

Organizational culture at Texas community colleges and the leadership response to the enrollment management environment

by

Tracee Tollett Watts

B.S., Evangel University, 2005  
M.O.L, Evangel University, 2015

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

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Community College and Leadership  
College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
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## **Abstract**

Community colleges have experienced many challenges since their establishment in 1902; however, the 21st century has brought new obstacles and opportunities. In turn, community college leaders have been called upon to address challenges such as the COVID-19 global pandemic, the demand from students for virtual course offerings, and financial concerns. Declining birth rates and questions about the value of college have exacerbated enrollment concerns (Kelderman, 2019). With the changing enrollment management environment, higher education professionals acknowledge the need to adapt organizational culture and leadership strategies to address the challenges. This adaptation requires prioritizing student success through retention, persistence, graduation, certificate completion, or transfer while highlighting the institution's strengths and value to attract more students and increase enrollment.

This study used an explanatory sequential design mixed-methods study to collectively form a comprehensive understanding of how executive leaders and enrollment management personnel assessed organizational culture in Texas community colleges and how executive leaders responded to the changing enrollment management environment. The theoretical framework guiding this study was Schein's (1986) organizational culture theory. Quinn and Rohrbaugh's (1983) Competing Values Framework (CVF) was the conceptual framework guiding this study.

Using Cameron and Quinn's (n.d.) Competing Values Culture Assessment (CVCA), the results of this study show there are differences in the assessment of organizational culture between executive leaders and enrollment management personnel. Furthermore, the results illustrate that executive leaders and enrollment management personnel encountered internal and external challenges, which have had positive and negative effects on enrollment at their

institutions. These challenges created unique opportunities to reconsider traditional approaches and reimagine strategies to fulfill the foundational mission of community colleges and meet the expectations and desires of students, employees, and the broader community.

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Approved by:  
Co-Major Professor  
Dr. Margaretta B. Mathis

Approved by:  
Co-Major Professor  
Dr. Jennifer Spielvogel

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## **Dedication**

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## Chapter 1 - Introduction

Community colleges are complex systems serving diverse student populations. At their core, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC, 2012) explained the mission of community colleges is to “ensure that millions of diverse and often underserved students attain a high-quality college education” (p. v). However, higher education institutions nationwide have suffered significant enrollment declines in recent decades and have struggled to rebuild, which has altered the impactful work of community colleges.

For decades, community colleges have played a vital role in contributing to the economic growth of the United States. However, community college administrators have grave concerns about a predicted enrollment cliff due to a decline in U.S. birth rates (Kline, 2019; Milton, 2022). Declining birth rates can be attributed to the significant economic pressure on markets caused by the Great Recession of 2008, which resulted in fewer college-age students in the U.S. population (Kline, 2019). To explain the phenomenon of declining birth rates, economist Nathan Grawe, as cited in Barshay (2018), stated:

When the financial crisis hit in 2008, young people viewed economic uncertainty as a cause for reducing fertility, and the number of kids born from 2008 to 2011 fell precipitously. Fast forward 18 years to 2026, and there are fewer kids reaching college-going age. (para. 3)

In addition to the Great Recession in 2008, the COVID-19 global pandemic severely affected higher education enrollment declines. In March 2020, due to the rapid spread and severity of COVID-19, the World Health Organization (2023) labeled the disease a global pandemic. As a result, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2023) mandated stay-at-home orders. These orders impacted various sectors, including higher education, where colleges

and universities had to transition to online learning, close campuses, cancel athletics, and close residence halls until safety guidelines allowed for a return to normal operations. Research showed the COVID-19 global pandemic was the biggest nonfinancial reason for students not enrolling or re-enrolling in college; for example, Whissemore (2021) revealed 53% of students said they considered not attending or returning to college due to concerns about COVID-19. Community college credit enrollment decreased by 10.1% from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020 (AACC, 2019b) and by 3.4% from Fall 2020 to Fall 2021 (AACC, 2022). By Fall 2020, fewer social distractions, fewer job opportunities, and pandemic-related aid were thought to be responsible for the lower enrollment compared to the year before (Bulman & Fairlie, 2022).

Declining birth rates, financial concerns, and questions about the value of college have contributed to an enrollment crisis (Kelderman, 2019). In response, community colleges have shifted their focus from tried-and-true business practices to strategic enrollment management efforts. This shift represents a departure from the traditional organizational culture and leadership approaches commonly found in higher education institutions, often characterized by bureaucratic structures and deep-rooted histories. Therefore, higher education professionals should acknowledge that organizational culture and leadership strategies require adaptation to address the challenges of declining enrollment.

### **Statement of the Problem**

According to the AACC (2019a), “Community college enrollment has been declining since their peak in 2010 by an average of 2.2% each year” (p. 2), or “14.4% over the course of seven years” (p. 4). Institutions nationwide, particularly public community colleges, have suffered significant enrollment declines and have struggled to rebuild. Boeckenstedt (2022) noted:

Declining enrollment even in one sector (say, community colleges) is troublesome because of downstream effects. Declining revenue and wavering state support, coupled with fewer high-school graduates, fewer families that don't need financial help, and an increasingly negative attitude from the public toward higher education, may take us to a long-rumored tipping point. While there are no guarantees, the colleges that are aware of how those trends will affect their specific states and regions, are dealing with those issues, and are looking realistically toward the future are likely to be the ones best able to survive. (para. 22)

Significant declines in enrollment pose a threat to higher education institutions, including public community colleges, potentially leading to their closure or consolidation with larger, more financially stable institutions. According to Zirkel (2023), "Since 2020, enrollment at community colleges has declined 5.4%, which has prompted institutions to reflect on practices that impact student success and barriers students face in their pursuit of higher education" (para. 1). At the same time, one population in community colleges that has been increasing are high school students taking college courses simultaneously, known as dual enrollment. Zirkel (2023) reported the driver of postpandemic enrollment recovery at community colleges has been in dual enrollment, which saw an 11.5% increase in Fall 2022. Although this increase is encouraging, it highlights the importance of not only attracting but also retaining students (Hossler, 2002). According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2023), in Spring 2023 at community colleges, "Enrollment grew only among younger undergraduate students, i.e., dual enrollees and students ages 18-20, while older groups (21 or above) continued a downward trend, extending multi-year losses in adult enrollment" (para. 13). An additional population experiencing growth is in postsecondary noncredit workforce education programs. For example,

the Community College Research Center reported many community colleges enroll more noncredit students than credit students, and significant growth in noncredit program offerings provides students with access to credit programs, facilitating the long-term pursuit of degrees (Van Noy et al., 2008). Therefore, implementation of strategic enrollment management (e.g., recruitment, retention) has been considered an essential strategy because student demographics are changing, the pool of prospective students is decreasing, and the future of higher education has forever changed because of economic pressures. Adapting to the changing enrollment environment requires effective leadership and a potential shift in the organizational culture to align with the evolving educational environment.

### **Background of the Problem**

Community colleges have experienced many challenges since their establishment in 1902; however, the 21st century has brought new obstacles and opportunities. Historically, community college leaders have learned to fulfill their mission with limited resources while competing with 4-year institutions and evolving student demographics. Community college leaders have been called upon to address challenges such as the COVID-19 global pandemic, the demand from students for virtual course offerings, and financial concerns. They manage limited resources while prioritizing student success through retention, persistence, graduation, certificate completion, or transfer while highlighting the institution's strengths and value to attract more students and increase enrollment.

Economic concerns such as the Great Recession in 2008, the COVID-19 global pandemic, and economic pressures such as inflation continue to significantly impact higher education enrollment in credit programs, leading to an enrollment crisis. This crisis, attributed to declining birth rates from these substantial economic pressures (Kline, 2019), has prompted

community college leaders to look at their 4-year university counterparts for best practices and business models focused on recruitment and enrollment management. For example, through a study of 385 public 4-year institutions across the United States, Trainer (2016) identified a best practice of incorporating the academic community into the enrollment management process to foster a shared sense of responsibility for enrollment outcomes in the academic units.

According to Kelderman (2019), the enrollment crisis will impact all higher education institutions in some way; however, small, rural colleges are at the greatest risk for a steep enrollment decline. C. Harris (2022) stated:

In addition to national and regional demographic shifts, a significant decrease in demand for college is only making a cliff higher and steeper for institutions. According to the Higher Education Demand Index, demand for a college education is expected to drop 9% as the population of prospective students simultaneously declines. (para. 5)

Furthermore, Grawe (2018) reported:

Demographic change is reshaping the population of the United States in ways that raise challenges for higher education. Through immigration, interstate migration, and fertility differences across demographic groups, the country's population is tilting toward the Southwest. From the perspective of the higher education sector, these changes adversely shift the population away from traditionally strong markets toward those with lower rates of education acquisitions. (p. 6)

In response, higher education institutions have reported being proactive in advancing enrollment efforts. Many community colleges have implemented strategic enrollment management initiatives to focus on recruitment; however, current literature has suggested the same focus be placed on retention, persistence, and completion efforts (Abston, 2010; Dolence, 1998; Hossler,

2002). Economist Grawe stated, “Colleges might be able to avoid closures and budget shortfalls if they can reduce their dropout rates and focus on keeping their students, and tuition dollars, on-campus” (as cited in Barshay, 2018, para. 17). Essentially, retaining a student is more cost effective than recruiting a new one.

Penn (1999) indicated the field of enrollment management has existed for approximately 3 decades. Enrollment management was established in 4-year universities and viewed primarily as a way for university foundations to bring in additional money to attract students. In response to the challenges of declining enrollment, community colleges are embracing best practices in conceptualizing and expanding enrollment management efforts and strategies. According to Dolence (1998) and Hossler (1984), enrollment management administrators must employ a comprehensive approach involving the entire campus as strategic enrollment management evolves with new approaches to student recruitment and retention, a relevant trend for 21st century community colleges. From initial contact at the beginning of the student recruitment cycle through students’ path to graduation, students will encounter many departments on campus, and each could have an impact on their continued enrollment and persistence to graduation. Hossler identified college departments and functions considered to have direct responsibility for enrollment management. These functions include marketing and recruitment, pricing and financial aid, academic and career advising, academic assistance programs, institutional research, orientation, retention programs, and student services.

Dolence (1998) stated, “Simply defined, strategic enrollment management is a comprehensive process designed to help an institution achieve and maintain the optimum recruitment, retention, and graduation rates of students, where ‘optimum’ is defined within the



academic context of the institution” (p. 72). Hossler (1984) defined enrollment management as follows:

A process, or an activity, that influences the size, the share, and the characteristics of a student body by directing institutional efforts in marketing, recruitment, and admissions as well as pricing and financial aid. In addition, the process exerts a significant influence on academic advising, institutional research agenda, orientation, retention studies, and student services. (para. 1)

Hossler (1984) explained higher education institutions began to focus on postsecondary admissions in 1870 when the University of Michigan began certifying state high schools to guarantee admission into the university. Hossler added, in the 1920s and 1930s, when 2- and 4-year institutions began to see this new trend, administrative specialist positions focused on student admissions. The role evolved over the decades by broadening the scope of the admission process, recruitment, communication, and retention efforts. Hossler (1984) stated, “Admissions personnel have often seen themselves as second-class citizens” (p. 5); however, “the admissions field is emerging as an area of crucial importance to many colleges and universities” (p. 5). According to LoBasso (2005), survey responses from 28 Florida community colleges “indicated that the right leader is important to the success of enrollment management” (p. 84). Huddleston (2000) stated that enrollment management expanded into higher education in the 1970s on private college campuses, and the structure varied based on the institution. Enrollment management evolved as a “specific expertise” (Hossler, 1984, p. 5), becoming the new college admission and recruitment model, leading to college enrollment. Based on the findings of these studies, the concept of enrollment management may continue to develop and redevelop as

institutions identify a model appropriate to meet the needs of their institution that also aligns with the goals, vision, mission, and institutional and enrollment strategic plans.

In general, four enrollment management approaches have been identified and defined as models of enrollment management coordination: (a) enrollment management committee, (b) enrollment management coordinator, (c) enrollment management matrix, and (d) enrollment management division (Hossler & Bean, 1990; Hossler & Kemerer, 1986; Huddleston, 2000). Enrollment management considers an institution's mission, vision, core values, and unique strengths and weaknesses. Hossler (2002) noted, "Enrollment management activities concern student college choice, transition to college, student attrition and retention, and student outcomes" (p. 78). Regardless of the approach each institution determines, Huddleston (2000) further stated intentional collaboration and communication with academic affairs is crucial for long-term sustainability and implementing enrollment management approaches successfully.

Through an intentional focus on strategic enrollment management, community college leaders can establish connections between why students choose a particular institution and their motivations to persist, enabling them to better understand the market, environment, and competition. Penn (1999) cited enrollment management as an important factor in an institution's financial viability and achievement of stated goals and listed the following examples of general enrollment management goals: (a) increase enrollment, (b) create a student body that meets the goals and expectations of institutional policymakers, and (c) achieve better institutional graduation rates.

According to Juskiewicz (2020) and Gavazzi and Gee (2021), historical trends have indicated postsecondary enrollment increases during economic downturns as individuals seek to upskill to advance their career opportunities and become more competitive in the job market.

This phenomenon proved true as higher education experienced a 10% increase in enrollment from 2008–2011 during the Great Recession of 2008. In contrast to this phenomenon, following this increase, enrollment declined for 7 consecutive years from 2011–2018 (Kelderman, 2019) and continued to decline with the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic, with community colleges experiencing a 10.1% decline from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020 (AACC, 2019a). Through multiple surveys, Fisher (2022) showed nearly 1.3 million students were “missing” from U.S. colleges during the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic heightened higher education institutions’ concerns regarding enrollment numbers, including concerns about finances, particularly for institutions relying upon revenue from tuition and fees to balance the budget or meet the bottom line. With these staggering statistics, enrollment challenges are top of mind for many college leaders.

