreditation prior to the beginning of the project, so that there is clear delineation on who will receive credit and at what level. This research was done by a sole researcher who conducted analysis for her doctoral dissertation. The second principle, B: Fidelity and responsibility. The researcher played a single role in this research and took into account her bias, as she was the only person to interview the participants. She ensured the participants were given a cordial interview process where they had the opportunity to answer questions about their personal and professional lives. Participants had the right to refrain from answering any of the questions asked by the researcher. The third principle, C: Integrity. Prior to participation in the research, all participants were provided

detailed information in writing on the purpose of the study, duration and confidentiality parameters (Appendix B &C). At any time during the research study, participants were allowed to leave the study with no explanation to the researcher. The fourth principle, D: Justice. This principle states that the researcher exercises reasonable judgment and takes precautions to ensure that their biases and limitations of their expertise does not lead to unjust behavior or practices. The researcher ensured that steps were taken to guarantee that participant personal information was kept confidential. Data collected digitally, was kept in a digital file folder that was encrypted with a four digit pin number that was only identifiable to the researcher. No other individual had access to participant information and data. Once individuals agreed to participate, the researcher assigned a numerical identifier that was used throughout data analysis and to describe report findings in the document. All paper documents were stored in the researcher's office in a locked cabinet. The researcher was the sole individual who has access to the cabinet. After three years, the researcher plans to shred all documents with participant identifier information. Finally, the fifth principle, E: Respect for people's rights and dignity. The researcher respected cultural, individual, and role differences, including those based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status. The researcher considered these factors when recruiting members of a specific ethnic group to participate in the study (APA, 2016).

The researcher also ensured that APA ethical guidelines were met. Along with informed consent, which was outlined in the principles, participants were also given detailed information prior to the study so that there was no deception about the nature of the study or coercion. Individuals participated at will and were not given any type of compensation for participation in

the study. Protection of data was outlined for participants to ensure anonymity throughout the study (APA, 2016).

Rationale for Methodology

For this research, the author planned a qualitative methodology to approach the study. A primary focus of qualitative research is to understand the information the researcher is collecting. There are two perspectives to this idea: One is that the researcher uses his or her own frame of reference to understand people. The second is to understand the lives of the individuals being studied from their own perspectives and in their own contexts using their specific words and concepts. This notion is referred to as *Verstehen,* which is central to the qualitative methodology (Bailey, Hennink, & Hutter, 2011). The qualitative research design was appropriate for this study because it allowed the author to gather critical information regarding an individual's personal experiences that could only be collected through the shared experience. This design allowed for research questions to be developed in a fluid manner and to be refined while the researcher developed the design cycle. This process is a deductive conceptual framework that brings all information together in a concise manner to transfer to thorough data collection and analysis. The abstract research questions originated from many sources including the literature review and existing theories (Bailey et al., 2011).

Researchers who use a qualitative data design as their system seek to "understand subjective meaningful experiences and the meaning of social actions within the context in which people live" (Snape & Spencer, 2008, p. 7). This is an interpretive paradigm, which distinguishes itself from examining the scientific approach from a positivistic model, which is more prominent in the social sciences (Bailey et al., 2011). Qualitative data are a source of

"well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes occurring in local contexts" (Miles & Huberman, 2014, p. 15). The qualitative methodology, through its structure, can lead to unique findings and possibly new theories and frameworks.

Once the researcher established the qualitative design as her approach, she applied grounded theory to analyze data and compile themes. The grounded theory approach was first articulated by Glaser & Strauss in their 1967 book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory was born out of disagreement with the idea of positivism which dates to the teachings of Galileo the prominent Italian scholar and author (Pitt, 1988, p. 87). According to Bailey et al., (2011), "Grounded theory is a prominent approach to qualitative data collection and analysis in the social sciences" (p. 207). Glaser & Strauss articulated the importance of an empirical approach for developing theory rather than the development of theory prior to data collection and analysis, which was the common way for theory to evolve at the time (Charmaz, 1996, p. 29). Glaser and Strauss advocated for an alternative approach, one that involved developing theories in a way that is connected to the data collection and analysis process (2011, p. 208).

This framework provided the researcher a structure to carefully observe the social world (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005) and to conduct a series of tasks that were continually repeated through the process of analysis. This circular process of analyzing data gave a flexibility that allowed the researcher to discover new ideas through the data. This theory relied on a consistent systemic approach with flexible guidelines to collect information (Charmaz, 2006; Straus & Corbin, 1998).

Richards and Morse (2013, p. 58) added humor to the analytical world of coding by suggesting, "If it moves, code it." As verbatim transcripts become data, it is pertinent that the

researcher checks each transcript for accuracy. This was done by listening to the recorded interview while following along with the written transcript. This process helped the researcher to omit any errors, inconsistencies, and inaccuracies as she transcribed the data (Bailey et al., 2011). The following steps were used to execute the grounded theory analysis:

1. Transcribe and summarize each interview.
2. Code the date by defining, finding, and marking in the text excerpts that have relevant concepts, themes, events, examples, names, places, or dates.
3. From interviews, find the excerpts marked with the same code and sort them into a single data file; then, summarize the contents of each file.
4. Sort and resort the material within each file, comparing the excerpts between different subgroups, and then summarize the results of each sorting.
5. After weighing different versions, integrate the descriptions from different interviewees that create a complete picture.
6. Combine concepts and themes to generate individual theory to explain the descriptions that have been presented. While doing so, continually test ideas by examining them in light of the interviews.
7. Determine how far results can be generalized beyond the individuals and cases studied. To validate the results, the researcher looked for unifying themes until saturation was reached. (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 190).

Once the framework was in place, and research and interview questions were formulated, the interview process could begin. By using open-ended questions, the researcher allowed any information that might be pertinent to the study to be gathered and used intentionally to answer the research questions. Merriam (1998) stated:

> The key to understanding qualitative research lies with the idea that meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world. . . . Learning how individuals experience and interact with their social world, the meaning it has for them, is considered an interpretive qualitative approach (p. 3).

In the qualitative methodology, data collection occurs through words and pictures. The written results of the research contain quotations from data to illustrate and substantiate the presentation. The researcher analyzes the richness as carefully as possible using the form in which the data were recorded and transcribed (Biklein & Bogdan, 1982). As naturalist researchers, qualitative interviewers examine the complexity of the real world by exploring multiple perspectives of an issue. In-depth interviewing is the tool of choice for exploring personal and sensitive issues or morally ambitious choices people have made. Qualitative interviewing projects are especially important when the process studied is nearly invisible (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

A narrative is a telling of what an individual believes will occur. The narrative is not perfection, but the individual attempts to stay close to the facts. A story is a well-polished, frequently repeated version of a narrative, often altered to make a point or offer a moral. Stories are essential to research because they portray everyday life. The responsive interview from the stories set up a comfort level with the participant. This qualitative gathering of information fortified this study because the researcher explored various angles of the participants' views and experiences to understand better what was happening in the world of higher education and Hispanic leaders.

Research Design

The researcher employed a semi-structured, open-ended interview protocol based on the life, culture, and career experiences of Hispanics leaders employed in community colleges. Fifteen participants included administrators employed as deans, associate vice-presidents, vice-presidents and presidents/CEOs. Upon initial contact by e-mail, acknowledgement of participation forms (see Appendix B) was disseminated via e-mail to participants following a consent to participate and confidentiality form (see Appendix B). The researcher also attached a copy of the interview questions that she was going to ask. By doing so, this gave the participants time to review the questions with the consent to participate and confidentiality form (see Appendix C).

Population & Sample

Interviews were conducted from a representative sample of 15 community college leaders including deans, vice-presidents, and president/CEOs. These individuals were referred to the researcher from three members of her dissertation committee who are connected to national administrator networks in the community college arena. Once the researcher received confirmation of participation, she assigned each participant a confidential number to identify the individual throughout the analysis and report. As individuals confirmed, they were assigned in numerical order. Only the researcher had access to the identifier. The study was conducted in mid-2019. Once the interviews were completed, the researcher began the process of analysis by using Grounded theory.

Sampling Procedures

The researcher used purposive sampling, a nonprobability sampling technique, because the participants represented a specific ethnic group and were a small subgroup of 15 leaders in

the community college, higher-education stratosphere (Davis, Gallardo, and Lachlan, 2010). The researcher implored the principle of saturation to determine an appropriate point in the data collection. Saturation is a tool used for ensuring that adequate and quality data are collected to support a study and is a common technique in qualitative research (Bailey et al., 2011, p. 88). The researcher recognized saturation, when she noticed that the same themes, words and phrases were being repeated throughout the interviews. After interviewing the 15 participants, the researcher recognized that there were no new phrases or themes emerging from the interviews. Ziglio (1996) stated that good results could be obtained from a small panel with ten to 15 experts. Expert sampling was used by working with committee members with a vast network of leaders in the community college arena. Expert sampling is appropriate where there is a lack of empirical evidence in an area as well as situations where it may take a long period before the findings from research can be uncovered. Expert sampling is a cornerstone of a research design known as expert elicitation (Richards, 2015). For instance, this study collected data from Hispanic leaders in community colleges who were employed in management and who identify as Hispanic. Participants included individuals employed as deans, vice-presidents, presidents and others, to acquire a reliable representation. The disadvantage of using purposive, expert sampling is that this technique is prone to bias from the researcher.