As community college leaders work diligently to respond to the enrollment crisis, internal challenges and opportunities exist to consider and navigate. For example, the enrollment crisis has contributed to a culture shift in organizations. According to Schein (2004), culture is at the core of a group in which basic assumptions are shared, and the group works together to solve problems and adapt to the changing environment. According to Hossler (1984), strategic enrollment management is a collaborative effort between departments and teams that work together for the common goal of student success; thus, the group drives enrollment management efforts and strategies. Strategic enrollment management may be considered a transformational change process involving rethinking how institutions approach recruitment and enrollment. Schein (2004) noted, “Transformative change implies that the person or group that is the target of change must unlearn something as well as learn something new. Transformative change will therefore almost always involve culture change to some degree” (pp. 320–321). In response to

the changing external climate, internal processes and practices will need to change.

Organizational leaders are pivotal in guiding institutional teams as they embrace the need to adapt to the impending challenges and practices these changes present.

## **Texas Community Colleges**

The junior college movement emerged in Texas in the 1890s, with the first publicly supported junior college established in 1922 (Tuttle, 1976/2019). According to the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (n.d.), “Texas’ public community colleges serve a vital role in our state’s economy by developing our workforce and preparing students for further academic study” (para. 1). The state’s 50 community college districts were “created to expand access to higher education and play an important role by meeting the specific education and vocations needs to their services areas” (Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, n.d., para. 1).

Sustaining the fundamental mission to “ensure that millions of diverse and often underserved students attain a high-quality college education” (AACC, 2012, p. v) has become difficult because community colleges have been expected to do more with fewer resources. Many community colleges depend on tuition and fees as a main source of income. For example, according to the Texas Commission on Community College Finance (n.d.), Texas community colleges are funded by three main sources of revenue: (a) state appropriations, (b) local property taxes, and (c) tuition and fees. The current contact hour funding model, linked to enrollment, has existed for over 50 years. In the 1980s, the state of Texas provided 65% of all community college funding. (Texas Association of Community Colleges [TACC], n.d.). In 2023, the allocation was closer to 24% (TACC, n.d.). Contact hour funding is a second stream of state appropriations for Texas community colleges. According to Keller (2021), contact hour funding, which reflects enrollment, constitutes most of the allocation for Texas community colleges at

78.9%. Total student enrollment at 2-year Texas public institutions in Fall 2022 was 669,354, a decrease of 99,773 students, or a 13% decline, compared to Fall 2019 (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2023). Hossler (2002) stated:

Enrollment management efforts have also become an integral part of campus financial and budgeting strategies. The effects of new student enrollments and campus-based aid programs on net tuition revenue have a pronounced effect on colleges' and universities' economic health and vitality. Hence, enrollment management is not only part of an enrollment strategy but has also become a budgeting strategy. (p. 78)

With a funding model linked to enrollment, higher education institutions experiencing significant enrollment decline have faced losses in revenue, which could lead to merging or closing their doors, drastically impacting the local community. Significant research on strategic enrollment management at 4-year universities has been conducted; however, limited research has focused on community colleges pertaining to enrollment management and the response of executive leadership to the enrollment environment.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to compare how executive leaders and enrollment management personnel assessed organizational culture at Texas community colleges and to understand how those executive leaders responded to the changing enrollment management environment.

### **Research Questions**

Two primary research questions guided this study:

1. How does the assessment of organizational culture differ between executive leaders and enrollment management personnel in Texas community colleges when measured by the Competing Values Culture Assessment tool?
2. How do executive leaders at Texas community colleges respond to the changing enrollment management environment?

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks**

According to Osanloo and Grant (2014), “The theoretical framework is the foundation from which all knowledge is constructed (metaphorically and literally) for a research study” (p. 12). The theoretical framework supports the problem statement, the purpose of the study, and the research questions while serving as the anchor for the literature review, methods, survey instrument, and data analysis (Osanloo & Grant, 2014).

The theoretical framework guiding this study was Schein’s (1986) organizational culture theory. Schein (1986) proposed “culture is a deep phenomenon, merely manifested in a variety of behavior” (p. 30). Schein’s (1986) organizational culture theory posits:

For any given group or organization that has had a substantial history, culture is the pattern of basic assumptions that the group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaption and internal integration, and that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relations to those problems. (pp. 30–31)

Schein (2004) illustrated that organizational culture consists of three interrelated levels: (a) artifacts, (b) espoused beliefs and values, and (c) underlying assumptions. According to Schein, considering organizational culture serves as the status quo for the organization,

flexibility and adaptability can disrupt the evolution of an organization's culture. Schein (2004) wrote, "Culture is a stabilizer, a conservative force, and a way of making things meaningful and predictable" (p. 365). Applying Schein's organizational culture as a theoretical framework assisted this researcher in understanding how executive leadership and enrollment management personnel at Texas community colleges assess organizational culture.

Osanloo and Grant (2014) further explained a conceptual framework is "the researcher's understanding of how the research problem will be best explored, the specific direction the research will have to take, and the relationship between the different variables in the study" (pp. 16–17). The conceptual framework that guided this study was the competing values framework (CVF; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983), which examines relationships between organizational culture and effectiveness. CVF categorizes values into three competing sets: (a) structure, (b) focus, and (c) means and ends (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1981). As Howard (1998) stated:

An organizational culture can be reliably represented by the values—preferences for means and ends—which drive its members' attitudes and activities; top management constitutes an important and sometimes defining source of cultural values; and, while organizations may differ in terms of their dominant values, there are common value dimensions that run through most organizations. (p. 234)

CVF has two primary dimensions: (a) control or flexibility and (b) internal or external constituents (Howard, 1998). The researcher used the Competing Values Culture Assessment (CVCA) tool, which emerged from empirical research on Quinn and Rohrbaugh's (1983) CVF, to compare how executive leaders and enrollment management personnel assessed organizational culture. The CVCA "has been applied to a variety of topics related to individual and organizational behavior" (para. 1) and was designed to diagnose an organization's current and

desired culture. Based on their research findings, Goodman et al. (2001) determined employing the CVF offers practitioners a valuable framework for understanding organizational culture. The CVF has been used in higher education and business sectors for over 25 years to pinpoint the elements that contribute to the effectiveness of organizations (Cameron & Quinn, 1983). For example, Flanigan (2016) employed the CVF to assess how staff members at Virginia Commonwealth University perceived the current and desired states of the organizational culture in the enrollment management department. Lincoln (2010) also used the CVF to help organizations improve global performance.

## **Methodology**

This research study employed an explanatory sequential design mixed-method study to understand how executive leaders and enrollment management personnel assessed organizational culture and how executive leaders responded to the changing enrollment management environment at Texas community colleges. Subedi (2016) stated, “The rationale for an [explanatory sequential design] is that the quantitative data and results provide a general picture of the research problem; more analysis, specifically through qualitative data collection is needed to refine, extend, or explain the general picture” (p. 572). An explanatory research design was selected because it “can be used to explain what is or what could be” and “seek to provide an answer to why practices, policies, program, and processes interact or act as they do (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017, p. 9).

This mixed-methods approach collectively formed a comprehensive understanding of how organizational culture is assessed in Texas community colleges and how executive leaders responded to the changing enrollment management environment.



To address Research Question 1, a quantitative research design was used to gather the assessments of organizational culture from executive leaders and enrollment management personnel at Texas community colleges. A quantitative research design describes, explains, and predicts a phenomenon of a larger sample size (Khalid et al., 2012). During a review of the literature, the researcher was unable to identify survey instruments that are comprehensive in assessing the organizational culture at Texas community colleges. Therefore, the researcher developed a survey instrument that included four sections using Qualtrics (2023), a secure online survey platform. Section A sought demographic information from respondents on their role in the organization, years in their current position, and the size of their institution based on the institutional peer groups outlined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (see Appendix A). Section B identified the enrollment management approach in each Texas community college (e.g., committee, coordinator, matrix, division). Section C included Cameron and Quinn's (n.d.) CVCA tool, a 24-question survey used to assess an organization's current culture. Section D included open-ended questions to gather additional information and perspectives from respondents and to provide an opportunity for additional comments regarding organizational culture and strategic enrollment management environment.

Two types of analysis were conducted on the survey responses. The first was a descriptive analysis, including the distribution, means, and standard deviations of survey responses to the CVCA 24-question survey items. Responses are presented separately based on the assessments from executive leaders and enrollment management personnel. A separate description, including distribution, means, and standard deviations, are presented by the four Texas community college institutional peer groups. A comparative analysis determined if there was a statistically significant difference in the assessments between the two categories of

employees: (a) executive leaders and (b) enrollment management personnel. Additionally, assessments were compared by the four institutional peer groups to determine differences.

After completing the quantitative research design, the study's second phase was a qualitative design. To address Research Question 2, interviews were conducted with executive leaders at four different types of Texas community colleges. The executive leaders represented the four institutional peer groups identified by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

### **Alignment Table**

Appendix B provides an overview of how Schein's (1986) organizational culture theory and the conceptual framework—Quinn and Rohrbaugh's (1983) CVF—were aligned with this study's methodology, research questions, and survey questions.

### **Delimitations and Assumptions**

The researcher conducted the online survey with 49 public Texas community college districts, each with vastly different service areas and taxing districts. The researcher interviewed executive leaders regarding their perceptions of the changing enrollment management environment. Thus, an assessment of organizational culture and perceptions from executive leaders were based on responses from a subset population rather than the entire institution. Lastly, the researcher conducted the study between November 2023 and January 2024; therefore, the assessments and perceptions of organizational culture and strategic enrollment management environments are representative of the timing of the study.

The assumptions of this study included two main points of focus. First, the researcher assumed those surveyed and interviewed answered truthfully and were transparent. Second, the researcher assumed those surveyed and interviewed correctly identified strategic enrollment management approaches at their institution.

## **Significance of the Study**

This study contributed to the body of knowledge on the perceptions of organizational culture and strategic enrollment management in higher education. Executive leaders and enrollment management personnel can benefit from understanding organizational culture and how executive leaders have responded to the changing enrollment management environment at Texas community colleges.

## **Definitions of Terms**

*Caring Campus Initiative*—The Caring Campus Initiative “is designed to create a positive, supportive campus culture and to increase students’ sense of connectedness to the college through the development of student-centered behaviors and activities among faculty and staff” (Community College Research Center, 2024, para. 1).

*Competing Values Culture Assessment (CVCA)*—Cameron and Quinn (n.d.) explained, “The purpose of this assessment is to diagnose your organization’s current culture” (p. 6). The CVCA contains six questions seeking to identify how respondents identify their experience with their organization.

*Enrollment cliff*—The enrollment cliff is the result of declining U.S. birth rates attributed to the significant economic pressure on markets caused by the Great Recession of 2008, resulting in fewer college-age students in the U.S. population (Kline, 2019).

*Enrollment management*—Hossler (1984) defined enrollment management as a process, or an activity, that influences the size, the share, and the characteristics of a student body by directing institutional efforts in marketing, recruitment, admissions, pricing, and financial aid. In addition, the process exerts a significant influence on academic advising, institutional research agenda, orientation, retention studies, and student services.

*Guided Pathways*—The Community College Research Center (2024) explained Guided Pathways is “a whole-college redesign model designed to help all students explore, choose, plan, and complete programs aligned with their career and education goals efficiently and affordably” (para. 1).

*Organizational culture*—According to Schein (1986), organizational culture refers to a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaption and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

*Strategic enrollment management*—Dolence (1998) defined strategic enrollment management as “a comprehensive process designed to help an institution achieve and maintain the optimum recruitment, retention, and graduation rates of students, where ‘optimum’ is defined within the academic context of the institution” (p. 72).

## **Chapter Summary**

Chapter 1 introduced the background of the problem, the statement of the problem, the research questions, and the significance of studying the organizational culture and strategic enrollment management at Texas community colleges. Additionally, Chapter 1 included the theoretical and conceptual frameworks used to guide the study and the methodology. Chapter 1 also introduced a table (see Appendix B) to demonstrate alignment throughout the study. The chapter concluded with delimitations, assumptions, and definitions of terms to assist with understanding concepts referenced throughout the study.

## **Organization of the Study**

Chapter 1 of the dissertation presented an overview of the problem, its significance, and an outline of the study. Chapter 2 provides a detailed literature review to inform this study. Focus areas of the literature review include (a) theoretical and conceptual frameworks, (b) enrollment barriers, (c) leadership, (d) embedding culture, and (e) enrollment management. Chapter 3 details the research methodology used for the study. Chapter 4 discusses the data collected and key research findings. Chapter 5 reflects on the findings and concludes with implications and recommendations for further research.

## **Chapter 2 - Literature Review**

The literature review provides content and context to this study. This chapter begins with a review of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks serving as the foundation of this study. Subsequently, the chapter delves into a comprehensive literature search, providing an overview of four themes identified through the literature: (a) enrollment barriers, (b) leadership, (c) embedding culture, and (d) enrollment management.

The information in this chapter was collected from a wide range of current and historical sources from 1979–2023. The more than 40-year timeframe provided comprehensive historical perspective on organizational culture, leadership, and enrollment management. Documents for the literature review were discovered through searches in Kansas State University databases, including ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global, Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), JSTOR, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Google Scholar, and Internet Archive digital library. Sources include peer-reviewed journals, dissertations, websites, books, and professional reports.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework that guided this study was Schein's (1986) organizational culture theory, which suggests:

For any given group or organization that has had a substantial history, culture is the pattern of basic assumptions that the group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaption and internal integration, and that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relations to those problems.

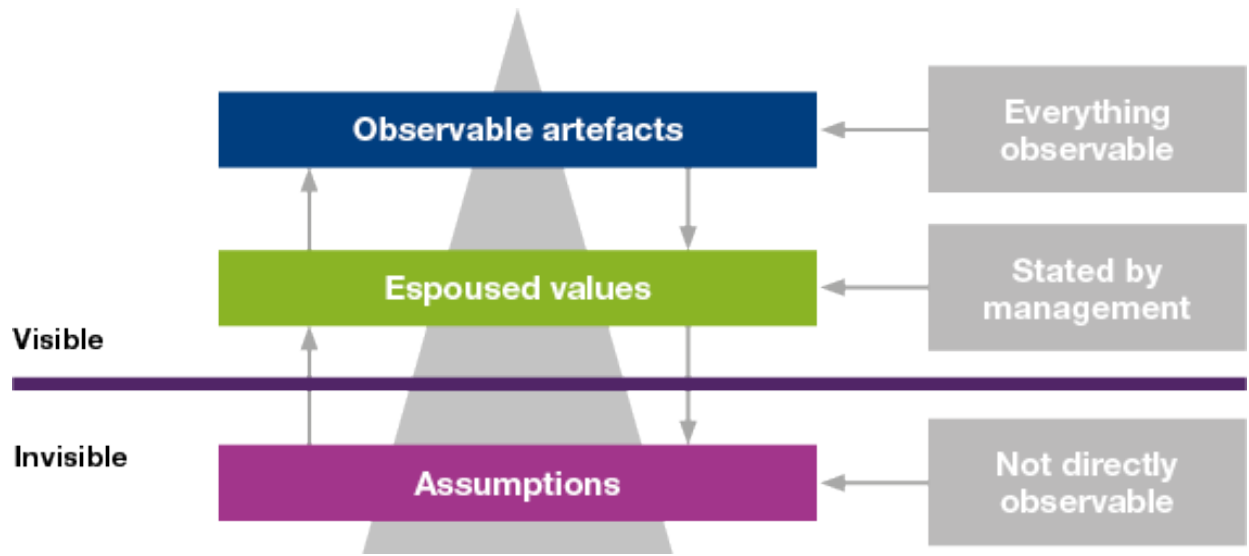
(pp. 30–31)

Lehman (2017) indicated although culture plays a significant role in an organization, scholars struggle to establish a singular, cohesive definition. According to Schein (2004), organizational culture is defined as:

A pattern of basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 17)

Flanigan (2016) paraphrased Schein's definition by stating organizational culture is "the way we prefer to do things around here" (p. 118). According to Denison et al. (2012), organizational culture was first introduced in 1951 by Jacques to "explain the failure of formal policies and procedures to resolve the unproductive dynamic between managers and employees at the Glacier Metal Company" (p. 146). Other researchers have described culture as collective sense making, formal and informal structures, and behaviors guiding and facilitating shared meaning (Alvesson, 1990; Denison et al., 2012; Pettigrew, 1979). Scholars have concurred with Schein's (2004) illustration that organizational culture consists of three interrelated levels: (a) artifacts, (b) espoused beliefs and values, and (c) underlying assumptions (Denison & Mishra, 1995; Flanigan, 2016; Pettigrew, 1979). Figure 2.1 depicts the three levels of culture, according to Schein (2004).

Figure 2.1. Edgar Schein’s Levels of Organizational Culture



*Note.* Adapted from “The Three Levels of Organizational Culture,” by E. Schein, 2024. The Leadership Centre (<https://www.leadershipcentre.org.uk/artofchangemaking/theory/3-levels-of-organisational-culture/>).

Schein (2004) presented artifacts as the “visible organizational structures and processes” (p. 26) that are easy to identify but difficult to decipher by anyone unfamiliar with the culture. According to Lehman (2017), artifacts are observed easily in the institution’s physical spaces, employees’ apparent behaviors, and how work is organized and processed. Artifacts in an organization are surface-level elements that can be observed by the environment, behavior of members, décor, office layouts, and other visible manifestations (Howard, 1998; Lehman, 2017; Schein, 2004). Schein (2004) explained espoused beliefs and values “are the strategies, goals, philosophies, and other justifications group members use to portray the culture to themselves and others” (p. 26). According to Schein (2004), underlying assumptions are the unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings that are the ultimate source of values and action. According to Manning (2018), “Every organization has a set of values and assumptions



that are embedded in mission statements, founding documents, and other historical artifacts” (p. 72). Schein (2004) believed unless one digs down to the level of basic assumptions, one cannot understand the artifacts, values, and norms. Manning (2018) stated, “Values and assumptions pinpoint guidelines for everyday behavior, provide a common focus, and identify heroines and heroes” (p. 72). Schein (2004) summarized:

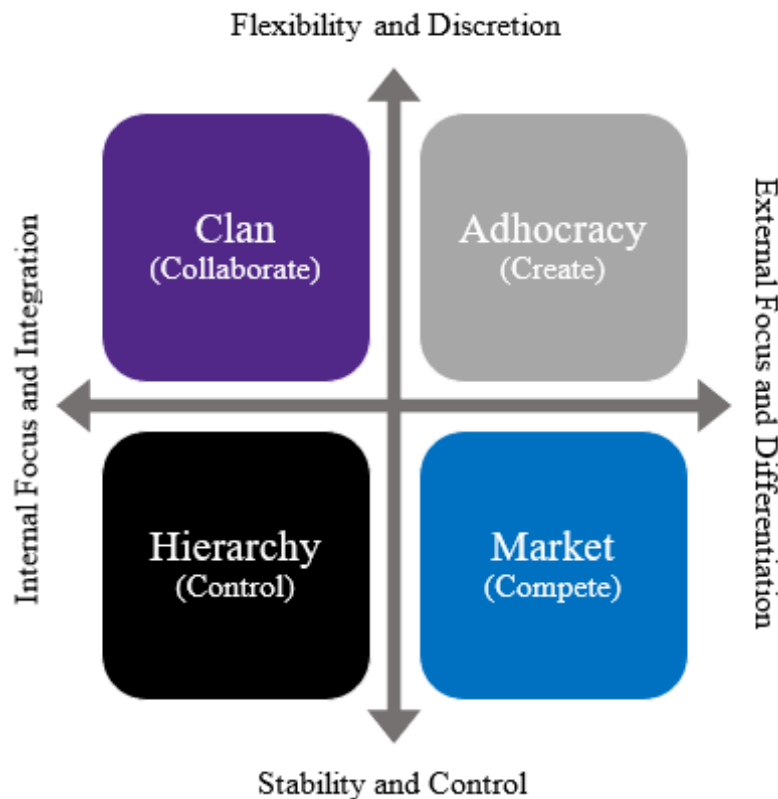
Cultures basically spring from three sources: (1) the beliefs, values, and assumptions of founders of organizations; (2) the learning experiences of group members as their organization evolves; and (3) new beliefs, values, and assumptions brought in by new members and leaders. (p. 225)

Examining case studies and survey data, Denison et al. (2012) discovered an organization’s culture is shaped by its history, core values, and how values are expressed in structure and action. This empirical research identified four cultural traits positively related to perceptions of performance leading to effectiveness—involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission (Denison & Mishra, 1995). Furthermore, Schein (2004) proposed, “Culture is a deep phenomenon, merely manifested in a variety of behavior” (p. 30). Schein (2004) emphasized culture is not a static entity, but a dynamic and evolving phenomenon created through socialization; newcomers to an organization learn the values, norms, and assumptions through socialization by observing stories, rituals, and symbols. Therefore, according to Schein (2004), considering organizational culture serves as the status quo for the organization, flexibility and adaptability can disrupt the evolution of an organization’s culture. However, organizational culture is unique and cannot be generalized (Howard, 1998).

## Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this study was competing values framework (CVF; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983), which examines relationships between culture and organizational effectiveness. One of the 50 most recognized models in business, CVF is defined by two primary dimensions: (a) control or flexibility and (b) internal or external constituents (Howard, 1998). These dimensions form four cultural quadrants: (a) clan, (b) adhocracy, (c) hierarchy, and (d) market (Denison & Mishra, 1995; Howard, 1998; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983). Figure 2.2 illustrates the CVF. Cameron and Quinn (n.d.) indicated the four quadrants “represent a way of being, seeing, managing, and organizing” (para. 1). CVF is based on the premise that organizations have inherent tensions and competing values that need to be managed effectively to achieve success (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983). Thus, all four quadrants are represented in every organization, and each quadrant has a conceptual opposite (Howard, 1998). Each quadrant of CVF represents a culture found in organizations.

Figure 2.2. Quinn and Rohrbaugh's Competing Values Framework (1983)



*Note.* Adapted from “Organizational Culture and Leadership,” by E. H. Schein, n.d.

Wind4Change. <https://wind4change.com/organizational-culture-leadership-framework-edgar-schein/>

The “clan” and “adhocracy” culture quadrants in the CVF model represent flexibility and discretion in the organization. The “clan” quadrant represents collaboration and the kinds of people, purposes, and processes supporting collaboration and cooperation (Cameron & Quinn, n.d.). This internally focused culture represents flexibility (Hartnell et al., 2011) and a family-like environment (Flanigan, 2016) and emphasizes the well-being and development of the organization and people in the organization (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1981). The “adhocracy”

quadrant symbolizes creativity, innovation, and vision. Externally focused, it encourages experimentation, adaptability, and a forward-thinking belief that an idealistic and novel vision inspires creativity and risk-taking (Cameron & Quinn, n.d.; Hartnell et al., 2011).

The “hierarchy” and “market” culture quadrants in the CVF model correspond to stability and control in the organization. The “hierarchy” quadrant is characterized by a formalized and structured bureaucracy valuing efficiency and standardization (Lincoln, 2010). Howard’s (1998) research suggested the hierarchy or internal processes quadrant emphasizes formal communication channels and centralized decision making for stability. The “market” quadrant has an external focus and represents predictability and dependability in performance (Cameron & Quinn, n.d.). Lincoln (2010) determined market culture has been characterized by intense competitiveness and a strong emphasis on goal achievement. Leaders in this culture are expected to possess qualities such as being driven, tough, and demanding competitors (Lincoln, 2010).

Based on their research findings, Goodman et al. (2001) determined that using the CVF model provides a valuable framework for understanding organizational culture and making informed choices about intervention strategies to achieve effectiveness. Flanigan (2016), in response to rapid growth in the enrollment management division, employed CVF to gauge staff perceptions at Virginia Commonwealth University regarding the existing and desired state of the organizational culture in the department. Findings revealed a preference for “clan” and “adhocracy” culture aspects, with a reduction in “hierarchy” and “market” culture (Flanigan, 2016).

Denison and Mishra (1995) argued little attention had been placed on understanding the critical impact culture has on organizations and organizational issues. However, Howard (1998) determined the CVF:

Represents a valid framework for addressing three critical issues involved with analysis of organizational culture: (1) it specifies a descriptive content of organizational culture, (2) it identifies dimensions whereby similarities and differences across cultures might be evaluated, and (3) it suggests tools and techniques for organizational analysis that enable measurement and representation of culture. (p. 232)

Schein (2004) gathered that organizational culture assists individuals in understanding their roles, expectations, and position within the broader organizational context.

### **Enrollment Barriers**

To increase enrollment in academic institutions, a comprehensive understanding of factors and barriers impeding or deterring students from enrolling is crucial. Declines in enrollment encompass reduced numbers of new students and diminished retention rates among current and returning students. Research has indicated numerous barriers have contributed to declines in student enrollment (The College Board, 2019; Kreighbaum, 2019; Newton, 2021; Whissemore, 2021).

### **Paying for College**

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2022), the rising cost of tuition makes pursuing and obtaining a postsecondary credential or degree unrealistic, particularly for families that could benefit from earning a degree the most. In March 2021, the Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE, 2021) administered the Community College Survey of Student Engagement to 120,833 students across 273 colleges. The purpose of the survey was to gain insights into how the COVID-19 global pandemic had continued to affect students in community colleges. According to CCCSE (2021), “Over one-third of Spring 2021 respondents described their personal financial situation as worse than it was before the pandemic” (p. 2).

Additionally, “Almost one-quarter of spring 2021 respondents said they were struggling to pay for colleges as a result of COVID-19,” and an “additional 20% of students said paying for college was a struggle, but it was not due to the pandemic” (CCCSE, 2021, p. 3). Bouchrika (2021) reported the average in-district tuition and fees doubled for public community colleges over the past 30 years. Reductions in funding of community colleges by state governments mean the burden of increased tuition has fallen on students. The College Board (2019) indicated students often see an increase in tuition and fees that exceed the overall inflation rate by two or three percentage points. In Summer 2021, the Cengage Group conducted an online survey of over 1,600 students enrolled in community colleges, recent high school graduates contemplating college, or students who recently dropped out of college. Whissemore (2021) found approximately 49% of students indicated “cost of living or tuition and course materials [were] the biggest barriers to education” (para. 2). Of currently enrolled students, 20% worried about having sufficient funds to pay for the following semester, 46% stated they would return to a community college if President Biden’s American Families Plan were enacted, 36% said increased Pell Grants would encourage them to return, and 36% cited their past student loan debt as a detriment to their return to college to complete their degree (Whissemore, 2021). However, Jaschik (2021) reported the high school class of 2021 saw a 4.8% decrease in completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or 102,000 fewer applications for aid. According to Kreighbaum (2019), completing the FAFSA is “a leading indicator of college enrollment, and there is ample evidence that more financial aid is associated with outcomes like college completion” (para. 3). Furthermore, McKinney and Novak (2023) discovered in their findings through the Beginning Postsecondary Student Study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics that “failure to file a FAFSA negatively affects the ability of community

college students, especially those attending part-time, to persist from the fall to spring semester during the first year of enrollment” (p. 77).

Through multiple surveys, including a meta-analysis of the effects of financial aid on student enrollment decisions and research on the college choice process, Hossler (2002) found the effects of tuition costs and financial aid did not affect decisions of prospective or currently enrolled college students uniformly. However, two findings included (a) receiving a financial aid award had a significant positive effect on the likelihood a student would enter the institution that made the financial aid offer and (b) the amount of financial aid students were offered had an effect on the decisions they made as to which college or university to attend. Financial aid offers also had psychological benefits for prospective students (Hossler, 2002). Results from an 8-year randomized trial conducted by D. N. Harris and Mills (2021) concluded offering merit-based grants while in high school increased student effort while in high school, college expectations, and student outcomes; however, there was no significant evidence that merit-based incentives are effective. Based on their research, Whissemore (2021) concluded exploring alternative approaches to tuition and fees, including textbooks and course materials, expanding online course offerings, and facilitating access to student support services like housing and emergency aid funding are all viable strategies for eliminating obstacles to attaining postsecondary education. Hossler reported campus-based financial aid offerings can assist institutions in reaching their enrollment goals.