Initial contact was made by the expert committee members who were well known in the community college arena. Follow-up calls and e-mails were made by the researcher to participants confirming their willingness to participate. Once the participant agreed to partake in the interview, a set date, time, and place were coordinated and confirmed to conduct the interview. Each participant received a formal letter on which confirmed his or her participation in the study (Appendix A). For the interview process, the researcher communicated with the

participants by in-person interviews, Zoom, or by telephone call with approximately 60-90-minute sessions. Zoom is an Internet-based video conferencing tool with a local, desktop client and a mobile app that allows users to meet online, with or without a video (Zoom, 2019). Zoom users can choose to record sessions, collaborate on projects, and share or annotate on one another's screens, all with one easy-to-use platform. Three modes of interviewing were offered due to some participants residing outside of the researcher's state. By allowing Zoom and telephone interviews, the researcher was able to obtain a broader pool of participant interviews without the cost of air travel. Interviews were recorded for the validity of data collection purposes. A confidentiality form and a copy of interview questions were sent via e-mail for the participant to sign and return to the researcher via e-mail (Appendices C & D). For the interview session, the researcher asked for one hour of time from each participant. Each in person meeting, Zoom session or telephone call session occurred in a quiet, secure location and was recorded for analysis. Data analysis was conducted by identifying segments in the transcribed interviews (Merrium & Tisdell, 2016). The initial steps in data analysis are "reading the interview transcripts, observational notes, and documents that need to be analyzed" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, pp. 142-143). The researcher started the execution of the grounded theory analysis by transcribing each interview. For each transcribed interview, the researcher highlighted, noted, and marked text excerpts that were relevant to the study. She noted all other findings that were recurring. After the initial coding of the data, she went through the transcripts several times to check for accuracy and to capture any information not previously gathered. She then sorted the recurring data and began comparing and summarizing the words. Recurring themes and ideas were categorized together. Through the process, prevalent themes and strategies began to emerge that solidified the findings of the study.

Researcher's Role

The study was conducted by a Hispanic female employed at a community college. The researcher in this study had an active role by interviewing each participant either in person, over the telephone or via Zoom, a video communications site (Richards, 2015). The researcher was involved in asking open-ended questions and probing follow-up questions.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. Restrictions include disadvantages from using a research design that focuses on a limited number of participants, 15, across the United States. When conducting one-to-one personal interviews to collect data, the researcher was limited to that individual's experiences and perceptions. There was no feedback collected from others. A successful interview is based on the interviewer's ability to establish rapport with the participant. This model was challenging because the researcher interviewed individuals from all over the United States. In efforts to diminish the time and cost of travel to each individual living outside of the researcher's hometown, the researcher established rapport via Internet-based video conferencing or by telephone. The researcher remained focused when listening and reacting to the interviewees. She established a natural tempo and conversation flow to elicit robust data collection from each individual (Bailey et al., 2011). Another challenge with recorded interviews was detailed transcription was needed, which was time-consuming.

Generalizing the Hispanic culture posed another limitation to this study. Hispanic people are a diverse group originating from many different countries and subcultures all over the world. The range in different factors includes country and region of origin, length of time in the United States, education level, socioeconomic level, and personal experience. For this study, the

researcher focused on the common characteristics these people tended to share. Examples included language, values, socialization, and cultural heritage. The use of generalization can be a valuable tool in helping to understand and predict the behaviors of a group of people. This study was also specific to the community college higher-educational system and cannot be generalized to the four-year, university-level institution. While there are similarities within two-year and four-year institutions, there are also structural and cultural differences at a research-based institution that do not allow for generalizability.

Biases include the fact that the researcher is of Hispanic descent and might have assumed to know what the participants were thinking or feeling because she shared the same cultural background as the participant. This was a potential challenge because the Hispanic culture includes a variety of subcultures. It would have been unrealistic for the author to believe that her background and beliefs aligned with all participants in this study. For this reason, the author could not assume to know what the participants were thinking. Also, she could not assume how their response was aligned with how she thought or felt. At the time of this study, the author was an aspiring leader within the community college world and needed to be mindful not to react or project her own personal experiences into acknowledging or negating the responses of the participants.

Assumptions

The researcher believed certain assumptions to be valid, truthful, and accurate. The following six assumptions guided this study:

1. A surge in retirements of the community college senior leadership will occur during the next several years.

2. The Hispanic population in the United States and the number of Hispanic students entering community colleges will continue to grow.
3. The small number of Hispanic presidents is especially alarming, as it is disproportionate to the number of Hispanics and other students of color.
4. Hispanics have demonstrated that they are fully capable of leading a college system effectively.
5. The interviewee is knowledgeable using Internet-based video conferencing to log on and participate in an interview.

Summary

In summary, the research presented is a qualitative study centered on the analysis of low numbers of Hispanic community college presidents in the United States. This chapter presented the statement of the problem, research questions, and the importance of the qualitative method for the structure of this study. This study employed a grounded theory approach to understand and capture the lived experiences of Hispanic executives in higher education. In addition, also described are the selection of participants, the interview process, data collection, and data analysis. Finally, ethical standards, the role of the researcher, and the various limitations of the study were presented. The next chapter discusses the interviews conducted, participants' information, relevant findings, analysis, and summarization of the study data.

Chapter 4 - Findings

Introduction

As stated in Chapter One, the primary purpose of this study was to explore the disproportionately low number of Hispanic community college presidents in the United States. This chapter begins with an overview of the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, and research questions that served as the foundation for this study. The remainder of the chapter presents data extrapolated from the interview and recurring themes that emerged from the data. Also discussed are the critical strategies that participants discussed as necessary for the future development of Hispanic leaders in higher education. The chapter ends with a summary of the findings.

Statement of the Problem

The American Council on Education (ACE) college president study reports information regarding the president/CEO position in community colleges (Espinosa et al., 2017). This study monitors the demographics and information regarding the individuals who hold the position of president/CEO. The 2017 study reported little to no change in the ethnic makeup of leadership within the past ten years. The average associate degree institution president/CEO is 60 years old, white, and male. The challenge with having few minorities in leadership positions is that a monumental shift is occurring within the Hispanic population. The ethnic makeup of students attending two-year institutions is increasingly Hispanic (Krogstad, 2016).

In 2015, The American Association of Community Colleges also conducted a survey of community college chief executive officers (CEOs) to collected information on compensation. The survey included feedback from 239 active CEOs who indicated that “one-third of sitting CEOs will retire within five years, and 80% of sitting CEOs will retire within the next 10 years”

(Phillipe, 2016, p. 3). While these numbers pose a monumental challenge for the higher-education community, this challenge can also be seen as an opportunity to prioritize diversity in searches for community college presidents.

In the past decade, high school dropout rates for Hispanics have improved, which also translates to an increase in Hispanics enrolling in higher-education institutions. In 2014, numbers showed a 22% increase in college enrollment compared to 2004 (Krogstad, 2016). Despite the rise in college enrollment, only 14.8% of the Hispanic population age 25 and older have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher (Bureau, 2018). Given the high number of Hispanics in the United States, this issue is not about the educational advancement of one group, but of the entire nation as a whole. Increasing educational attainment in the Hispanic community is imperative for the overall welfare of all American citizens (Albert et al., 2011). The community college has proven to be a point of access for underrepresented groups because of the affordability, access, and flexibility that are necessary to support the nontraditional student: low-income, working, and part-time students, many of whom are Hispanic (Liu, 2011; Ornelas, 2002; Sengupta & Jepsen, 2006).

However, with increasing numbers of minority students come new challenges. Minority students come from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds with different needs for educational attainment. Issues such as financial support, generational progress, low retention numbers, and achievement gaps have become a new focal point (Carnevale 2013; Davila, 2011; MacDonald et al., 2007). Studies show the importance of having a leadership team reflective of the student population to enhance the success of all students. This is particularly helpful with Hispanic students who continue to fall behind in completion rates compared to other ethnic groups (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002; Nuñez, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the disproportionately low number of Hispanic community college presidents. This study examined Hispanic leadership styles, and cultural practices as Hispanics ascend to the presidency. Additionally, factors that hinder or support advancement opportunities for Hispanics were also explored.

For more minorities to succeed within higher education, best practices include institutional leadership that reflects and connects with students to ensure completion. Regardless of the high number of Hispanic immigrants coming to the United States, the number of Hispanic leaders representing current citizenship is inadequate. The efforts to cultivate the Hispanic community college president are limited in scope, given the insufficient numbers of Hispanics in the role. "Ten years ago, the number of Hispanic college presidents in the United States was about five percent. Today, it is down to roughly about four percent" (Watson, 2017, p. 1). Time, influence, and energy have been dedicated to the advancement of Hispanics in leadership roles; yet, the numbers are declining. This study examined the impact of demographic and cultural practices and experiences as Hispanic leaders ascended into leadership roles in community colleges. Additionally, factors that hindered or supported advancement opportunities for Hispanics were also explored.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher focused on minority representation within administration positions at community colleges. Diversity within the advanced leadership of an institution is imperative in the prioritization of the Hispanic academic. The opportunity to succeed educationally is critical to advance in life and for the success of the individual, his or her family, and this country.

Research Questions

The following three questions guided this qualitative study:

1. What are the experiences that Hispanic leaders face on the pathway to the presidency?
    a. What are the obstacles Hispanic leaders face on the path to the presidency?
    b. What are the opportunities for Hispanic leaders on the path to the presidency?
2. What are the cultural practices and norms that impact Hispanics in their quest for the community college presidency?
3. What has been the contributions of the Hispanic network in preparing for the presidency?

Interview Findings

The results from the interviews were organized into the following categories: demographic characteristics, presidential search information, leadership development opportunities, obstacles, and cultural influences.

Demographic Characteristics

Subjects in this study shared information on gender, date, and place of birth, where they were raised, parent and child information, spousal information, and what U.S. generation they were. The researcher chose to capture the following demographic characteristics to obtain a holistic view of the participants' lives outside of their professional career. The quest for a president/CEO position tends to affect the entire family and the researcher concluded that the following information was pertinent to the study.