### **Online Learning**

The COVID-19 global pandemic required a shift in course modality offerings. As a result, many colleges have shifted from traditional on-the-ground classes to more online, synchronous, and hybrid modalities. Despite the convenience, many students have been

unhappy, realizing online learning may not deliver the expected quality or experience. The Student Voice Survey conducted by *Inside Higher Ed* and College Pulse in May 2021, explored how the COVID-19 global pandemic impacted students' academic success and showed deep dissatisfaction with the post-2020 iteration of online learning (Newton, 2021). The Student Voice Survey of 2,000 undergraduate students, representing 1,500 colleges and universities in all 50 states, explored students' needs and wants in the postpandemic era (Student Voice, 2021). When asked how much students learned in 2021 compared to prepandemic college years, more than half (52%) reported learning less (Student Voice, 2021). However, when disaggregating data by college or university type, about one-third (34%) of 2-year college students reported learning less in 2021 compared to prepandemic (Student Voice, 2021). Newton (2021) explained the survey results depicted "the bad experience many students have with remote, online learning" (para. 2). Further research explored that the critical success factor for online learners is ensuring students are aware of and meet the requirements for technology (Golladay et al., 2000). According to Milton (2022), identified "gaps in agility and flexibility in providing a high-quality and consistent learning experience in an increasingly hybrid environment gives further pause to college administrators" (para. 8).

In a survey administered in Spring 2022 to over 82,000 students to determine how the COVID-19 global pandemic impacts student learning and engagement, CCCSE identified that 65% of online-only students were much more likely to be non-traditional age, 54% were majority part-time, 48% work 30+ hour per week, and 78% are female students (CCCSE, 2023). One respondent stated, "Okay, so I don't like taking online courses. I find them stressful. I have to teach myself all the materials. I do like that I can do it on my own time and make my own schedule" (CCCSE, 2023, p. 3). According to CCCSE (2023), "Setting aside differences in



engagement between online-only and not online-only students, higher levels of engagement are associated with higher outcomes for both groups, as measured by self-reported GPA. Therefore, engagement clearly matters for online-only students” (p. 13).

## **Economic**

The enrollment crisis may impact all higher education institutions in some manner; however, small, rural colleges are at the greatest risk for a steep decline in enrollment (Kelderman, 2019). C. Harris (2022) stated, “In addition to national and regional demographic shifts, a significant decrease in demand for college is only making a cliff higher and steeper for institutions” (para. 5). According to the Higher Education Demand Index, “Demand for a college education is expected to drop 9% as the population of prospective students simultaneously declines” (as cited in C. Harris, 2022, para. 5). Through a correlation analysis to examine the relationship between the economy and enrollment in community colleges, Pennington et al. (2010) determined “a high gross domestic product and high personal consumption expenditure both tended to be very strongly associated with low enrollment in community colleges” (p. 435). Based on their research findings, Joshi et al. (2009) determined, “Every generation of college students experiences a different set of societal and economic conditions that affect the college enrollment decision” (p. 811). In response, many community colleges have implemented strategic enrollment management initiatives focused on recruitment; however, the same focus must be placed on retention, persistence, and completion efforts. Economist Grawe stated, “Colleges might be able to avoid closures and budget shortfalls if they can reduce their dropout rates and focus on keeping their students, and tuition dollars, on-campus” (as cited in Barshay, 2018, para. 17). Essentially, retaining a student is more cost effective than recruiting a student.

An alternative perspective suggested the economist could be wrong about the predicted enrollment cliff in 2025. Barshay (2018) reported a similar enrollment decline predicted in 1980 after the baby boomer generation; however, the opposite happened; enrollment skyrocketed because women started attending college in large numbers. Barshay added younger generations chose to attend college because obtaining a job with only a high school diploma was difficult. In addition, Barshay (2018) shared, “Understanding that in the coming years the demographic of future college students will be racially and ethnically diverse, colleges could see a surge in specific populations, such as Latino” (p. 19). According to Kelderman (2019), community colleges take a risk when they stand idle and hope the enrollment cliff turns out to be a myth.

The underlying cause of the enrollment crisis consistently has traced back to a decline in birth rates following the Great Recession, financial strains on higher education institutions, and skepticism about the price and value of a college. The lasting impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic have accelerated the crisis by several years. According to Kelderman (2019), these economic crises will result in a decline in the number of traditional-age college students after 2025 and may shift enrollment patterns across the nation. Although projections have shown an increase in high school graduates between 2020–2025, there is a projected 14% decline in the total percentage of high school graduates by 2031 (Kelderman, 2019). Finally, Kelderman (2019) referenced a declining student demand identified as a “sharp decline of traditional-aged college-going students across the country through 2029” (p. 9). To explain the phenomenon of declining birth rates, Economist Grawe (as cited in Barshay, 2018) stated:

When the financial crisis hit in 2008, young people viewed economic uncertainty as a cause for reducing fertility, and the number of kids born from 2008 to 2011 fell

precipitously. Fast forward 18 years to 2026, and we see that there are fewer kids reaching college-going age. (para. 3)

In contrast, Barshay (2018) clarified the enrollment cliff will likely impact regions differently. For example, enrollment in the Northeast is projected to drop by more than 15%, and the South and West may experience a steady increase in high school graduates through 2025 before seeing a decline. The West is projected to have modest growth in high school graduates through 2024. Similarly, The Brookings Institution released a report stating there were 40,000 “missing births” in the final months of 2020, which would have been conceived during the early months of the COVID-19 global pandemic (Kearney & Levine, 2021). However, Kearney and Levine (2021) added, looking beyond the 2025 enrollment crisis, community colleges should prepare for another similar trend in 2038, with the missing births resulting from the COVID-19 global pandemic. All higher education sectors, including selective colleges, have felt the pressure and have not met their enrollment goals; as a result, many colleges have been required to make difficult choices about their enrollment practices, academic offerings, and the makeup of their student body (Kelderman, 2019).

Additionally, according to the Lumina Foundation (n.d.), “Increasing attainment of postsecondary education in the United States is more important today than ever—key to preparing more people for success in the global economy and to meeting the nation’s growing need for talent” (para. 1). Therefore, a focus has been placed in higher education, particularly community colleges, on short-term credentials, defined as college-level certifications and industry-recognized certifications, that lead to meaningful employment, career advancement, higher pay, and continued education training (Lumina Foundation, n.d.). In 2022, the Lumina Foundation partnered with Gallup to conduct a third study on the state of higher education. The

study surveyed U.S. adults between 18–59 years of age who are either currently enrolled in a postsecondary education program, stopped out with some college but no degree, and with no postsecondary training or education (Gallup & Lumina Foundation, 2023). Gallup and Lumina Foundation (2023) indicated, “Associate degree or short-term credential programs are the most popular pathways among both those who have stopped out and those who have never enrolled,” and “Unenrolled women are more likely than unenrolled men to be considering certificates (46% vs. 35%) or associate degrees (44% vs. 36%)” (pp. 12–13). According to American Association of Community Colleges (2016), “Community colleges confer substantially more certificates than any other sector of higher education” (para. 1). In conclusion, the emphasis on short-term credentials and the pursuit of associate degrees has reflected a critical role of community colleges in preparing individuals for success in the evolving global economy while addressing the nation’s workforce needs.

### **Student Experience**

According to Phillips (2019), “Throughout our community college work, students tell us they want to feel cared about and like they are welcome and belong at our colleges if they are to succeed and achieve their educational goals” (paras. 7–8). In November 2020, Barnes and Noble College Insights surveyed college students, faculty, and administrators nationwide to gather opinions and insights on higher education’s current and future state (Barnes and Noble Education, 2021). Survey results indicated U.S. citizens questioned the value of college education, students struggled with decreased engagement with online learning, and students believed online courses should be offered at a lower cost than traditional ones. In a similar study, Gallup (2022) partnered with the Lumina Foundation and surveyed over 11,000 total U.S. adults to measure the viewpoints of individuals who were currently enrolled, who were previously

enrolled, or who had never enrolled in higher education following the unprecedented disruptions of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Of associate degree seeking students, 41% reported they considered withdrawing from courses in 2020, and emotional stress was the most cited reason for considering stopping out for 39% of associate students. Furthermore, Burke (2022) stated, “While a growing mental health crisis challenged institutions prior to the pandemic, feelings of isolation and academic difficulties caused by the pandemic have exacerbated mental health struggles nationally” (para. 17). Milton (2022) reported, “Institutions are facing the pressure of shifting student expectations where students have come to anticipate an Amazon-like experience in their education: easy, integrated, and personalized” (para. 4). Kafka (2023) proposed:

College leaders should examine and forthrightly address what students and their families seek and what they fear, gear academic programs and recruitment toward clear and demonstrable value, increase flexible schedules and online learning options, reimagine who a college’s potential students are, and, by focusing on students’ step-by-step success through graduation, improve institutional reputation. (para. 2)

Finally, when asked in the College Pulse Survey what a college could provide to help students be successful, a 2-year college student responded, “From my perspective, a successful college is one that supports its students by providing all the necessary tools and guidance so that students find it easier to be productive with their studies” (Student Voice, 2021, Question 19).

## **Leadership**

For community colleges, institutional leadership is critical to establishing academic credibility in the higher education arena (Boggs, 2003; Fullen, 2000). Gardner (1990) defined leadership as the process of persuasion or example by which an individual induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and their followers. Gardner believed

the term follower is passive and preferred using the term constituent, clarifying leadership is not about status; therefore, leadership, power, and official authority should not be confused or used as synonyms. Kotter (2012) stated, “Leadership defines what the future should look like, aligns people with the vision, and inspires them to make it happen despite the obstacles” (p. 28). Schein (2004) noted leaders play a critical role in shaping and influencing organizational culture through behaviors, values, and communication styles. Schein also added ineffective leaders do not align their actions and messages with the desired culture; thus, they fail to integrate the desired espoused values.

Through an examination of community colleges, Mathis and Roueche (2019) identified that “transformative leadership required courage, candor, and collaboration” (p. 258). Kouzes and Posner (2011) identified unique attributes effective leaders possess, such as intellect, emotional stability, proficiency in technical areas, adept communication skills, intrinsic motivation, and strong interpersonal skills. Researchers have emphasized that high-performing leaders embody the qualities of personal humility, professional will, and modesty (Blanchard, 2012; Collins, 2001). Yukl (2013) noted community college leaders need to motivate and influence their teams to achieve shared goals, and part of this motivation comes from establishing trust with team members. Building and fostering mutual trust is the backbone of collaborative leadership (Kayser, 2011). According to Kayser (2011):

Trust is the road over which all of your other collaborative leadership behaviors will ride; it is the key to your integrity and ability to be a respected leader instead of an immensely disliked commander and controller getting minimum effort from all your employees. (p. 47)

Fundamentals of building trust include competence (Kayser, 2011), character (Blanchard, 2012), communication (Kotter, 2012), and creating knowledge (Inkpen, 1996). Kotter (2012) stated, “Without credible communication . . . employees’ hearts and minds are never captured” (p. 9). Blanchard (2012) stressed the importance of leaders’ consistency in their behavior and decision making to assist in building credibility among their followers. Collins (2001) argued trust is critical in creating high-performing teams and achieving long-term success. Trust emerges as a vital element in effective leadership in community colleges. Establishing trust is essential for collaborative leadership and focuses on individuals joining together to achieve shared goals. Bachmann and Inkpen (2011) contended, “Trust between individual and/or collective actors is based on the decision of one party to rely on another party under conditions of risk” (p. 284). Based on research findings, Inkpen (1996) demonstrated, through an examination of 40 U.S.-based American Japanese joint ventures, “Six factors that facilitate effective knowledge management: flexible learning objectives, leadership commitment, a climate of trust, a tolerance for redundancy, creative chaos, and an absence of performance myopia” (p. 131). As Gardner (1990) determined, leadership is centered on reaching individuals beyond boundaries and connecting various segments, a concept he referred to as networking. According to Gardner (1990), community is the foundation for effective leadership. Finally, Schein (1999) stated one main role of leadership is to establish, sustain, and influence an organization’s culture.

### **Transformational Change and Leadership**

Although college leaders need to have an unwavering focus on their students and communities, “they must anticipate constantly shifting needs—within their college, the state, and the nation—while crafting viable strategies to compete in the larger global community” (Mathis & Roueche, 2019, p. 249). One challenge community college leaders face is the uncertainty of

enrollment management and leading the organization through rapidly changing environments. Buller (2015) discussed change in higher education as two typical clichés; by its very nature, higher education is constantly changing, and despite the constant changes, higher education does not handle change very well. Buller provided, as leaders, approaching a transformational change process often is the catalyst to “widening the gulf” between stakeholders in our institutions and communities. Buller (2015) stated:

Change leadership in higher education is about how everyone works together constructively to produce an academic culture that responds well to each new challenge or opportunity, capitalizes on evolving possibilities when times are good, and demonstrates resilience when times are bad. (p. xii).

Buller (2015) also stated, “Effective change leadership in higher education is rarely, if ever, about imposing specific answers; it’s about asking the right questions” (p. xii).

Transformational change cannot happen in isolation but through strong coalitions led by individuals committed to successful change and performance. Kotter (2012) noted efforts lacking a powerful guiding coalition can see progress for a while; however, the progress is usually short lived and can undermine the proposed change. Mathis and Roueche (2019) noted, “Purposeful and passionate leaders are unyielding in their pursuit of effective and sustainable solutions that will transform institutions—without overwhelming the very stakeholders who are needed to implement them” (p. 267). In addition to being perceptive into organizational culture, Schein (2004) highlighted several skills and qualities effective change leaders embody to enable successful transformational change. Before a transformational change process can be implemented, a leader needs to embark on an exploration journey to understand the environment. Throughout the process, it is essential for the leader to be objective and have an awareness of



personal bias while recognizing culture can be both functional and dysfunctional. Obtaining objectivity requires the leader to have humility while being confident and willing to acknowledge they may not always know the answer. Change can fail if the leader enters the process with a plan already in place and does not focus on obtaining stakeholder support and buy-in. Mathis and Roueche (2019) proposed “a transformative leader’s fundamental outlook is based on the importance of respect for people and the relationships that are fostered through continuous communication, collaborations, and sustenance in traveling toward shared vision, values, and goal” (pp. 264–265).