Table 4.1 presents these findings.

Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants.

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage of Total
Gender		
Male	7	46%
Female	8	53%
Age		
36-40	1	6%
41-45	4	26%
46-50	4	26%
51-55	4	26%
56-60	0	—
60+	1	6%
No data provided	1	6%

While researching the low numbers of Hispanic community college presidents, it appears Hispanics who were also part of the Baby Boomer generation (people born between 1946-1964) were able to overcome challenges and forged ahead as leaders of higher-education institutions. Prior to that, Hispanics played a minuscule role in higher-education administration. The Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s ignited Hispanics to rise to the senior ranks in their professions, which included higher education. These individuals were typically the lone Hispanics at their institutions, and struggles, albeit in a different generation, are very similar to the current group of Hispanic leaders.

One distinction arose concerning the Baby Boomers in this study who had not achieved a presidency/CEO position. They communicated that their time to secure a presidency has passed. One participant notably captured the essence of what the participants shared:

> I feel I waited too long to pursue an Ed.D., and we all have a certain shelf life. I don't feel like I've witnessed many presidents getting a position of that nature in their late 50s and early 60s. By that point of time, they've already attained a position of that nature or have held several president positions. Time got away from me. I was doing other important things, like raising my kids, aging parent responsibilities, and fiscally recovering from helping my kids go to college. (Participant 1).

This study demonstrates that regardless of the current low numbers, in the next ten years, there are Hispanic leaders who are ready to take the lead in higher-education institutions in this country. The group after the Baby Boomers, Generation X, (born between 1965-1980), has dealt with their own obstacles such as being the token minority on an executive team and needing to take part in many initiatives to fill the Hispanic voice along with having other major life responsibilities that prioritize their time and energy. Several participants discussed these challenges during interviews. For instance, Participant 12 gave a personal account of his time as a new dean at a large community college in Texas:

> It was 2011, and I was in a leadership meeting at the college. My very first executive level meeting and the second item on the agenda was how to recruit more Hispanic students, and I was the only Hispanic in the room. I was the highest-ranking Hispanic at that college. . . . You know, it really bothers me. One part of me was sad, thinking after all this time, we've still not come a long way. And then there's still that little fire in me, and thinking I need to really do good in my position here because I'm representing an entire race. If I do a bad job, then they can say that's why they don't hire Hispanics. I felt a responsibility of being able to represent the entire Hispanic race and to be able to do a good job. (Participant 12).

The following tables include information about participants' personal life including relationship status, ethnicity/race of spouse or partner, and number of children.

Relationship Status

This table documents the relationship status of each participant during the time of the interview.

Table 4.2 Relationship Status.

	Number	Percent
Single/never married	0	—
Married	12	80%
Separated or divorced	2	13%
Long-term relationship	1	6%

Spouse or Partner Race or Ethnicity

The next table documents the Race/Ethnicity of the participants' spouse or partner.

Table 4.3 Spouse or Partner Race or Ethnicity.

	Number	Percent
Anglo	4	26%
Black	1	6%
Hispanic	9	60%
Asian	0	—
No answer	1	6%

Number of Children

Table 4.4 shows the number of children of each participants during the time of study.

Table 4.4 Number of Children.

	Number	Percent
None	3	20%
One	2	13%
Two	7	46%
Three	1	6%
Four	0	—
≥ Five	2	13%

The next two tables record participants' birthplace and generation in the United States of America.

Birthplace

Table 4.5 Birthplace.

	Number	Percent
California	1	6%
Illinois	1	6%
Virginia	1	6%
Washington	1	6%
Wisconsin	1	6%
Texas	9	60%
Venezuela	1	6%

Generation in the United States

Table 4.6 Generation in the United States.

	Number	Percent
First generation	6	40%
Second generation	1	6%
Third generation or more	8	53%

Of the 15 subjects, 12 were married at the time of the study, two were divorced, and one individual was in a long-term relationship. Spouses' ethnicity was included in the interview questions. Statistics on Hispanics who marry in the United States were provided in the literature review. Individuals who are of Hispanic descent have a higher percentage of marrying outside of their ethnicity the longer they and their families have been in the United States. Third-generation Hispanics (the third generation born into a country) are less likely to identify as Hispanics and

are less likely to marry a person of Hispanic descent. Almost 100% of immigrant adults from Latin America or Spain and 92% of second-generation immigrants, report having a Hispanic spouse. However, by the third generation—a group made up of the U.S.-born children of U.S.-born parents and immigrant grandparents—self-identity falls to 77%, and by the fourth or higher generation (U.S.-born children of U.S.-born parents and U.S.-born grandparents, or even more distant relatives), just half of U.S. adults with Hispanic ancestry identify as Hispanic. Studies show that only 35% of the third-generation Hispanics are married to a Hispanic. This compares to first-generation Hispanics whose marriage rate to another Hispanic is at 91% (Bialik et al., 2018).

In this study, spousal ethnicity included nine Hispanics, four Anglos, one Black, and one participant chose not to provide data. This study did not align with national statistics described above. In this group of 15 participants, the first generation to the United States, 66% were married to an individual who identified as Hispanic or of Mexican nationality. For participants who had been in the United States for three generations or longer, 75% were married to a partner who identified as Hispanic or of Mexican nationality. Three of the participants did not have children. Seven of the participants had two children, two of the participants had one child, and two participants had five children. The ACE Presidents study from 2006 and 2016 showed that approximately 85% of presidents/CEOs had children. Nine of the 15 subjects were born in Texas while the others were born in California, Illinois, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. One participant was born outside of the United States in Venezuela.

Seven males and eight females participated in the interviews. "What generation are you to the United States?" proved to be a challenging question to answer. Forty percent were first-generation born in the United States. One subject identified as second-generation. Fifty-three

percent of participants reported as “third-generation or higher” in the United States. The challenge with this question lies within the history of Hispanics in the United States. Many families began to settle in the Texas area where many of these individuals were born between the 1500-1700s during the Spanish land grants. The question was difficult to answer because, during that timeframe, the people of Texas went from being part of Mexico to being annexed when Texas became the 28th state in 1845.

The following table records education attainment of participants' parents.

Parent Educational Attainment

Table 4.7 Demographic Characteristics of Participants' Parents.

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage of Total
Mother's highest educational attainment		
Grade school	3	20%
11th grade	2	13%
High school diploma/GED	3	20%
College courses/certificate	1	6%
Associate degree	1	6%
Bachelor's degree	4	26%
Master's degree	0	—
Doctoral/professional degree	0	—
No data provided	1	6%
Father's Highest Education Attainment		
Grade school	3	20%
11th grade	0	—
High school diploma/GED	4	26%
College courses/certificate	2	13%
Associate degree	1	6%
Bachelor's degree	1	6%
Master's degree	1	6%
Doctoral/professional degree	1	6%
No data provided	2	13%

The highest educational attainment on the maternal side of the participant was a bachelor's degree. Thirty-three percent of mothers had some high school or a high school diploma. Twenty-six percent of mothers obtained a bachelor's degree. None obtained a master's

or doctorate degree. On the paternal side, 40% of the subjects' fathers had at least some college or higher; the highest level of attainment was a doctoral degree.

For this group, family prioritization on education was a common value that the households shared. As noted by the data, 66% of the parents of this group earned a postsecondary degree. The author attributes this to the generational status of this group. A majority of the parents were born and raised in the United States, where they had educational opportunities. Parents not born in the United States were working hard to improve the lives of their children. They viewed education as an opportunity for advancement. The participants in this study had the opportunity to obtain a post-secondary degree. This is in stark comparison to their parents, the Baby Boomer generation, who regardless of race or ethnicity, were raised by the Silent Generation (1925-1945), which had a 24% college completion rate compared to the Baby Boomers, which had a 42% college completion rate (Bialik et al., 2018).

Taking care of aging family members and being in close proximity to adult children caused a challenge in some participants' willingness to relocate. The inability or unwillingness to relocate for a promotion can stunt career growth. Along with being identified as Generation X, the term *sandwich generation* defines the majority of this group and their challenges in their personal lives. Seventy percent of the participants fit this category, which is middle-aged adults living with the financial burdens associated with caring for multiple generations of family members. The increased pressure tends to come primarily from grown children rather than aging parents (Parker & Patten, 2013). This generation, defined by the Pew Research Center (Parker et al., 2013), is exemplified in the personal stories of the participants:

> So, my president is up for a chancellor position, and she reminded me that if she gets the job, she is taking me with her [the job is across the United States]. I can't. I take care of

my mom. And my daughter, she is 22 years old, and I raised her. I was a single dad. Her mom left when she was one…so um, we are very close, so I feel very geographically tied to where she's at because I'm all she has. So, I feel a lot of pressure. (Participant 8).

Participants' Educational Attainment and Employment

The next table documents the participants' educational attainment and their current place of employment at the time of the interview.

Table 4.8 Participant Educational Attainment and Employment

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage of Total
Highest educational attainment		
Bachelor's degree	0	—
Master's degree	2	13%
Currently pursuing EdD/PhD	2	13%
EdD	4	26%
PhD	9	80%
Current position at community college		
Associate dean	1	6%
Dean	5	33%
Vice-president	5	33%
Associate provost	1	6%
President	3	20%
Location of community college		
Arizona	3	20%
California	2	13%
Texas	9	60%
North Carolina	1	6%

According to AACC (2013), a doctoral degree is a requirement for emerging leaders in higher education. Of the 15 participants, 13 (86%) had earned a doctoral degree. Two participants had a master's degree and were enrolled in a doctoral program. These statistics validate national data that report 90% of presidents/CEOs have a doctoral degree (Gonzalez-Barrera et. al., 2017). Data recorded from the U.S. Department of Education also show that from 2004-2005 to 2014-2015, doctoral degrees conferred to Hispanics increased by over 84%:

> For the first time in the history of this country, there exists a critical mass of highly educated Hispanics who are positioned in society to significantly improve the life chances of the rest of the population, both Hispanic and non-Hispanic. The retention of affirmative action policies can be countered by having a coordinated set of activities that brings to bear the full weight of Hispanic influence on the myths and distortions promoted by the opposition. But these efforts need to be part of a grander vision of societal democracy than presently exists (Martinez, 1993, p. 14).

Presidential Search Information

The next set of data identifies participants' willingness and readiness to pursue a community college presidency.

Table 4.9 Presidential Search Information.

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage of Total
Currently serving as a president	3	20%
Currently applying for a presidency	2	13%
Plan to pursue in 1-2 years	1	6%
Plan to pursue in 3-5 years	4	26%
Plan to pursue in 6-10 years	2	13%
No plans to apply at this time	3	20%

Of the 15 participants, three were serving as presidents of a two-year higher education institution. All three reported the position as their first presidency, and all had been in the position for fewer than five years. Currently, two applicants are applying for a presidency. Of the 15 participants, seven plan to pursue the presidency at some point in their careers, and three have no plans to apply at this time. Reasons for not applying include thinking that it is too late to pursue a presidency position. All three also reported that earlier in their careers, taking care of aging parents and children took precedence over relocating for a promotion. One subject acknowledged not wanting to leave her current institution for a promotion:

> I'm in a really good place. I am not in the position to leave at this time. I've raised my kids. I have my grandchildren . . . I just don't feel that it is the right time to leave my institution. (Participant 1).

Five participants served in the vice-president role at the time of this study, and five served as deans. One participant was employed as an associate provost, and one participant was employed as an associate dean. Prior to joining the administration, four participants were faculty members who ascended through the academic pipeline, which in 2007, was the most traveled pathway to the presidency (Weisman & Vaugh, 2007). However, by 2012, the American college president report noted that nearly one-third (30%) of presidents in 2011 had never been faculty members. This statistic, along with the current presidential responsibilities that occur outside of academia, shows that roles are becoming more complex, and leaders with senior-level executive experience are being given opportunities to ascend the presidency that had not been there in prior years (ACE, 2012, p. 39). The data from this study validate individuals coming from non-academic leadership roles:

> People told me I was going to have a hard time climbing the ranks from Student Services. You have to make sure you are the best-qualified person for the job. You've got to get that Ph.D. and be the best in your field. (Participant 15).

Another participant noted:

> When I was a coordinator, and I met my then-president, Sandy Shugart, I thought to myself, this is what I want to be. I saw what he was doing at his institution, and I knew that one day that would be me. (Participant 4).

Of the 15 participants, six have applied for a presidency/CEO position at least once in their career. Of those six participants, four were contacted by a consulting firm. All reported having a positive experience with consultants. One participant was not contacted by a firm and reported a negative experience during the interview process:

> I never spoke to anyone in person. I had to put together a video recording of myself answering several questions and sent it to the hiring committee. It was very cold and impersonal. (Participant 7).

Two of the participants discussed the challenge of being the internal candidate for a presidency position. They described both the positives and negatives of that scenario:

> Being that internal candidate can be harder than coming in from the outside. People know you, which is a positive, but if certain people do not like you, that can follow you and make it difficult to land the position at your institution. (Participant 3).

> Depending on the leadership, as a leader, you have to work with your faculty. You have to say this (hiring diverse faculty/staff) is a priority for the institution; then I think it becomes a reality. You know, as a person of color, I'm just more aware and heightened

to the fact that we are an HSI. We should have faculty/staff that represents the community as much as possible. (Participant 5).

All participants in this study served at public institutions, and 14 of the participants were employed at a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). In 2007, ACE reported, "Because many of HSIs are associate colleges, many of these are headed by minorities; they raise the overall percentage of minority leaders at this institution type" (p. 6).

For me, growing up in a working-class Hispanic family, I've always felt connected to that large population of students, and I've always wanted to give back. I've had the opportunity to apply for a presidency/CEO position at other institutions, but I feel that my passion is with that specific group. It's part of who I am and what I want to give back. (Participant 5).

Table 4.10 identifies the leadership programs that participants noted as attending during their journey through higher education.

Leadership Programs

Table 4.10 Leadership Program.

Leadership Programs Attended	Frequency	Percentage of Total
National Community College Hispanic Council (NCCHC)	9	60%
Aspen Presidential Fellows Program	3	13%
League for Innovation Executive Leadership Institute (ELI)	2	6%
American Association of Community Colleges Leadership Institute (AACC)	1	6%
Other	4	26%

Of the participants in this study, 93% have taken part in a leadership program at some point in their careers. The following programs were reported by participants as being a vital part of their path to leadership.

National Community College Hispanic Council Fellows Program

NCCHC was established in 1985 as an affiliate of the AACC. The council touts itself as the nation's premier organization for the preparation and support of Hispanic leaders in America's community college.

League for Innovation Executive Leadership Institute

Founded in 1968, the "League" cultivates innovation in the community college environment. ELI provides the opportunity for prospective community college presidents, or those in transition, to analyze their abilities, reflect on their interests, refine their skills, and engage in leadership discussions with an unparalleled faculty of community college leaders from across North America.

AACC John E. Roueche Future Leaders Institute

AACC's John E. Roueche Future Leadership Institute is a three-day seminar designed for middle management leaders who are looking to advance into a senior leadership role.

Aspen Presidential Fellows Institute

The Aspen Presidential Fellows Institute recruits and develops exceptional leaders who are diverse, student-success-focused reformers who collectively can push the field forward.

Unfortunately, only one participant in this study reported attending multiple leadership programs. Former president/CEO of the League for Innovation, Dr. Gerardo de los Santos, stated that each program plays an integral role in preparing leaders at different phases in their

careers. In collaboration with other community college leaders at the national level, leaders strategically aligned each program to have a distinct mission for leaders in the pipeline. Essentially, each organization's leadership program should build upon the next to give leaders optimal guidance and preparation as they ascend into a president/CEO position. Participants in this study have not had the opportunity to attend all programs. This is an opportune time for organizational leaders to reevaluate what the current challenges are for Hispanic leaders to reach all levels of leadership education:

> I was part of the NCCHC Inaugural class in 2010 for the middle managers programs, which was trying to transition faculty and managers into director or dean roles. And they are still doing that. I've tried to enhance my skill set with regards to leadership. Just because I know there are so many gaps, you can never go into a new leadership role knowing everything or all the skillsets required for that. You have to obtain supplementary skills along the way. In regard to these programs, they help without a doubt. They give you a different perspective than you get day to day, and I think the strongest element of that is the networking that you get. (Participant 5).

Recurring Themes

Using grounded theory, the researcher analyzed the data and identified six recurring themes that resonated throughout the interviews.

Figure 4.1 Recurring themes.

Social Capital

The lack of social capital was one of the disadvantages reported during the interviews. This coincides with research conducted in the late 1990s by Mata (1997), who reported lack of social capital as a systemic barrier with which Hispanics were challenged. Social capital is defined as the connections and shared values that exist between people and enable cooperation. Dr. Chris Cancialosi described social capital as the most important of the three areas, which include financial and human capital. Social capital helps individuals by establishing oneself as a leader and fostering reciprocity, "Giving to and supporting others builds trust and establishes

your reputation as an upstanding person who is skilled in your field" (Cancialosi, 2014, p. 1). One participant, who has not been able to secure a presidency, stated that she never attempted to apply for leadership programs that were based on ethnicity:

> The real world is not just one color, and I felt that putting my energy in general leadership programs would be more helpful. Looking back, I can't help but wonder if this could have helped me in the long run. (Participant 4).

Or another participant who discussed having more in common with the students that he served compared to the trustees in the boardroom.

> I love serving the community college student because I was that student…I've seen myself and my colleagues suffer. We were not raised to have the social capital that is needed to move in certain circles. (Participant 9).

> Social capital is key. Relationship building is key. If you have to, hire an executive coach and use an attorney when negotiating (salary & benefits)…never settle. (Participant 15).

Mentors and Support

The first major theme that arose from the interviews was mentoring and support. All 15 participants reported that having a mentor was necessary when navigating through leadership roles in higher education. Having a leader who takes notice and gives one the opportunity to be a leader gave the participants the motivation to apply for leadership positions. Once participants were given the opportunity to learn and lead, their career trajectory intensified. When asked about the ethnicity of their mentors and supervisors, participants reported mentors of all ethnicities and ages encouraged and guided them.

However, much discussion occurred concerning how one obtains a mentor. Some participants reported watching others from afar and never having a formal mentorship. Others stated that they had formal mentors who were crucial to their professional journey.

Isolation as a Hispanic leader was also a recurring theme. Having a mentor helped ease the loneliness that can sometimes occur with leadership roles. One participant discussed candidly the challenges with mentors in her professional career:

> Having a white male as a mentor has been an incredible, valuable experience, but at times it has been difficult to connect at the most fundamental levels with these mentors. As a minority female leader, I long yearn to have a Hispanic or female mentor. There are times when it's difficult to share without retribution- feelings of isolation, especially when it feels like you have been marginalized, tokenized-either because of your gender or race. If you raise these issues, you may be perceived as dramatic or angry. These are subjects I don't touch with my mentors. (Participant 2).