In striving for successful transformation, change leaders cannot underestimate the power of clearly articulating the vision. Kotter (2012) stressed the importance and power of describing the vision in 5 minutes or less and doing so in a way that results in a reaction of understanding and interest. Thus, to be effective, a change leader must articulate the vision clearly, convey benefits of the change, and walk the walk as an outward demonstration of their aligned words and actions. According to Kotter, a vision clarifies the general direction of change, motivates people to act, and coordinates people’s actions. Kotter described six characteristics of an effective vision that are vital to the change process: (a) imaginable, (b) desirable, (c) feasible, (d) focused, (e) flexible, and (f) communicable. Kotter (2012) stated, “Vision is the central component of all great leadership” (p. 70); however, “an ineffective vision is worse than no vision at all” (p. 85).

### **Embedding Culture**

Schein (2004) stated, “One can argue that leadership creates and changes culture, while management and administration act within a culture” (p. 11). Kotter (2012) established culture as powerful for three primary reasons:

1. Because individuals are selected and indoctrinated so well.
2. Because the culture exerts itself through the actions of hundreds or thousands of people.
3. Because all of this happens without much conscious intent and thus is difficult to challenge or even discuss.

Culture influences every aspect of an organization, including the employees, strategies, organizational structures, procedures, and how employees and departments interact.

Organizational culture can evolve, but it is a leading indicator of how individuals in the organization think, act, and respond (Kotter, 2012). Schein (2004) wrote, “Culture is a stabilizer, a conservative force, and a way of making things meaningful and predictable” (p. 365).

Consequently, ignoring culture is detrimental to transformational change. Kotter (2012) noted, “Needed change can stall because of inwardly focused cultures, paralyzing bureaucracy, parochial politics, a low level of trust, lack of teamwork, arrogant attitudes, a lack of leadership in middle management, and the general human fear of the unknown” (p. 22). Buller (2015) added:

All organizations resist change. After all, that’s their job. The whole purpose of any organization is to act in ways that are regular, consistent, and predictable. And regularity, consistence, and predictability are natural enemies of change. (p. 2)

Schein (2004) proposed culture is deeply embedded and built to resist change, making it challenging for the organization to transform; however, according to Schein, successful change initiatives require a deep understanding and analysis of existing culture.

According to Morgan (2006), organizations can be described through various metaphors such as machines, organisms, brains, cultures, political systems, psychic prisons, flux and

transformation, and instruments of domination. Morgan added organizations are living, breathing, ever-evolving, open systems, much like organisms studied in biology. The organism metaphor depicts an organization as a collective response to its environment. For an organization to survive and thrive, it must adapt to the environment and its changes. Conversely, if the organization cannot quickly adjust and modify to meet internal and environmental needs, they risk weakening or even failing to exist. Morgan's (2006) theory describing an organization as an organism "began its excursion into biology by developing the idea that employees are people with complex needs that must be satisfied to lead full and healthy lives and to perform effectively in the workplace" (p. 34). Before the development of organism theory, the workplace was a means to an end in which individuals worked to make money through a secure environment where they each knew the task(s) they were assigned to perform; such was the development of the organization as a machine metaphor. Maslow's theory dispelled the view that wages alone were motivation enough for employees; therefore, through the Hawthorne Studies in the 1920s and 1930s, Elton Mayo was concerned with the relationship between work conditions and employee fatigue and boredom (Morgan, 2006). The study focused on employees' social needs, including needs outside the organization. Morgan (2006) noted, "The studies are now famous for identifying the importance of social needs in the workplace and the way that work groups can satisfy these needs by restricting output and engaging in all manner of unplanned activities" (p. 35). Therefore, the organization as an organism metaphor was developed with the "idea that individuals and groups, like biological organisms, operate most effectively only when their needs are satisfied" (Morgan, 2006, p. 35).

Mathis and Roueche (2019) expressed "culture change is apt to be fraught with resistance as stakeholders perceive that the traditional ways of doing things are changing" (p. 262).

Therefore, leadership holds significant importance in establishing, integrating, and occasionally altering organizational culture (Schein, 2004). According to Schein (2004), “We basically do not know what the world of tomorrow will really be like, except that it will be different, more complex, more fast-paced, and more culturally diverse” (p. 393). Consequently, to adapt to the changing environment, “organizations and their leaders will have to become perpetual learners” (Schein, 2004, p. 393). Through a questionnaire of 276 staff members, Goodman et al. (2001) found a crucial element in facilitating change is the ability to comprehend the prevailing organizational culture. The role of leadership is critical in navigating the challenges of organizational culture change, coupled with the importance of understanding culture as a key factor in facilitating successful change initiatives (Goodman et al., 2001; Mathis & Roueche, 2019; Schein, 2004). According to Dunne (2018), the concept of design thinking, defined as a series of steps to solve a problem, has been adopted by many organizations in most sectors of the economy. Relating to organizational culture, through a qualitative research design consisting of 29 semistructured interviews of leaders in public, private, and nonprofit sectors, Dunne (2018) discovered:

While the desire to change culture through design [thinking] is often real, it is usually driven from the top and may not initially have adequate buy-in at the grassroots; furthermore, culture change can involve dismantling systems and processes that have built up over many decades, a daunting task for a design program. (p. 13)

Building on Schein’s (2004) concepts of the learning culture and the role of a learning leader, at its core, an organization needs to commit to learning. Schein emphasized that all members of the organization should collectively embrace the idea that learning is a valuable endeavor worth investment. Furthermore, to achieve a learning culture, the learning leader should possess

confidence, belief in the power of learning, faith in the people in the organization, and a commitment to open communication and information sharing (Schein, 2004).

Abundant research has been conducted on organizational change processes and models (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Buller, 2015; De Bono, 1985/1999; Kotter, 2012). Regardless of which change model a leader selects, Buller (2015) highlighted, “To incorporate change in the way these models suggest, we first have to understand what the culture is” (p. 11). Through research, Kotter (2012) determined the magnitude of significant and often traumatic transformations in organizations has increased substantially over the past 20 years. Kotter (2012) emphasized the importance of embedding culture in organizations to ensure long-term success, saying, “Embedding culture involves aligning the values, norms, and behaviors of individuals with the desired culture” (p. 164). Schein (2004) argued leadership plays a significant role in embedding culture. As depicted in Table 2.1, Schein (2004) identified six cultural embedding mechanisms leaders possess to “embed culture within their organizations to teach others how to perceive, think, feel, and behave based on their own conscious and unconscious convictions” (p. 246). Finally, Cameron and Quinn (2011), through the development of CVF, identified the role of leadership as shaping and embedding culture by aligning it with organizational strategies and goals while fostering the desired cultural values and behaviors.

Table 2.1. How Leaders Embed Their Beliefs, Values, and Assumptions

Primary embedding mechanisms	Secondary articulation and reinforcement mechanisms
What leaders pay attention to, measure, and control on a regular basis	Organizational design and structure
How leaders react to critical incidents and organizational crises	Organizational systems and procedures
How leaders allocate resources	Rites and rituals of the organization
Deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching	Design of physical space, facades, and buildings
How leaders allocate rewards and status	Stories about important events and people

Primary embedding mechanisms	Secondary articulation and reinforcement mechanisms
How leaders recruit, select, promote, and excommunicate	Formal statements of organizational philosophy, creeds, and charters

*Note.* Adapted from “Organizational Culture and Leadership,” by E. H. Schein, 2004, p. 246.

Jossey-Bass Publishers.

## **Hiring**

In examining 1,435 companies over 15 years, Collins (2001) identified factors distinguishing great companies from good ones. Findings suggested people were the center of success, and individuals guiding greatness are Level 5 leaders, identified by Collins as those who embody a paradoxical mix of personal humility, professional will, and ambition—first and foremost, to the company. Through the flywheel model, Collins emphasized the concept of first who, then what. The cornerstone of Collins’s (2001) concept is: “If we get the right people on the bus, the right people in the right seats, and the wrong people off the bus, then we’ll figure out how to take it someplace great” (p. 41). Schein (2004) emphasized leaders are crucial in the hiring process to ensure the organization’s values are articulated to each candidate. According to Miller (2001):

An organization’s lifeblood, particularly the community college’s, is the energy between the administrators, faculty, students, and others who enter its organizational systems. Similar to individuals, institutions possess personalities that influence behavior. The culture of the institution is one aspect of personality that influences how the institution feels about itself. (p. 19)

Hence, according to Kotter (2012) and Schein (2004), hiring decisions must encompass not only technical skills and qualifications but also alignment of values, mindset, and fit in the

organizational culture. However, as Kotter examined the success followed by the slow decline of productivity and profitability at General Motors, he reported, during the recruiting and hiring process, few people are aware of how strong organizational culture is applied; in fact, they are oblivious to the importance of value fit. Kotter advocated that individuals who share the organization's core values and are committed to its mission and purpose are more likely to contribute positively to the organization's success. Schein illustrated the importance of socialization through the onboarding process to assist new hires in understanding and adapting to the organization's culture.

## **Policy**

O'Banion (1997) proposed an organizational culture centered on learning can reduce significantly the frustrations and challenges typically associated with academia. Further, organizational learning aims to prioritize policies, programs, and practices in every aspect. Miller (2001) added, "Ideally, colleges will provide educational experiences for learners in any way, place, and time feasible for the learner and the institution" (p. 43). According to Baker (1998), the National Initiative for Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness proposed five action concepts for strengthening organizational culture: (a) enact policies that guide work toward achieving a college's mission and vision; (b) provide appropriate feedback whenever possible; (c) design work to satisfy employee needs while simultaneously improving organizational effectiveness; (d) encourage renewal of commitments to colleagues, tasks, and the profession; and (e) skillfully incorporate employees in decision making to develop their skills. Emphasizing the importance of collective responsibility, broad-based participation, and transparency, the Bronx Community College president instituted a policy "creating an infrastructure for

information analysis, built on institutional capacity to analyze information, and set expectations for the use of evidence and analysis” (Ritze, 2006, p. 86).

## **Enrollment Management**

Enrollment management emerged in the 1970s when the number of high school graduates was declining and visionary college administrators were seeking new and innovative methods to retain current students and reach new students through marketing and outreach initiatives (Hossler & Bontrager, 2015). The concept of enrollment management has evolved since its introduction into higher education. The focus is no longer solely on recruiting new students but also emphasizes increasing retention and graduation rates; however, in a study conducted at Maryland’s community colleges in 1999, Lane (2002) reported community colleges struggled with developing recruitment, marketing, and retention strategies, critical components of a strategic enrollment management plan. From initial contact at the beginning of the recruitment cycle through a student’s journey at the college to completion, students encounter many departments on campus. Similarly, based on research findings, following a survey of 21 comprehensive community colleges in Alabama, Abston (2010) reported, “Retention and academic advising were two integral components that were lacking in many of the respondent’s institutions” (p. 129). Each community college department, administrator, faculty, or staff member could impact a student’s persistence and continued enrollment.

Enrollment management is a comprehensive framework designed to encompass the various components and stages involved in a college’s enrollment process; however, there are varying definitions of enrollment management. Hossler and Kemerer (1986) defined enrollment management as a process or activity influencing a student body’s size, shape, and characteristics by directing institutional efforts in marketing, recruitment, admissions, and financial aid.



Maguire (1976) provided enrollment management as a process unifying the typically separate functions of student recruitment, financial support, student tracking, retention efforts, and student replacement through their journey with and beyond the college or university. According to Bontranger (2004):

Enrollment management as we know it today was born in the anticipation and impact of a demographic downturn. From the 1950s through the 1970s, colleges and universities enjoyed a steady stream of students fueled by a succession of societal and demographic changes. From the G.I. Bill in the 1950s to the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s to the last vestiges of the baby boom generation in the 1970s, higher education saw an expansion of interest, access, and sheer numbers that provided a steady stream of students. (p. 11)

Penn (1999) cited enrollment management as an important factor in an institution's financial viability and achievement of stated goals and listed the following as examples of general enrollment management goals: (a) increase enrollment, (b) create a student body that meets the goals and expectations of institutional policymakers, and (c) achieve better institutional graduation rates. Hossler and Bean (1990) stated:

Enrollment management is an organizational concept and systematic set of activities designed to enable educational institutions to exert more influence on their student enrollments. Organized by strategic planning and supported by institutional research, enrollment management activities concern student college choice, transition to college, student attrition and retention, and student outcomes. (p. 5)

Dolence (1998) defined strategic enrollment management as "a comprehensive process designed to help an institution achieve and maintain the optimum recruitment, retention, and graduation

rates of students, where ‘optimum’ is defined within the academic context of the institution” (p. 72). Hossler and Bontrager (2015) noted “the field of Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) is arguably the newest major administrative function to emerge at senior levels of college and university administration” (p. xi). Therefore, research has suggested enrollment management is a collaborative effort between many departments and teams, all working together for the common goal of student success (Doty, 2017; Hossler, 1984; Lane, 2002; LoBasso, 2005). Although all definitions highlight the importance of achieving certain levels of enrollment growth (Abston, 2010), changing student demographics and dynamic internal and external factors require a focus on not only recruiting new students but also retaining and graduating current students (Hossler, 2002). Serna (2017) highlighted although strategic enrollment management is designed to promote college access, it often overlooks the barriers and uncertainties many students face, particularly undocumented students.

In a study conducted at 28 Florida community colleges in 2005, LoBasso (2005) indicated early configurations of enrollment management typically consisted of moving the admissions and financial aid functions under one administrator’s direction to address recruitment issues. Hossler and Bontrager (2015) noted, in the 1980s, “Enrollment management grew to include other enrollment service functions that proved critical to attracting students, such as financial aid, registration, student records, and fee payment” (pp. xi–xii). Lane (2002) reported staff perceptions of the SEM organizational culture and willingness to embrace change were important factors to consider when designing an SEM organizational structure and planning effort. Doty’s (2017) results from 673 respondents in a quantitative study conducted at Ohio community colleges highlighted “each type of college or university must evaluate their individual institutions to determine how their organization will implement enrollment

management to effectively meet their goals” (pp. 48–49). Johnson McPhail (2016) articulated the importance for community colleges to rethink organizational structures to meet the needs of today’s students and new emerging programs adequately. Johnson McPhail (2016) provided, “The old hierarchical bureaucracies and silos in many of the nation’s community colleges are obstructing effective and efficient delivery of services” (p. 57). In response to the conceptualization and expansion of enrollment management efforts and strategies, community colleges have embraced best practices to address the challenges of declining enrollment. Lane (2002) stated, “Enrollment management, as an organizational function, is relatively new to higher education, yet it has begun to affiliate with functions throughout the institution, creating the need for organizational change” (p. 30). However, Flanigan’s (2016) research findings of 10 departments at Virginia Commonwealth University reported, “There is little literature available that directly quantifies the organizational culture of enrollment management units as it relates to the effectiveness of enrollment management models” (p. 118).

### **Summary**

The literature review highlighted the complex nature of enrollment barriers and the need for higher education institutions to address financial concerns, online learning experiences, economic changes, and student support services to increase enrollment and promote student success. In addition, studies have emphasized the critical role of leadership in community colleges and have provided insights into the qualities, behaviors, and strategies contributing to effective leadership, transformational change, and embedding culture. Lastly, the literature findings have emphasized the evolving nature of enrollment management and a willingness to embrace change. Although the literature review covered topics such as organizational culture, leadership, and embedding culture, an identified gap in research is the investigation of how

leaders have responded to these crucial post-COVID-19 global pandemic factors influencing the enrollment management environment.

## **Chapter 3 - Methodology**

Chapter 3 reviews the purpose, presents the overarching research questions the study sought to explore, and illustrates the theoretical and conceptual frameworks guiding this study. In addition, this chapter describes the research design, study setting, study participants, and instrumentation. The chapter also describes the methods for collecting data and data analysis. The chapter concludes by outlining the limitations of the study, ethical considerations, and the study quality.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to compare how executive leaders and enrollment management personnel assessed organizational culture at Texas community colleges and to understand how those executive leaders responded to the changing enrollment management environment.

### **Research Questions**

There were two primary research questions that guided this study:

1. How does the assessment of organizational culture differ between executive leaders and enrollment management personnel in Texas community colleges when measured by the Competing Values Culture Assessment tool?
2. How do executive leaders at Texas community colleges respond to the changing enrollment management environment?

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks**

The theoretical framework guiding this study was Schein's (1986) organizational culture theory. Schein's organizational culture theory suggests culture in a group or organization with a significant past is the collection of basic assumptions, customs, and practices the group has

created, uncovered, or cultivated to meet external challenges or sustain internal cohesiveness effectively. Once basic assumptions have been proven reliable and effective, they are imparted to new members as the proper approach for perceiving, thinking, and emotionally engaging with challenges. Using Schein's organizational culture theoretical framework aided the researcher in understanding how executive leadership and enrollment management personnel at Texas community colleges assessed organizational culture. Furthermore, the framework of organizational culture theory assisted in obtaining a deeper understanding of how organizational culture influenced enrollment management approaches.

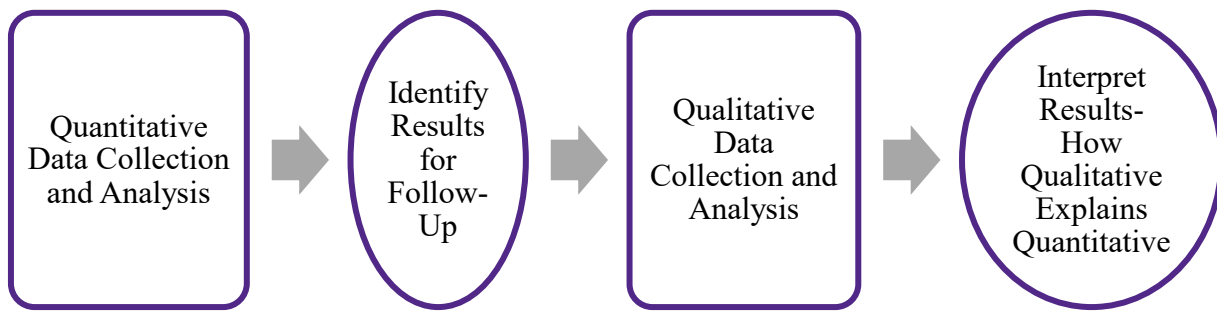
The conceptual framework guiding this study was competing values framework (CVF; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983), which examines relationships between culture and organizational effectiveness. According to Cameron and Quinn (n.d.), CVF provides a robust conceptual framework to assist in organizing and categorizing organizational cultures based on two sets of competing values: (a) internal versus external and (b) flexibility versus stability. The framework can be used as a foundation to study how different cultures affect organizational behavior, decision-making processes, and overall performance (Cameron & Quinn, n.d.). CVF is measured through Cameron and Quinn's (n.d.) Competing Values Culture Assessment (CVCA) tool, a survey instrument, to gauge an organization's dominant culture and the extent to which employees perceive the organization as exhibiting specific cultural traits (Cameron & Quinn, n.d.). The CVCA, which emerged from empirical research from Quinn and Rohrbaugh's (1983) CVF, "has been applied to a variety of topics related to individual and organizational behavior" (Cameron & Quinn, n.d., para. 1) and has been designed to diagnose an organization's culture. The CVF and CVCA offered a structured framework for comparing the organizational cultures

and enrollment management environment assessed by executive leaders and enrollment management personnel in Texas community colleges.

## Research Design

This research study employed a nonexperimental, explanatory sequential, mixed-methods research design. Figure 3.1 provides a visual representation of the process.

Figure 3.1. Explanatory Sequential Design (Two-Phase Design)



*Note.* Adapted from “Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches,” by J. W. Creswell and J. D. Creswell, 2018, p. 218. SAGE Publications.

As depicted in Figure 3.1, quantitative research was conducted first through an online survey to gather the assessment of organizational culture from executive leaders and enrollment management personnel at Texas community colleges. A quantitative research design was selected because it describes, explains, and predicts a phenomenon of a larger sample size (Khalid et al., 2012). An explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design incorporated the causal-comparative approach by using findings from the quantitative phase to inform and guide the qualitative phase. A causal-comparative quantitative research design seeks “to compare two or more groups in terms of a cause (or independent variable) that has already happened”

(Creswell & Cresswell, 2018, p. 12). Lochmiller and Lester (2017) stated the “practitioner-scholar wants to identify a reason for the differences between the outcomes or behaviors of an individual or a group of individuals” (p. 128). Further, Lochmiller and Lester (2017) explained, “Causal-comparative designs are less about prediction than they are about describing relationships between variables” (p. 128).

After collecting and analyzing the quantitative data, qualitative interviews were conducted to understand how executive leaders responded to the changing enrollment management environment. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the incorporation of qualitative data as a secondary data source adds “the personal experiences of participants” (p. 228) into a research study. Through a semistructured interview protocol, structured questions guided the interview and provided flexibility “to conduct the interview in a more conversational manner” (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017, p. 151). Furthermore, Subedi (2016) explained, “The rationale for an explanatory sequential design is that the quantitative data and results provide a general picture of the research problem; more analysis, specifically through qualitative data collection, is needed to refine, extend, or explain the general picture” (p. 574). Through this study design, the researcher aimed to understand organizational culture and executive leadership responses during changing enrollment management environments at Texas community colleges.

### **Study Setting**

According to the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (n.d.), Texas has 50 public community college districts. For this study, the researcher administered the survey to executive leaders and enrollment management personnel at 49 Texas public community college districts. These sites were selected due to the limited research on organizational culture and enrollment management environment at Texas community colleges. Researchers such as Abston (2010),



Doty (2017), and Lane (2002) have conducted educational research on organizational culture and enrollment management in states such as Alabama, Maryland, and Ohio; however, a review of the literature provided limited empirical research, particularly descriptive quantitative studies, on Texas community colleges. At the time of the study, the researcher was employed at a Texas community college, possessed a keen interest in the study setting, and had access to networks (e.g., Texas Association of Community Colleges [TACC]) that assisted in reaching potential study participants. Texas community colleges were also selected for this study due to the total student enrollment across Texas. According to the most recent available data from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (2023), the total Fall 2023 enrollment in Texas higher education was 1,335,676 students. The TACC (2020) reported community colleges constituted the most significant portion of higher education enrollment in Texas, representing 47.3% of the total postsecondary student enrollment. According to the American Association of Community Colleges (2022), “America’s community colleges serve more than 10 million students through traditional degree programs and workforce education across the U.S.” (p. 8). Thus, considering the substantial student enrollment at Texas community colleges, examining organizational culture at these institutions offered a unique view from the executive leaders and enrollment management personnel.

### **Study Participants**

The study participants were executive leaders and enrollment management personnel in 49 Texas community college districts. One college district declined to participate in this research study. To maximize content validity, the researcher relied on the guidance provided by Doty’s (2017) and Lane’s (2002) studies when identifying whom to include in this research and their positions in the colleges where they were employed at the time of the study. These studies were

used because they guided the researcher in identifying the positions, displayed in Table 3.1, that represented personnel who contributed directly or indirectly to enrollment management functions or activities. Table 3.1 displays the functions of participants who were invited to participate in the quantitative phase of the study.

Table 3.1. Function and Job Titles of Survey Participants

Function
Executive leaders
President or chancellor
Vice president/chancellor of academics/academic affairs
Vice president/chancellor of finance (CFO)
Vice president/chancellor of enrollment
Vice president/chancellor of student services
Dean of enrollment
Dean of student services
Dean of institutional research
Dean of instruction/academics
Enrollment management personnel
Director, finance/business office
Bursar
Director, financial aid
Director, marketing/communications
Recruiters
Director, institutional research
Director, informational technology
Assistant director or manager of information technology
Director of admissions
Registrar
Assistant/associate director of admissions
Assistant/associate registrar
Director, counseling/advising
Advisor

Respondents for the quantitative research phase were identified by researching the 49 Texas community college districts' websites. The researcher sent email invitations to 1,352 identified participants. The desired rate of response for the quantitative phase of this study was 215 responses. A total of 218 survey responses were received. Once the researcher received

survey responses, 12 executive leaders, defined as president/chancellor or vice president/chancellor, representing the four institutional peer groups outlined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (see Appendix A), were identified for the qualitative phase of the research study. In total, 12 one-on-one interviews with executive leaders were conducted via Zoom, an online video platform, in the qualitative phase. According to Schein (2004), leaders set the tone for an organization, and as a result, leadership behaviors shape the culture of the organization. Therefore, this study aimed to understand how executive leaders responded to the changing enrollment management environment in Texas community colleges.

## **Instrumentation**

### **Quantitative Instrument: Electronic Survey**

The researcher used an electronic survey for the quantitative phase of the study. According to Lochmiller and Lester (2017), surveys are “intended to capture the perspective of participants at a moment in time or changes in their perspective across a period of time” (p. 133). An illustration of the approach used to collect quantitative data through the survey can be found in Appendix C.

During a review of the literature, the researcher was unable to identify comprehensive research comparing the organizational culture as perceived by executive leaders and enrollment management personnel at Texas community colleges. Surveys identified in the research focused on organizational culture or enrollment management. Therefore, the researcher developed an online survey instrument using Qualtrics (2023), a secure online survey platform, with four sections (see Appendix D). In Section A, survey items were used to collect information from respondents on their role in the organization, years in their current position, and the size of their institution based on institutional peer group (see Appendix A). Responses from the question

asking their role in the organization were used to code each position as an executive leader or enrollment management personnel. Section B of the survey collected the category of the enrollment management approach in each Texas community college. In general, four enrollment management approaches were identified and defined as models of enrollment management coordination: (a) enrollment management committee, (b) enrollment management coordinator, (c) enrollment management matrix, and (d) enrollment management division (Hossler & Bean, 1990; Hossler & Kemerer, 1986; Huddleston, 2000). Thus, participants had four options from which to identify the enrollment management approach at their community college, with a fifth option of “please describe.” If “please describe” was selected, the respondent was prompted to type the approach used at their institution into an empty text box. In Section C, the CVCA (see Appendix D) was used to collect information to assess the current organizational culture in Texas community college districts. Cameron and Quinn’s (n.d.) CVCA tool is a 24-question survey divided into six categories: (1) dominant characteristics, (2) organizational leadership, (3) management of employees, (4) organizational glue, (5) strategic emphasis, and (6) criteria of success. With four questions in each of the six categories, the CVCA assessment determines how employees perceive the organization as displaying specific cultural characteristics. The researcher obtained written permission from The Kim S. Cameron Team to use the CVCA (see Appendix E). In Section D, open-ended questions were used to gather additional information and perspectives from respondents and provided an opportunity for additional comments regarding organizational culture and enrollment management approaches. A final question inquired if the respondent was willing to participate in a follow-up interview and, if so, requested contact information.

## **Qualitative Instrument: One-on-One Interviews**

The qualitative research phase in this study was conducted through one-on-one interviews to understand how executive leaders responded to the changing enrollment management environment. The interview questions, based on Schein's (1986) organizational culture theory and Quinn and Rohrbaugh's (1983) CVF, covered topics such as enrollment impact and trends, leadership, institutional culture and change, organizational culture and effectiveness, and navigating future change (see Appendix F). An illustration of the approach used to collect and analyze qualitative data for this study can be found in Appendix G.

Using a quantitative survey and qualitative interviews, the researcher aimed to obtain a holistic picture of organizational culture through the perceptions of executive leaders and enrollment management personnel and executive leaders' responses to the changing enrollment management environment.

## **Data Collection**

### **Quantitative Data Collection**

The researcher obtained approval from the Kansas State University (KSU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) before distributing the survey. The researcher conferred with the KSU College of Education and confirmed obtaining IRB approval from each participating institution was unnecessary. Before distributing the electronic survey instrument, the researcher piloted the survey to a selected population. Avry et al. (2002) suggested conducting a pilot study can assist in identifying any issues with a research plan before undertaking the final study. This approach helped the researcher save time by rectifying such problems in advance of the actual study. The researcher emailed a letter of introduction and provided an overview of the study to the TACC and the Community College Association of Texas Trustees to request support in promoting the

study to 49 Texas community college presidents or chancellors (see Appendix H and I). Other organizations, such as the TACC Government Relations Advocacy Team, were contacted to request support in promoting this study. The researcher also made personal contact with community college colleagues across the state of Texas to increase survey response rate. The researcher emailed a letter of introduction with a link to the online survey (see Appendix J) containing a participant consent statement based on the KSU Informed Consent Form (see Appendix K) to all identified participants at 49 Texas community college districts. The electronic survey was conducted using the online survey tool Qualtrics. The survey was open for 11 weeks. Two reminders were sent to participants. Data was collected through the Qualtrics platform and exported into Excel for analysis.