Another participant discussed the influence of her mentors in her career:

> I think my mentors that I have been able to gather through my career have been the most supportive because I have a very narrow circle. My friends are my colleagues because I've tended to my career . . . the mentoring is the most supportive factor that was able to help me continue to move forward. (Participant 3).

Many of the participants were told early in their careers by their supervisors and mentors that they would one day be in administration. Most participants had not considered a career as an administrator until a mentor/supervisor suggested the idea. This brings up an important issue for future leaders: "What happens if your supervisor does not see value in you?" This illustrates

the power and influence that come from the leaders at the top. The ability to move ahead can be hindered by one individual:

> I had been told by others that my president (Hispanic male) did not like strong Hispanic females. As I began to apply for presidency/CEO positions, I started receiving information from the consultants that I was not receiving a positive reference from my president. The recruiter finally stopped asking him. (Participant 3).

The mentorship theme also originated in the data when discussing the challenges and obstacles that Hispanic leaders face in higher education. Leadership programs teach the importance of having a mentor, but no one discusses how to obtain a mentor or how to become a successful mentor:

> I have been to several leadership conferences, and mentorship is always discussed. They tell you to get a mentor. But what does that mean? How do you find one? And when you give back as a mentor, what is your role? (Participant 6).

One participant shared his dilemma as a Hispanic leader:

> I have been inundated lately with requests from young Hispanic leaders who are looking for a mentor. While it is flattering, but at the same time, it is also overwhelming. I do not have the time to give to everyone. There just aren't enough in administration to look up to. (Participant 5).

Hispanic Leaders in the Pipeline

Despite higher education's willingness to prioritize diverse leadership, studies conducted by *Inside Higher Ed* and *the Gallup Poll* showed that 58% of current presidents who participated in the survey agreed that there were too few minority candidates in the running (Jaschik &

Lederman, 2017). In this study, participants were asked if they thought that any of their Hispanic colleagues were ready for the presidency. A majority of the participants (93%) responded yes to the question and agreed that they have several Hispanic colleagues who were primed and ready to lead a higher-education institution. Below are examples of participants views regarding other Hispanic colleagues and the importance of supporting one another.

> I have several Hispanic colleagues that are ready…we support each other and prioritize building a solid network of encouragement. (Participant 2).

> It's hard, you have to worry about other Hispanic colleagues in the field that have the same pride and you have to help prepare them. You have to lend a hand to other Hispanic leaders. (Participant 15).

> Being the only person in your family with a high-level degree is isolating…you have to have colleagues that support you. (Participant 11).

Another theme extracted from the data included that 80% of participants acknowledged that, at some point in their career, a student had acknowledged the participants' ethnicity as a positive aspect of their education:

> I taught at a predominately Black institution. At the end of class, a Black female class member came up to me and thanked me. She had never been taught by a Hispanic professor before and did not realize how important it was to get my perspectives on things (as a Hispanic man). (Participant 15).

> As a new president, I attended a panel discussion at my college, and when I was done, students of all ethnicities came up to me and asked if they could take my picture. The

> Hispanic students were so proud to meet another Hispanic. It was a good feeling to know that at that moment, I was making a difference. (Participant 4).

Positive Attributes of the Hispanic Culture

Additionally, a theme that arose was the positive culture of love and support from Hispanic families. Participants prioritized their families when making decisions to move toward an administration position. One female administrator came home and asked her daughter about the idea of applying for a dean position.

> My family life is one of the most important things for me. Knowing that the position would involve more travel and longer hours, my teenage daughter, who would need to take care of herself more than before, said, "Go for it, Mom." (Participant 7).

Another participant talked about the importance of having a supportive supervisor.

> Having a supervisor who saw something in me and invited me to the table, gave me the path to succeed. (Participant 2).

Some participants discussed the authentic and hardworking cultures from which many Hispanics originate.

> In an organization that values trust and transparency our culture lends itself to being our true authentic self. People resonate with that. (Participant 15).

One participant discussed the challenges that come with being part of such a close-knit extended family unit:

> I think there's definitely both, aspects of the culture that strengthen this pursuit and also that detract from their pursuit. Personally, I think there's a real challenge and a real difficulty in mindset of perceiving yourself as a leader. (Participant 9).

Lack of Mobility

Another challenge derived from the interviews was lack of mobility due to family obligations. The priority of staying in close proximity to aging parents was a recurring theme for many professionals. Although most of the participants had siblings who lived close to their parents, they chose to stay nearby their aging parents to offer support. Participants who were no longer interested in applying for the presidency believed that they had prioritized taking care of sick or aging parents early on in their careers when others were encouraging them to apply for higher leadership roles such as the presidency. At this point in their careers, they thought that the opportunities were no longer there for them, or they did not have the motivation to make significant moves this late in their lives.

> I feel I waited too long to pursue my Ed.D. and we all have a certain shelf life. Time got away from me. I was busy doing other important things like raising my kids, aging parents' responsibilities, and fiscally recovering from helping my kids go to college. (Participant 1).

> There were times in my career that I wasn't quite ready. There were personal family or reasons that I wanted to stay in the area. My mom was getting elderly and there were only two of us left (siblings). I just feel that at the time I wanted to be able to help her through you know, health issues. After she passed, I started putting my name out there…my mentors were encouraging me, and the consultants knew my strengths. It just never happened. (Participant 3).

Participants who did not live in close proximity to their parents noted that while their parents were in good health at the time of the study, they could see how challenging it would be when their parents started to age or become ill. When one participant discussed moving three hours away from his mother and mother-in-law to pursue a dean position, he described the move as emotionally taxing for all family members involved. The feeling of selfishness ensued for wanting to elevate oneself at the expense of the family. This was challenging for several participants who noted that leaving the comfort of their families was difficult:

> When I decided to move my wife and my two young daughters four hours away from my family, it was a betrayal to my mother. She cried. My mother-in-law cried. It made me second guess what I was doing. However, my wife stuck with my decision, and we moved. Although it was the hardest thing I have ever done, looking back now, it was one of the best decisions we ever made for our family. My daughter, who told me that she despised the move, is now an adult and has thanked me. She now feels that it is the best thing that could have happened to her. (Participant 12).

Stress on a marriage was also a factor. This came up with several leaders who talked about the strain that could occur in a marriage when the family moves:

> When we left for my job, we left the comfort of our family and our home. My wife and my two daughters were so angry at me. How could I do this to them? We didn't know if we were going to survive. But sometimes you don't know until you try. So, we did, and we were successful. I was able to move into a vice-presidency and eventually to a president position. It has paid off but not without its hardships. (Participant 15).

> I am so grateful that I have a spouse that is extremely supportive. My husband is happy with his position. He can work at any institution. At first, we were not sure if it was

going to work. We were far from our hometown with just the two of us. But I knew that I had to move. I had to make that choice. It was so hard, but so far it has been worth it. (Participant 6).

Time Commitment

Another recurring obstacle was the time commitment required when serving as a college president. Time away from family within a culture that prioritizes family is a challenge. The hours of a college president are known to be extensive. Many of these participants interviewed belong to the group deemed Generation X. One recurring conversation was that Generation Xers have observed the Baby Boomer generation spend most of their lives off-balance with work taking precedence. There was hesitation in living an off-balanced life and instead focusing on a job that gave one a balanced work-life way of living:

> I see how much hours that my president puts in, and I think do I really want to do this? Right now, as a vice-president, I have to work hard for my work-life balance. Other colleagues see me, and they ask why I work so hard. I know eventually I'm heading in that direction, but right now, I want to enjoy taking trips and spending time with my partner and my family and friends. As a president, there are times that you don't have a choice and you miss something—it's inevitable. (Participant 8).

Figure 4.2 Critical strategies.

Participants were asked about critical strategies that could benefit Hispanic leaders when advancing in leadership roles. Figure 4.2 diagrams the four critical areas that emerged as a road map for leaders who want to advance within higher education. The first area emphasizes the importance of preparing oneself as a professional through education and experience. The second area focuses on establishing key relationships and creating a network for oneself. One must work to connect with others by asking for mentorship and by reciprocating mentorship. The third area denotes the idea of intentionality with one's career and the major areas to focus on when moving up the career ladder. The last section focuses on personal responsibility and the importance of believing in oneself and supporting others.

Be Prepared

When applying for a leadership position, one needs to do due diligence and make sure that you are qualified for a position. You must know your job really well.

> Most people make the mistake of moving up the ladder too quickly. Do not rush to a leadership role. Know your current job really well before you make a move. And be the most qualified person. You do not want to be the token minority for the sake of numbers. You must be prepared to be the best person for that job. (Participant 15).

Another applicant gave advice on how to stay well-informed.

> I have a routine that I do...I get on higher education job boards and look at the job requirements for certain positions. I'm not looking for a job per say, but instead looking at the experiences that the job needs in order to get that job. And then I compare that to where I am today…what do I need to add to my repertoire? (Participant 10).

Establish Relationships

Obtaining a doctoral degree is key to preparing for a president/CEO position. The doctoral degree increases high level knowledge at an institutional level and can serve as a catalyst for the other strategies. As a doctoral student, the opportunity to attend conferences and connect with colleagues from all over the country arises. Building social capital becomes a catalyst for attending leadership institutions, obtaining mentors, building the Hispanic network and creating a strategic professional map.

In order to advance within higher education, it is often necessary to change institutions. The more flexibility one has to relocate, the higher one's chances of securing a president/CEO

position. Building social capital can help increase one's chances for a new professional opportunity.

> Look, I know that I could be in Arizona or California right now and have a presidency. My mentor is advocating for me to make that move. I'm just not ready right now. Maybe I will be one day…just not now. (Participant 3).