### **Qualitative Data Collection**

Upon completing the quantitative phase, the researcher compiled a list of executive leaders who indicated their willingness to participate in follow-up interviews. The researcher used purposeful sampling to select 12 executive leaders representing each of the four institutional peer groups to interview. Prior to conducting the interview, the researcher piloted the interview questions with college executives. The researcher contacted each executive leader to schedule one-on-one interviews. Interviews were conducted via Zoom, an online video platform, and recorded with participant approval. Informed consent forms were provided to respondents, and verbal consent was obtained before conducting the interviews. Interviews were no longer than 45 minutes.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis process was divided into two segments, aligned with the respective phases of the mixed-methods research design.

## **Quantitative Data Analysis**

To answer Research Question 1 for this study, survey results were tracked via Qualtrics and exported into Excel for statistical analysis. According to the American Psychological Association (2023), “Descriptive statistics include the mean, median, and mode to indicate central tendency, as well as range and standard deviation that reveal how widely spread the scores are within the sample” (para. 1). Descriptive statistics were the primary technique for analyzing Research Question 1. Quinn and Rohrbaugh’s (1983) CVF, through the use of Cameron and Quinn’s (n.d.) CVCA tool, was used for Research Question 1 by plotting the results to show how executive leaders and enrollment management professionals assessed the current organizational culture at all Texas community colleges. An example of the CVCA plotting diagram is found in Appendix L.

Comparative analyses were also conducted to compare the assessments of organizational culture by executive leaders and enrollment management personnel. Schein’s (2004) organizational culture theory suggests that someone’s place in an organization is relational to an individual’s role, the organization’s culture, and the process of cultural embedding. For all comparative analyses, *t* tests were run to determine if the differences in the assessments by category were statistically significant.

## **Qualitative Data Analysis**

For the qualitative phase of this study, interviews with the 12 executive leaders were transcribed and emailed to each participant for review. The interviews were analyzed and coded using Lochmiller and Lester’s (2017) iterative qualitative data analysis process. An illustration of the iterative qualitative data analysis process can be found in Appendix M. Lochmiller and Lester described the qualitative data analysis process as a series of iterative steps, including (a)

preparing data for analysis, (b) familiarization of the data, (c) transcribing the data, (d) recording the data, (e) coding data, (f) placing coded data into categories and themes, and (g) mapping coded data. Schein's (1986) organizational culture theory and Quinn and Rohrbaugh's (1983) CVF were used for coding in the qualitative phase of the study. Schein's three levels of culture (i.e., artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions) served as a framework for coding responses from executive leaders. Furthermore, leader responses were coded according to the two main dimensions of CVF, which are (a) control or flexibility and (b) internal or external factors. Any leadership responses that did not align with the theoretical or conceptual framework were identified as emerging themes. Excel was used to organize and visualize the data for Research Question 2.

### **Alignment Table**

Appendix B, introduced in Chapter 1, provides an overview of how Schein's (1986) organizational culture theory and the conceptual framework—Quinn and Rohrbaugh's (1983) CVF—aligned with this study's purpose. The alignment table also outlines the initial problem based on the literature findings, as well as the methodology, research questions, survey, and interview questions used in this research study.

### **Limitations**

According to Roberts and Hyatt (2019), limitations in educational research are “particular features of your study that you know may affect the results or your ability to generalize the findings” (p. 154). One limitation of this study was that it was conducted in the State of Texas, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other states. Also, because the interviews with the executive leaders represented their opinions, the findings cannot be generalizable, but they were informative.



## **Ethical Considerations**

The researcher applied for and received approval from the KSU IRB before conducting the study. In addition, the researcher was asked to complete IRB approval at one Texas community college, where approval was granted. The researcher also ensured informed consent was gathered from each participant at the beginning of the survey and one-on-one Zoom interviews so participants understood they had the right to opt out at any time. The researcher maintained confidentiality to protect participants' privacy, including assigning pseudonyms for interview participants. For the one-on-one interviews, all participants were asked for consent to audio and visual recording at the beginning of the interview. Recording did not begin until after consent was accepted. To further protect the privacy of interview participants, visual recordings were deleted, and the audio recordings were maintained for transcription. Data collected were housed on an external hard drive and will be stored in a locked safe for 5 years. In addition, the researcher was mindful of personal biases and transparent and honest throughout the data collection, analysis, and reporting.

## **Study Quality**

The researcher used Trochim's (2024) concepts of reliability and validity to ensure the study's quality. According to Trochim, reliability refers to the consistency and stability of measurements. Trochim (2024) added that a measure is deemed reliable when it produces the same outcome repeatedly, assuming the variables remain consistent. Lochmiller and Lester (2017) noted reliability is "the ability of an instrument to achieve the same measure regardless of the number of times it is administered" (p. 206). According to Trochim, validity is the extent to which a research study or measurement instrument measures what it intends to measure. Lochmiller and Lester (2017) noted validity ensures findings and conclusions drawn from the

study are accurate and meaningful. To reinforce validity, each participant received the same electronic survey.

According to Cameron and Quinn (n.d.), CVF and the CVCA “[have] been the focus of empirical studies for more than 25 years, and it has been employed to help thousands of organizations and tens of thousands of managers to improve their performance” (p. 2). Cameron and Quinn (2011) reported numerous researchers have used the CVCA in studies of many different types of organizations. Therefore, the reliability and validity of the study have been measured to determine if the CVCA tool assesses culture types consistently. Studies cited using the CVCA tool have included surveys of 796 executives from 86 different public utility firms; over 1,300 administrators, department chairs, and trustees of higher education institutions; 10,300 executives from 1,064 Fortune 500 companies; and numerous others (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). In each study, Cronbach alpha coefficients were computed for each culture type being assessed by the CVCA tool. According to Cameron and Quinn (2011), “Each coefficient was statistically significant and very satisfactory compared to normal standards” (para. 24). Reliability coefficients ranged from .74–.82 for clan culture, .80–.83 for adhocracy culture, .76–.86 for market culture, and .67–.90 for hierarchy culture (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

Through multitrait–multimethod analysis, the validity of the CVCA tool has been confirmed through convergent and discriminant validity tests. Cameron and Quinn (2011) noted convergent validity was supported because every correlation coefficient along the diagonal was found to be significantly different from zero. Cameron and Quinn reported the coefficients fell within the range of .212 to .515, indicating a moderate level of correlation. Discriminant validity was tested in three ways. Coefficient of concordance was computed, producing a coefficient of .764, “indicating strong support for discriminant validity” (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, para. 36).

The researcher piloted the survey instrument before distribution to identify any issues with the research plan before undertaking the final study. This approach assisted in ensuring content validity.

According to Lochmiller and Lester (2017), in qualitative research, “Trustworthiness is the degree to which your data collection, analysis, and presentation of findings are presented through a verifiable manner” (p. 180). Roberts and Hyatt (2019) identified credibility as “the degree to which your instrument truly measures what it purports to measure” (p. 149).

Furthermore, Roberts and Hyatt explained dependability determines if the study outcomes are consistent and repeatable. The qualitative interviews maintained high standards of credibility and dependability by engaging in peer review of the interview questions before the one-on-one interviews with the executive leaders and through member checking by requesting interview respondents review interview transcripts to verify accuracy.

## **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to compare how executive leaders and enrollment management personnel assessed organizational culture at Texas community colleges and to understand how executive leaders responded to the changing enrollment management environment. This chapter detailed the quantitative leading mixed-methods research design proposed for this study. Quinn and Rohrbaugh’s (1983) CVF was used for the quantitative phase of this study to address Research Question 1. Schein’s (1986) organizational culture theory and Quinn and Rohrbaugh’s CVF were used for the qualitative phase of this study to address Research Question 2. The chapter also identified the study setting, study participants, and instrumentation used for the study. The chapter further discussed the data collection and analysis and concluded with the limitations, ethical considerations, and study quality. Chapter 4 discusses

the study's findings through the conceptual framework, and Chapter 5 reflects on the findings and concludes with implications and recommendations for further research.

## **Chapter 4 - Findings and Analysis**

The purpose of this study was to compare how executive leaders and enrollment management personnel assessed organizational culture at Texas community colleges and to understand how those executive leaders responded to the changing enrollment management environment. The chapter includes a review of the research questions and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks guiding this study. In addition, the researcher provides an analysis of the data collected, a description of the sample population, and findings related to the research questions. The chapter concludes with a summary.

### **Research Questions**

Two research questions guided this study:

1. How does the assessment of organizational culture differ between executive leaders and enrollment management personnel in Texas community colleges when measured by the Competing Values Culture Assessment tool?
2. How do executive leaders at Texas community colleges respond to the changing enrollment management environment?

Research Question 1 (RQ1) focused on gathering the assessment of organizational culture from executive leaders and enrollment management personnel at Texas community college colleges by using Cameron and Quinn's (n.d.) Completing Values Culture Assessment (CVCA).

Research Question 2 (RQ2) focused on how executive leadership responded to the changing enrollment management environments at Texas community colleges through one-on-one interviews.

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

The researcher used two sources of data in this study: (a) quantitative survey and (b) qualitative interviews. The researcher developed a survey instrument using Qualtrics (2023), a secure online survey platform, for the quantitative phase to understand how executive leaders and enrollment management personnel assessed organizational culture in Texas community colleges. Data for the qualitative phase of the research study were collected using one-on-one interviews with questions designed to understand how executive leaders at Texas community colleges responded to the changing enrollment management environment.

Data were analyzed and coded using Excel spreadsheets. Schein's (1986) organizational culture theory and Quinn and Rohrbaugh's (1983) CVF were used for coding in the qualitative phase of the study. Schein's three levels of culture (i.e., artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions) served as a framework for analyzing the responses from executive leaders.

## **Distribution and Response**

### **Quantitative Survey**

The survey instrument developed for the quantitative phase of the research study included four sections. Section A sought demographic information from executive leaders and enrollment management personnel on their role in the organization, years in their current position, and the size of their institution based on the institutional peer groups outlined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (see Appendix A). Section B identified the enrollment management approach in each Texas community college (e.g., committee, coordinator, matrix, division). Section C included Cameron and Quinn's (n.d.) CVCA tool, a 24-question survey used to assess an organization's current culture. Section D included open-ended questions to gather

additional information and perspectives from respondents and to provide an opportunity for comments regarding organizational culture and the enrollment management environment.

Table 4.1 illustrates the distribution of surveys received by month, along with the corresponding percentages, showing that nearly two-thirds (64.7%) of the returned surveys were received in the first month.

Table 4.1. Survey Responses Received by Month

Month	<i>n</i>	% of surveys received by month	% of surveys received
November 2023	141	10.4	64.7
December 2023	41	3.0	18.8
January 2024	36	2.7	16.5
Total received	218	16.1	
Not returned	1,134	83.9	

*Note.* *N* = 1,352.

In November 2023, 141 surveys were received, constituting 10.4% of the total surveys distributed. In December 2023, 41 surveys were received, and in January 2024, 36 surveys were received, representing 3.0% of the total surveys distributed, respectively. Overall, 218 surveys were received, comprising 16.1% of the total distributed, leaving 83.9% not returned (*N* = 1,352). Table 4.2 indicates the distribution of surveys sent (*N* = 1,352) and received (*n* = 218), along with the corresponding response rates across different respondent categories.

Table 4.2. Survey Distribution

Survey distribution	Surveys sent <i>N</i> = 1,352	Surveys received <i>n</i> = 218	Response rate (%) 16.1
Executive leaders	519	109	21.0
Enrollment management personnel	833	105	12.6
Did not identify		4	

A total of 1,352 surveys were distributed electronically, with 519 sent to executive leaders and 833 to enrollment management personnel. Among these, 109 surveys were completed by executive leaders, representing a response rate of 21.0%. For enrollment management personnel, 105 surveys were returned, representing a response rate of 12.6%. Additionally, four surveys did not identify the respondent's function or role in the institution. Overall, out of the total 1,352 surveys distributed, 218 were received, resulting in an overall response rate of 16.1%.

### **Qualitative Interviews**

The qualitative data for this study were collected using one-on-one interviews with executive leaders. As described in Chapter 3, the one-on-one interviews allowed the researcher to understand how executive leaders responded to the changing enrollment management environment. Of the 109 executive leaders who completed the online survey, 47 responded they were willing to participate in a follow-up interview. A total of 12 one-on-one interviews were conducted with executive leaders representing each of the four institutional peer groups identified by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (see Appendix A) to gain a better understanding of their perceptions and insights.



## Descriptive Demographics

Survey participants were asked several demographic questions: (a) role in the organization, (b) years in current position, (c) size of institution based on the institutional peer groups outlined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (see Appendix A), and (d) the enrollment management approach present in their community college (e.g., committee, coordinator, matrix, division). Table 4.3 presents the job titles identified by the executive leader respondents when asked to indicate the role in the institution that most directly relates to their position.