Building relationships includes connecting with other professionals at a local, state, and national level. Joining organizations, attending and presenting at conferences are a few examples of network building that will help an individual advance within higher education. Also important is the ability to ask for guidance. Obtaining a mentor who will help answer questions and who will support the individual is crucial. Offering support is also just as important as receiving support. Part of establishing relationships is serving as a mentor to an individual who seeks guidance and support.

> As a Hispanic leader, I have been active in mentoring, advancing, recruiting Hispanic leaders who are talented, credentialed, and show great promise. This is the kind of mentorship that is required to continue to grow the Hispanic presidency/leadership ranks. It's not enough just to "mentor"- mentors have to be in a position to help you get connected to get that next leadership position. (Participant 2).

Be Intentional

One priority that arose was the intentionality of diverse hiring practices. As a leader at your institution, work to ensure that diverse applicant pools are a priority. When asked if their institutions prioritized hiring diverse faculty/staff, 50% of the participants in this study stated yes. Diverse hiring practices must be a priority for all racial and ethnic groups. Everyone in a leadership position must act with intent to help strengthen the Hispanic leadership pipeline.

A strategic professional map can help provide clarity and guidance for individuals wanting to advance in their careers. Knowing what you want to advance towards and having clear intentions can help you make the right decisions when applying for positions.

Take Responsibility

The final section of critical strategies concentrates on the individual. To get to a high level position of leadership, one must believe in oneself and in others. Building the Hispanic network is an integral piece to helping Hispanics advance to administration positions in higher education.

> I almost feel like, as Latinos, we almost weed our own selves. There an inherent sense of not fitting in something. We need to be proactive rather than I'm gonna wait and see who's in the pool. (Participant 9).

Along with that idea came the discussion that Hispanic leaders are not only important for Hispanic students and leaders but for students and colleagues of all race and ethnicities. One participant talked about his experience teaching at a predominately Black institution:

> It is our responsibility to mentor all students whether we want to or not. Also, Hispanics, as a group, need to be more intentional. They need to put their name in the running for positions. (Participant 15).

According to Dr. Felix V. Matos Rodríguez, newly appointed chancellor of the City University of New York system and chair of the HACU:

> You would expect Latino administrators would be particularly sensitive to the specific needs of Latino students as their numbers increase on campuses. The expertise to be able to help them achieve success will become more important, therefore the need for more administrators and presidents. (p. 2)

Another participant stated:

> This job never ends. You're not just making it for yourself, you're making it for your entire people. (Participant 12).

National Community College Hispanic Council

The leadership program, NCCHC, emerged during the interviews as a critical strategy for the advancement of Hispanic leaders to a presidency/CEO position in higher education. Participants discussed the need to increase national attention and funding for NCCHC to advance more leaders on a yearly basis. When discussing NCCHC, the program was described as powerful, revitalizing, and was deemed critical for the future of Hispanic leaders in higher education. One participant stated, "NCCHC was a huge factor in preparing me for a leadership role. It was transformational." When asked to elaborate on the positive impact of NCCHC, one participant described what she thought about the program:

> For the first time, I was with a group of people who had the same motivation and drive as I do in higher education but were also going through the same struggles. This has empowered me to start thinking critically about my future and has helped me develop a new game plan for a president/CEO position. (Participant 9).

NCCHC also pairs each fellow with a mentor to follow up with during and after the program. "It gave me a sense of revitalization," stated a participant. The national network provided by NCCHC is what many Hispanic leaders were missing in their professional repertoire. NCCHC is a prime example of an organization that embodies each critical strategy recognized in this study.

Summary

This chapter began with an overview of the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, and the theoretical framework that served as the foundation for the analysis of this study. The remainder of the chapter presented data extrapolated from the interview, recurring themes that emerged, and critical strategies that were identified to support Hispanic leaders with advancement in their careers. The fifth chapter reiterates the research questions that guided this study along with an interpretation of the findings. The chapters ends with implications and recommendations for future research in the subject area of Hispanic community college presidents.

Chapter 5 - Summary

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the disproportionately low number of Hispanic community college presidents in the United States. This study examined the contributions of demographic, cultural practices and experiences as Hispanic leaders ascended into leadership roles in community colleges. Additionally, factors that hindered or supported advancement opportunities for Hispanics were also explored. The final chapter begins with a review of the research questions and concludes with implications and recommendations for future research.

Research Questions

The following research questions served as a basis for this study.

1. What experiences do Hispanic leaders face on the pathway to the presidency?
    a. What are the obstacles Hispanic leaders face on the path to the presidency?
    b. What are the opportunities for Hispanic leaders on the path to the presidency?

The information obtained from these questions aided the researcher in comprehending what life experiences positioned Hispanic leaders to succeed in the world of higher education, which continues to be an Anglo-dominated environment. The researcher noted opportunities and obstacles to the presidency for Hispanics. This information was collected to understand why the number of Hispanics in presidency roles has decreased from six percent to four percent in the past decade.

2. What are the cultural practices or norms that impact Hispanics in their quest for the community college presidency?

This researcher sought to identify traits within the Hispanic culture that have positive or negative influence when an individual of Hispanic descent ascends to the highest level in a higher-education institution.

3. What has been the contribution of the Hispanic networks and organizations in preparing for the presidency?

The goal of this question was to garner information about how the national network is impacting the individual. The research also captured each participant's perspective regarding future initiatives that can enhance opportunities for Hispanics in higher education.

Summary of Interview

The data from individual interviews was intended to provide information, through a qualitative research design, about the participants' experiences of Hispanic leaders who are employed at a two-year college, as they ascend into leadership roles. Other factors related to the study further served to support the validity of the study. Interview findings were reported in the following categories: demographic characteristics of the participants, presidential search information, leadership development, opportunities, obstacles, opportunities, cultural influences, and mentorship.

Implications

The following implications reveal areas that should be of focus at the institutional, state, and nation level of strategic planning to help increase the pipeline of Hispanics in leadership roles in the community college arena. These major ideas were extracted from the recurring themes that arose from the poignant and humbling stories of the participants.

Mentorship

Mentorship was deemed important to all participants navigating through leadership roles in higher education. The challenge is securing a mentor and knowing how properly mentor other professionals. As important as the role of mentorship is, no one discusses the details in navigating this relationship. Isolation as a Hispanic leader was discussed and having a mentor of any race or ethnicity helped ease the loneliness that could occur with leadership roles.

Leadership Programs

In this study, NCCHC emerged as a catalyst for Hispanic leaders working their way through the higher-education pipeline. This program fills the gaps that hinder Hispanic leaders along the pathway to career advancement. NCCHC gives individuals a connection and touchpoint to others when trying to navigate uncertain waters. Fellows are designated a mentor who encourage them throughout the program and after the program is completed. These nationally recognized leaders, in turn, help to increase social capital for their mentees, another challenge that minority leaders face in the world of academia. The reverence and passion for NCCHC was unmistakable during the interviews. The commitment and purpose of NCCHC is necessary to continue the growth of Hispanic leaders. The challenge of the program is that it currently only admits 25 fellows per year. To substantially increase the pipeline of leaders, the program, along with others, needs to increase its yearly recruitment to more fellows and increase national attention to financially support the program.

Leadership programs must re-evaluate their positions to increase development opportunities. One example is HACU, which represents more than 470 colleges and universities committed to Hispanic higher-education success in the United States, Puerto Rico, Latin America, and Spain. HACU is currently working on leadership programs, the goal of which is to

approach the gap by creating a leadership academy to help those interested in seeking higher-education leadership.

However, programs for top leaders are not the only level of professional development lacking. The number of leadership programs available for prospective upper-level management leaders is insufficient. It is vital for an individual interested in a leadership role to have options for professional development at every juncture of the career path.

Prioritizing Diversity

Participants were asked what critical strategies could help Hispanic leaders to advance in leadership roles such as the presidency of a community college. The first theme centered on the idea that diversity in leadership should not be prioritized by one group but must be important to all. One suggestion is intentionality behind the hiring of diverse faculty/staff at higher-education institutions. When leaders speak of hiring practices that prioritize diversity, what does that entail? Studying the strategic plan, operational plan, and cultures of institutions that prioritize a diverse faculty/staff is important to understanding the complexity of the issue. Only half of the participants noted that their institution prioritized the hiring of diverse faculty and staff in their strategic plan and operations.

The participants interviewed for this study were all leaders in their prospective fields and are administrators at their institutions. Nine of the 15 participants interviewed for this study were preparing for the presidency. Many of them had been increasing their professional knowledge and prioritizing family commitments, all while navigating the journey to an executive level position. Most of them concurred that many of their Hispanic colleagues were ready to serve as a president/CEO in the near future. Intentionality when developing the strategic plans at the institutional and board-level must prioritize the recruitment and development of leaders from

diverse backgrounds, including ethnicity, religion, and sexual preference. Operational functions must reflect these priorities and be evaluated regularly.

At the national level, agencies such as the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) should discuss and develop workshops for diverse hiring practices. In 2018, the researcher had the opportunity to attend the ACCT Congress for trustees and attended a panel discussion with top hiring consulting firms in the country. It is common practice for community college boards of trustees to hire a consulting firm to navigate a successful presidential search. The firm's primary goal is to recruit qualified applicants that are a potential fit at the college. When asked how consulting firms assured a diverse applicant pool had been identified for a presidential search, the panelists gave vague answers about how challenging it was, and often, they could not guarantee a diverse applicant pool. In 2019, the researcher had the opportunity to attend the same session and sensed the same indifferent attitude from the consulting firm.

Strategic Career Planning

The participants in this study have spent many years in higher education and have developed into high level professionals. During the interview process, participants discussed the need to be more intentional when planning a career in higher education. Hispanics must be diligent about creating opportunities when leadership positions become available. However, it was noted that individuals must ensure that they are qualified for a position. One president noted, "You have to know your job really well. Do not rush to a leadership role. Know your current job really well before you make a move and be the most qualified person."

One leader stated, "This job never ends. You're not just making it for yourself; you're making it for your entire people." One participant remembers working as a dean and being the only Hispanic leader in a Hispanic-serving institution in Texas, "Being the only Hispanic in a

high-level position at a college that is an HSI, talk about pressure—I was representing an entire group."

Professional Preparation

The doctoral degree continues to be a key accomplishment for individuals wanting to serve as a president/CEO in a higher education institution. Of the participants, 86% held a doctoral degree, which compares to 90% nationally (Gonzalez-Barrera et. al., 2017). Individuals must take advantage of doctoral programs that are flexible for working professionals. Institutions of higher education are beginning to recognize the importance of online and hybrid programs at the doctoral level. These types of programs allow individuals to continue working at their institution while working towards a doctoral degree. Although the provost position continues to be the most certain path to the presidency (ACE, 2012), leaders from other areas are emerging as successful presidents/CEOs. Hispanics leaders who start in student services are proving to be successful presidents/CEOs.

These major ideas are recurrent throughout the research from the last thirty years and continue to be major challenges for Hispanics in higher education leadership. These implications highlight the priorities that must be addressed at all levels for the success of Hispanic leaders in higher education.

Recommendations for Further Research

Research on Hispanic Subgroups

Data from the U.S. Census provide insight into the diversity of the country. In 2010, over 300 million people were living in the United States, and 50.5 million (16%) were of Hispanic descent. From 2000 to 2010, the two largest subgroups to increase were the Mexican population,

which had a 54% rise, and the Cuban population, which increased by 44% (U.S. Census, 2011). Generalizing information into one large minority group is insufficient.

It would be valuable to look at the cross-section of the different ethnic groups within the Hispanic population and their generational status to the United States to understand where the challenges are. National data report that the longer an individual and his or her family have been in the United States, the more educational attainment they have (Kolodner, 2017). The ability to focus on concentrated ethnic groups can provide colleges and universities reliable information on how to increase support for specific groups of minority students.

It would be advantageous to replicate studies such as Jorge Chapa and Belinda De la Rosa's study in 2006 that identified subgroups of Hispanics by generation to the United States and by country of origin to truly understand the challenges that occur with Hispanics (Chapa, & de la Rosa, 2006). The researcher believes that institutions do not currently practice data analytics at this level because of the time and energy that is required.

Increased Research on Hispanic Leaders in Higher Education

One of the challenges the researcher faced during this study was the minimal research intended to understand Hispanic leaders and the challenges they face in higher education. The studies regarding this topic executed in the past 25 years focused on the positive aspects of the Hispanic culture and focused on how successful leaders attained a leadership role. Very few studies have examined both the current opportunities and challenges that Hispanic leaders face. A replication of this study on a larger scale with a quantitative piece that replicates de Los Santos and Vega's research in 2008 should be recreated to examine the hard data showing how many Hispanic presidents/CEOs are currently employed at community colleges. Additional research

should focus on who in the Hispanic culture is obtaining a doctoral degree in higher education and which individuals should be primed for a leadership role.

The role of boards of trustees is also a crucial element of this conversation. The ethnic makeup of community college trustees continues to be predominately Anglo. The appointment and election process for boards of trustees must be addressed. It is evident that if the United States wants Hispanics to succeed in higher education, intentionality, and substantial efforts must be woven into culture of institutions. Two questions the researcher has are: "If community college consultants and boards of trustees know that there is a challenge with hiring Hispanic presidents, what are they doing about it?" and "Do hiring and interview practices take into account the perspective of the minority?"

Accountability within the leadership of higher education must become a priority. It is in the best interest of the institution for leaders to ensure that the entire process occurs, from the development of future leaders, to hiring practices, to creating a sustainable culture that supports leaders of all ethnicities to succeed. For example, would it not be beneficial for a Hispanic applicant interviewing for a presidency to acknowledge to the board of trustees or college leadership that he or she has an aging relative who lives with him or her? Would it not be respectful if the host committee who is showing the prospective candidate excellent schools for children to also show the elements in the area that are attractive and available for one who has an aging parent or a 20-something young adult living with him or her? These small but significant changes are possibly occurring across the country but have not been identified at a noteworthy scale for leaders and consultants to discuss. It is also possible that Hispanic applicants are not having these conversations for fear of being viewed as difficult or too ethnic.

Summary

The catalyst for this study began when the researcher found disproportionately low numbers of Hispanic community college presidents at the helm of higher education institutions. The community college has proven to be a point of access for underrepresented groups because of the affordability, access, and flexibility that are necessary to support the nontraditional; low-income, working, and part-time; students, many of whom are Hispanic (Liu, 2011, Ornelas, 2002; Sengupta & Jepsen, 2006). However, with increasing numbers of minority students come new challenges. Minority students come from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds with different needs for educational attainment. Issues such as financial support, generational progress, low retention numbers, and achievement gaps have become a new focal point (Carnevale 2013; Davila, 2011; MacDonald et al., 2007).

As the numbers of Hispanic students enrolling in college continue to rise, priorities around ethnic leadership must be addressed. Studies show the importance of having a leadership team reflective of the student population to enhance the success of all students. This is particularly helpful with Hispanic students who continue to fall behind in completion rates compared to other ethnic groups (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002; Nuñez, 2009).

The role of the Hispanic leader has been identified as a crucial component in the success of Hispanic students. This study has shown that regardless of the many obstacles Hispanic leaders currently face, there are qualified individuals ready to serve as a president/CEO. The participants in this research study have affirmed that the path to a president/CEO position is challenging for all leaders. The modern world asks this individual to know the internal and external workings of a community college and the local, state, and national needs of our country. The leaders identified in this study have ascertained those qualities and despite the challenging

path ahead, are preparing themselves for the challenge. These leaders project a hopeful future for all community-college students, faculty, staff, and the communities they serve.

Leaders in higher education must work to ensure that the diversification of our leadership becomes a priority. The fate of our country is at stake. The economic growth of the United States depends on the increase of the Hispanic population. The educational success of the largest minority group in the country impacts all citizens. As leaders in higher education, we are positioned to strategically accelerate the path for Hispanic leaders. However, it must be a collective effort by all in the world of higher education.

Our students, communities, and nation are depending on the leaders of today to take our diverse country into the future of growth and prosperity. There continue to be many questions left unanswered: How many generations will it take for these challenges to subside? How many Hispanics in the pipeline are enough to make this large ethnic group a normalcy in higher-education leadership? The current leaders of community colleges are relying on their successors to continue the legacy that many have worked to sustain. Karen Stout, a former community college president and chief executive director of Achieving the Dream stated,

> There was a time when pathways to the presidency were very clear. Where you taught, became an academic chair, a provost and then president, and now more and more presidents do not follow that pathway. . . . There's less certainty about the pathway because there are so many pathways now" (Smith, 2018, p. 2).

Former president of Northern Virginia Community College summed up the issues of leadership in higher education. Dr. Robert Templin stated that about three years ago, he would have agreed with the views of community college presidents on a range of issues. Initially, he was concerned about the future of the presidency and did not see a clear pathway into the

position. However, that changed when he became a senior fellow in the Aspen Institute's College Excellence Program. As part of the program, Templin helped prepare that next generation of community college leaders through Aspen's Presidential Fellowship.

> As I looked at the folks replacing me after I retired, I found those most likely to step in were ready for retirement themselves, or they didn't want the job, or they thought it was too demanding and not rewarding, Templin said (Smith, 2018, p. 1).

Adding that despite those concerns, he guarantees most presidents would still take on the leadership role again. "And the reason they would do it again is because it is one of the most joyful and impactful roles in American society" (Smith, 2018, p. 1).

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Appendix A - IRB Approval

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY | University Research Compliance Office

TO: Dr. Margaretta Mathis
Adult Learning and Leadership
363 Bluemont Hall

Proposal Number: 9810

FROM: Rick Scheidt, Chair
Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: 08/21/2019

RE: Approval of Proposal Entitled, "A Study of Disproportionately Low Numbers of Hispanic Community College Presidents in the United States."

The Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects has reviewed your proposal and has granted full approval. This proposal is **approved for three years from the date of this correspondence.**

APPROVAL DATE: 08/21/2019

EXPIRATION DATE: 08/21/2022

In giving its approval, the Committee has determined that:

☒ There is no more than minimal risk to the subjects.
☐ There is greater than minimal risk to the subjects.

This approval applies only to the proposal currently on file as written. Any change or modification affecting human subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation. All approved proposals are subject to continuing review, which may include the examination of records connected with the project. Announced post-approval monitoring may be performed during the course of this approval period by URCO staff. Injuries, unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the Chair of the IRB and / or the URCO.

203 Fairchild Hall, Lower Mezzanine, 1601 Vattier St., Manhattan, KS 66506-1103 | 785-532-3224 | fax: 785-532-3278
comply@k-state.edu | k-state.edu/comply

Appendix B - Acknowledgement of Participation

To:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The purpose of this research is to understand why the numbers of Hispanic community college presidents have started to decrease in the past decade. By participating in this study, you are allowing the researcher, Natalie Chapa Villarreal, to use your answers from the interview as data. This data will be analyzed to comprehend the challenges that Hispanic leaders face in higher education when working towards the community college president/CEO position.

For the next step, you will receive a confidentiality form and interview questions by e-mail. Please sign the confidentiality form and return to the e-mail below before the scheduled interview date.

If you have any questions, please call me at 361-537-6955 or email at: nelliec11@yahoo.com. I look forward to our interview via (pick one option):

1) In-Person
2) Zoom Session
3) Telephone call

On _____.
Date/Time

Many Thanks,

Natalie C. Villarreal

Appendix C - Consent to Participate and Confidentiality Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The Hispanic Presidency in Community Colleges and the decline in numbers

Your participation in this research study is being requested by Natalie C. Villarreal, Doctoral Candidate from the Community College Leadership Program at Kansas State University. You were selected as a participant in this study because you are in a leadership role at a community college in the United States and identify as Hispanic.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To understand the declining numbers of Hispanic community college presidents in the U.S.

PROCEDURES

As a subject in this study, you grant the researcher permission to record the interview and use your information as data for the purpose of the study. Data will be collected in the form of interviews via in-person, Zoom Session, or over the telephone. Upon your confirmation of participation, the researcher will contact you via e-mail to confirm which method you prefer to be interviewed. Participation will take approximately 30 to 60 minutes.

The research study is set up as a qualitative research design which will employ a semi-structured, open-ended interview protocol based on the life, culture, and career experiences of Hispanics leaders employed in community colleges. You are part of a sample that will include twelve to twenty, high level leaders currently employed in a community college system in the United States who identify as Hispanic.

The study is set to begin May – September 2019. Responses during the interview questions will be recorded for data collection. During the interview, the researcher will ask questions, listen and take notes while you are speaking.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The risks foreseen with this study pose a minimal risk. The interview questions will be sent as an attachment via e-mail communication prior to the interview. You have the right to refuse to answer any question. Once data is collected, you will be assigned a code number to de-identify any personal information. The assigned number will serve as the sole identifier throughout the remainder of the

study. The assigned code number will be stored on a separate database that will be written in a secure document with a password encryption only known to the researcher. Once collected and analyzed, data will be presented in the written research report within broad categories. In cases where an individual could be identified by context (ex...Geographical area, college size), efforts will be made within the report to ensure all information is generalized.

BENEFITS

This study hopes to shed light on issues that may be detrimental to the success of Hispanic leaders in the community college arena. This study aims to give higher education institutions, boards of trustees and leadership organizations input to increase the numbers of Hispanic higher education leaders. Research in the higher educational field has set the stage to begin understanding the differing needs of minority students attending higher education institutions. Studies in student success show that having a leadership team reflective of the student population enhances the success of all students.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

There will be no payment for participation in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your personal information will be stored in a confidential manner. Information files will be stored behind a protected password only known to the researcher.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

If you volunteer to be a participant, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable answering and remain in the study.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Researcher:

Natalie C. Villarreal
nelliec11@yahoo.com
361-537-6955

Kansas State University

Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224; Cheryl Doerr, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Dr. Dr. Margaretta Mathis at 602-743-9258 or mbathis1@ksu.edu

TERMS OF PARTICIPATION

I understand this project is research, and that my participation is voluntary. I also

I understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	**Date**	**Signature**
_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	**Date**	**Signature**

Appendix D- Interview Questions

Demographic Information:

1. Name:
2. Education:
3. Date of Birth:
4. Background:
    a. Where were you born?
    b. Where were you raised?
    c. How many siblings do you have?
    d. Sibling Gender?
5. What generation are you in the U.S.?
6. Where did your parents originate from?
7. Parent's Educational Attainment?
8. Marital Status
    a. Spouse/Partner Ethnicity?
    b. Children? Ages?
9. Current Place of Employment & Position
    a. Work History
10. Have you ever applied for the President/CEO position at a Community College? If yes,
    a. How many times?
    b. Do you receive employment inquiries from consulting firms? If so, what kind of employment opportunities are they discussing with you?
    c. What was the experience like? Positive? Negative?

d. Were you a finalist?

e. What do you feel are the experiences that led you to apply for the presidency?

f. What are the obstacles you have faced on the path to the Presidency?

g. What are the opportunities you have had on the path to the Presidency?

11. If no, to question #10

    a. Do you plan to apply for a Presidency?

        i. Do you have a timeframe?

    b. If not, can you talk about why are you choosing not to pursue a President/CEO Position?

        i. What factors are affecting this decision? Positive? Negative?

        ii. Have colleagues or mentors encouraged you to apply?

    c. Do you receive employment inquiries from consulting firms? If so, what kind of employment opportunities are they discussing with you?

12. Do you have Hispanic colleagues that you feel are ready and qualified for a President/CEO position?

13. Do you feel that there are cultural practices or norms that impact you as a Hispanic in your quest for the community college presidency? If so, please elaborate.

14. Have you participated in any type of leadership program for community college administrators?

    a. If yes, which program?

    b. Do you feel the program is successful in preparing individuals for the presidency?

        i. If yes, can you provide examples of what was positive?

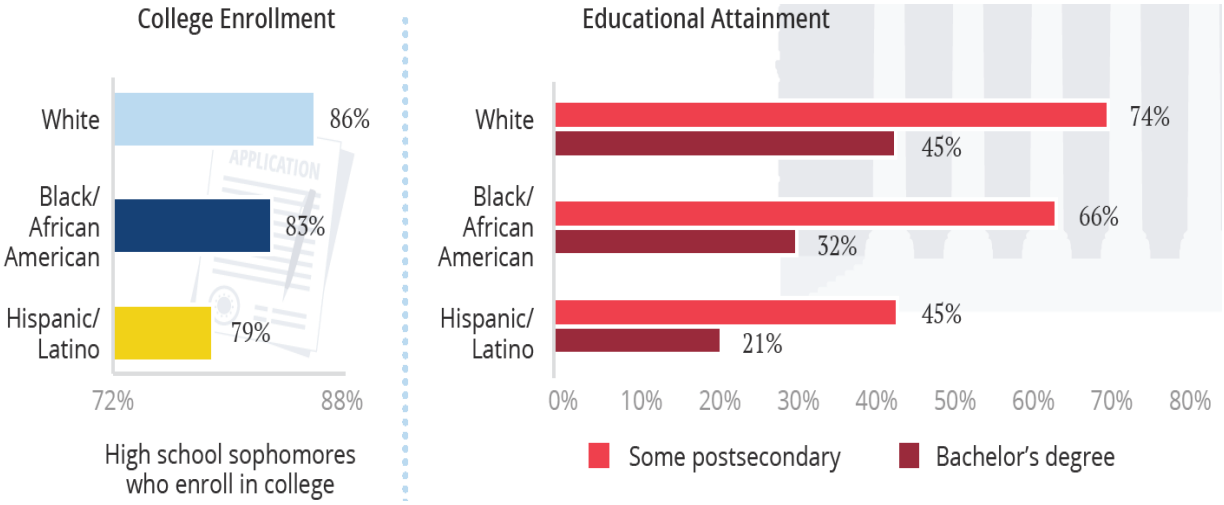
    c. If no, can you can provide examples of what was negative about the experience?

15. What are the social networks you perceive as the most important in your journey so far?

    a. What social network has been the most important to you? Family, friends? Why?

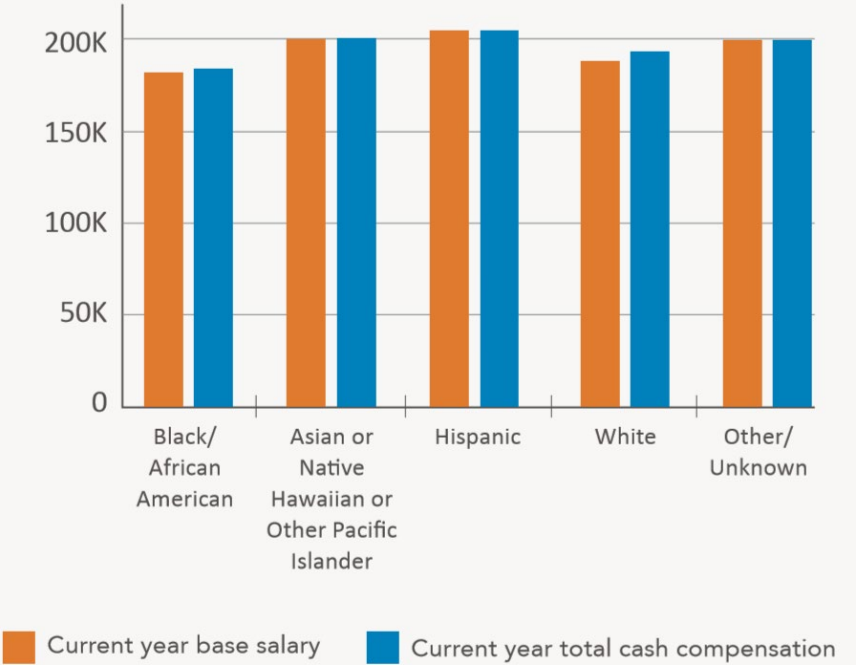
16. Have you had any mentors in your professional career? If so, please discuss.
    a. What ethnicity was your mentor(s)?
17. What do you perceive as the most critical strategies in creating opportunities for future Hispanic leaders in higher education?
18. As a leader in higher education, do you see students connect with you because of your ethnicity? If so, please give an example.
19. As a leader in higher education, describe how your institution prioritizes the hiring of a diverse faculty in your strategic plan.
20. Would you like to share anything else that you feel would be pertinent information for this study?

Appendix E- College Enrollment & Attainment by Ethnicity, 2017



Appendix E. Latinos rank behind Whites and Blacks in college enrollment, attainment, and overall earnings. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, *Latino Education and Economic Progress: Running Faster but Still Behind, 2017*.

Appendix F- AACC Median CEO Compensation by Race/Ethnicity



Appendix F. AACC median CEO compensation by race/ethnicity (Phillipe, 2016, p. 6).