Table 4.3. Number of Executive Leader Respondents by Job Title

Job title: Executive leaders	<i>n</i>
President/chancellor	25
Vice president/chancellor of academics (CAO)	14
Vice president/chancellor of finance (CFO)	10
Vice president/chancellor of student services	9
Dean of student services	8
Dean of instruction/academics	6
Dean of enrollment	4
Dean of institutional research	4
Vice president/chancellor of enrollment	4
Assistant vice president of academic affairs	1
Associate vice chancellor student engagement	1
Associate vice chancellor student success	1
Associate vice chancellor, chief marketing officer	1
Associate vice president of student services	1
Associate vice president for student affairs	1
Associate vice president of administrative technology	1
Associate vice president of enrollment management	1
Associate vice president of institutional effectiveness and educational technologies	1
Associate vice president of student services and enrollment management	1
Associate vice president of academic learning	1
Associate vice president of financial services	1
AVP of student life and engagement	1

Job title: Executive leaders	<i>n</i>
Campus provost	1
Chief of strategy	1
Dean for dual credit programs	1
Dean of admissions	1
Dean of educational partnerships	1
Dean of student affairs	1
Executive dean–satellite campus	1
Vice chancellor of public affairs	1
Vice president of K–12 partnerships	1
Vice president of marketing and public relations	1
Vice president of development	1
Vice president of administration and student services	1

The table presents a breakdown of job titles and corresponding frequencies in the category of executive leaders ( $N = 109$ ). Among the executive leaders, the most common job title is president/chancellor ( $n = 25$ ), followed by vice president/chancellor of academics (i.e., chief academic officer;  $n = 14$ ), and vice president/chancellor of finance (i.e., chief financial officer;  $n = 10$ ). Other identified titles included vice president/chancellor of student services ( $n = 9$ ), dean of student services ( $n = 8$ ), and dean of instruction/academics ( $n = 6$ ). Three other roles are represented with four respondents each ( $n = 4$ ), dean of enrollment, dean of institutional research, and vice president/chancellor of enrollment (chief enrollment officer). An additional 25 specific titles are listed in Table 4.3, each with one respondent ( $n = 1$ ). These positions collectively reflected the diverse leadership surveyed, which encompasses academic, administrative, and strategic roles in the various Texas community colleges. Similarly, Table 4.4 presents the job titles and number of enrollment management personnel respondents by job title when asked to indicate the role in the institution that most directly relates to their position.

Table 4.4. Number of Enrollment Management Personnel Respondents by Job Title

Job title: Enrollment management personnel	<i>n</i>
Registrar	13
Director of financial aid	9
Director of marketing/communications	9
Director of counseling/advising	8
Recruiter	8
Director of information technology (CIO)	6
Assistant or associate director of admissions	4
Director of institutional research	4
Advisor	3
Assistant or associate registrar	2
Bursar	2
Director of admissions	2
Assistant director or manager of information technology	1
Academic resource manager	1
Advising manager	1
Assistant director of advising	1
Assistant director, financial aid processing and intake services	1
Community engagement	1
Coordinator for orientation	1
Coordinator of financial aid	1
Counseling and advising	1
Director of student achievement and success	1
Director of accessibility and counseling services	1
Director of admissions and registration	1
Director of dual credit	1
Director of dual enrollment	1
Director of institutional effectiveness	1
Director of institutional effectiveness and learning technologies	1
Director of outreach services (Recruiting)	1
Director of recruitment	1
Director of recruitment and dual enrollment	1
Director of student access and support services	1
Director of student life, marketing, and community outreach	1
Director of student success	1
Director of admissions of records outreach and dual credit	1
Director of instructional support	1
Director of outreach and recruitment	1
District coordinator of student affairs	1

Job title: Enrollment management personnel	<i>n</i>
District director of student financial aid	1
Enrollment navigator	1
Executive director institutional effectiveness	1
Executive director of dual credit	1
Executive director of high school programs and services	1
Executive director of IT and learning innovation and CIO	1
Executive director of school and college partnerships	1
Executive director of student success	1
Faculty	1

The table provides a summary of job titles and their respective frequencies in the category of enrollment management personnel ( $N = 105$ ). The most common roles reported included registrar ( $n = 13$ ), director of financial aid ( $n = 9$ ), director of marketing/communications ( $n = 9$ ), director of counseling/advising ( $n = 8$ ), and recruiter ( $n = 8$ ). Other identified positions included director of information technology (chief information officer;  $n = 6$ ), assistant or associate director of admissions ( $n = 4$ ), director of institutional research ( $n = 4$ ), advisor ( $n = 3$ ), and bursar ( $n = 2$ ). An additional 35 specific titles are listed in Table 4.4, each with one respondent. The identified positions represented the multifaceted nature of enrollment management in Texas community colleges.

Table 4.5 summarizes the years of service identified for executive leaders and enrollment management personnel respondents.

Table 4.5. Years of Service Identified by Respondents

Years of service	Executive leaders <i>n</i> = 109	% of all executive leaders	Enrollment management personnel <i>n</i> = 105	% of all enrollment management personnel	Overall totals <i>N</i> = 214	% of all respondents
Less than 2 years	25	22.9	23	21.9	48	22.4
2–5 years	37	33.9	42	40.0	79	36.9
6–9 years	26	23.9	18	17.1	44	20.6
10+ years	18	16.5	22	21.0	40	18.7
Did not identify	3	2.8			3	0.0
Total	109	100	105	100	214	100

Survey participants were asked to indicate how many years they have been in their current position at their institution (*N* = 214). Table 4.5 presented the years of service for executive leaders (*n* = 109) and enrollment management personnel (*n* = 105). Three (2.8%) executive leaders did not identify their years of service. The findings indicated most executive leaders (33.9%) and enrollment management personnel (40.0%) had 2–5 years of service, highlighting their relative experience in their roles. A smaller proportion of respondents had 10 or more years of service, with 16.5% of executive leaders and 21% of enrollment management personnel, showing both categories of respondents have significant experience in their roles at their institutions.

Survey participants were asked to identify the size of their institution based on the institutional peer groups outlined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (see Appendix A). The results are presented in Table 4.6, detailing the size of the institutions reported by respondents, the number of surveys distributed, surveys returned, and the corresponding percentages.

Table 4.6. Size of Institution Identified by Respondents

Size of institution	Number of surveys distributed ( <i>N</i> = 1,352)	Portion of surveys distributed (%)	Number of surveys returned ( <i>N</i> = 214)	Portion of respondents (%)
Very large college (total student enrollment of 20,000+)	514	38.0	66	30.8
Large college (total student enrollment of 8,000–19,999)	238	17.6	44	20.6
Medium college (total student enrollment of 3,000–7,999)	452	33.4	75	35.0
Small college (total student enrollment of less than 2,999)	148	10.9	27	12.6
Did not identify			2	0.9
Total				100

A total of 1,352 surveys were distributed (*N* = 1,352). For very large colleges (with a total student enrollment of 20,000 or more), 514 surveys were distributed, representing 38% of the portion of surveys distributed. A total of 66 surveys were returned from very large colleges, which is 30.8% of respondents. In large colleges (i.e., enrollment of 8,000–19,999), a total of 238 surveys were distributed (17.6%). A total of 44 surveys were returned from large colleges, which was 20.6% of respondents. Similarly, in medium-size colleges (i.e., enrollment of 3,000–7,000), 452 surveys were distributed (33.4%). A total of 75 surveys were returned from medium colleges, which was 35.0% of respondents. In small colleges (i.e., enrollment of less than 2,999), a total of 148 surveys were distributed (10.9%), and 27 surveys were returned, which is 12.6% of respondents. Two respondents (0.9%) did not identify the size of their institution. Thus, the

number of surveys returned by institution size is a close representation of the total number of surveys sent.

Finally, survey participants were asked to identify the category of enrollment management approach present at their institution. In general, four enrollment management approaches were defined: (a) enrollment management committee, (b) enrollment management coordinator, (c) enrollment management matrix, and (d) enrollment management division (Hossler & Bean, 1990; Hossler & Kemerer, 1986; Huddleston, 2000). Table 4.7 provides a summary of the enrollment management approaches identified by executive leaders and enrollment management personnel.

Table 4.7. Institutional Enrollment Management Structure Identified by Respondents

Enrollment management approach	Executive leaders <i>n</i> = 109	Enrollment management personnel <i>n</i> = 105
Enrollment management division	47	44
Enrollment management matrix system	28	22
Enrollment management committee	21	16
Enrollment management coordinator	5	10
None of the above exist at my institution	4	5
Other	1	3
Did not identify	3	5

*Note.* *N* = 214.

A total of 47 executive leaders and 44 enrollment management personnel reported the enrollment management division was the approach present at their institutions. Additionally, 28 executive leaders and 22 enrollment management personnel reported the presence of an enrollment management matrix system, and 21 executive leaders and 16 enrollment management personnel reported their institution had an enrollment management committee. A total of five

executive leaders and 10 enrollment management personnel reported the presence of an enrollment management coordinator at their institutions. Four executive leaders and five enrollment management personnel reported none of the identified approaches exist at their institution, and one executive leader and three enrollment management personnel indicated another approach is present at their institutions. Finally, three executive leaders and five enrollment management personnel did not identify the enrollment management approach at their institutions.

Although it is unknown from the results if the executive leaders and enrollment management personnel represent the same size of institution, the findings show that both categories of respondents were able to identify an enrollment management approach at their institutions. Few respondents reported no approach or another approach exists at their institutions, and a notable 10 enrollment management personnel did not identify an approach. Additionally, the identified enrollment management approaches are similar between the two categories of respondents. Overall, the most identifiable approach is the enrollment management division; however, the findings show diversity in how enrollment management is structured in Texas community colleges.

## **Quantitative Research Findings**

This section contains an analysis of the data related to RQ1 to compare the assessment of organizational culture between executive leaders and enrollment management personnel at Texas community colleges. Findings are presented from the responses gathered using Cameron and Quinn's (n.d.) CVCA tool.

Notably, some executive leaders and enrollment management personnel did not answer every question in the CVCA section of the survey, which is necessary for an accurate analysis



when using this tool. Therefore, the sample size data associated with the CVCA results varied from the number of respondents ( $N = 218$ ) in the descriptive data previously presented. A total of 189 respondents, comprised of 101 executive leaders and 88 enrollment management personnel, completed the CVCA and are represented in the following findings.

### **CVCA Results**

The CVCA results are based on the respondent's assessment of four guiding statements in six organizational categories for a total of 24 survey questions. In each of the categories, the assessment of the four statements must total 100 points. While not identified to the respondents, each of the four statements represents one of the four CVF quadrants (i.e., clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy). Statement scores were averaged for all respondents and for executive leaders and enrollment management personnel separately, with overall averages calculated for each quadrant. According to Cameron and Quinn (2006), "The quadrant in which scores are the highest indicates the culture that tends to be emphasized most in your organization" (p. 71).

#### **Clan (i.e., Collaborate) Quadrant**

Table 4.8 represents the findings related to the clan (collaborate) quadrant for all respondents ( $N = 189$ ), then separately for executive leaders ( $n = 101$ ) and enrollment management personnel ( $n = 88$ ). This table indicates the average responses to a guiding statement from each of the CVCA categories on organizational culture. For the clan quadrant, the statement is the first question in the six categories of (a) dominant characteristics, (b) organizational leadership, (c) management of employees, (d) organizational glue, (e) strategic emphasis, and (f) criteria of success.

Table 4.8. Results Shown by Average of the CVCA Clan/Collaborate Quadrant (A)

Category and guiding statement	All	Executive leaders	Enrollment management personnel
	<i>N</i> = 189	<i>n</i> = 101	<i>n</i> = 88
Dominant characteristics:	39.2	37.5	41.1
1A. The organization is a very personal place. It is like an extended family. People seem to share a lot of themselves.			
Organizational leadership:	30.4	31.3	29.5
2A. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify mentoring, facilitating, or nurturing.			
Management of employees:	37.5	38.8	36.1
3A. The management style in the organization is characterized by teamwork, consensus, and participation.			
Organizational glue:	34.0	35.3	32.6
4A. The glue that holds the organization together is loyalty and mutual trust. Commitment to this organization runs high.			
Strategic emphases:	28.6	30.8	26.0
5A. The organization emphasizes human development. High trust, openness, and participation persist.			
Criteria of success:	34.8	36.5	33.0
6A. The organization defines success on the basis of the development of human resources, teamwork, employee commitment, and concern for people.			
Overall averages	34.1	35.0	33.1

The table presents the average of respondents' assessment on a scale to 100 of each guiding statement in each category. In the dominant characteristics category (1A), which views the organization as a very personal place, similar to an extended family, the breakdown showed executive leaders had a lower level of assessment (37.5) than enrollment management personnel (41.1). Regarding the organizational leadership category (2A), where leadership exemplified

mentoring and nurturing qualities, executive leaders had a somewhat higher level of assessment (31.3) than enrollment management personnel (29.5).

In the management of employees category (3A), the breakdown showed a higher level of assessment for executive leaders (38.6) and enrollment management personnel (36.1) who perceived the management style as emphasizing teamwork and participation. For the organizational glue category (4A), which emphasized that loyalty and mutual trust are crucial for organizational cohesion, executive leaders had a higher level of assessment (35.3) than enrollment management personnel (32.6).

The strategic emphasis category (5A) emphasized human development, trust, and openness. The breakdown shows executive leaders had a considerably higher level of assessment (30.8) than enrollment management personnel (26.0), indicating that executive leaders perceived higher levels of trust and openness in the organization than enrollment management personnel. Last, for the category of criteria of success (6A), which defines success by factors such as human resource development and employee commitment, executive leaders had a noticeably higher level of assessment (36.5) than enrollment management personnel (33.0).

The overall averages for all six categories were 34.1 for all respondents, 35.0 for executive leaders, and 33.1 for enrollment management personnel, indicating a close overall assessment, with executive leaders showing slightly higher averages compared to enrollment management personnel.

The findings highlighted a strong alignment of the assessment of organizational culture among executive leaders and enrollment management personnel in the clan (i.e., collaborate) quadrant. The assessment underscored a close-knit and supportive environment that emphasized teamwork and human development. These values contributed to a cohesive and engaged

workforce, fostering an environment of productivity, innovation, and employee well-being. Furthermore, executive leaders and enrollment management personnel shared in the sentiment of consensus, loyalty, and tradition. Table 4.9 compares responses from executive leaders and enrollment management personnel across various statistical measures for the clan (i.e., collaborate) quadrant.

Table 4.9. Statistical Variances Clan/Collaborate Quadrant (A)

Statistic	Executive leaders <i>N</i> = 101	Enrollment management personnel <i>N</i> = 88
<i>M</i>	35.0	33.1
Variance	10.9	27.3
<i>SD</i>	3.3	5.2
<i>t</i> -test one-tail		0.23

The average scores for each group showed that executive leaders ( $M = 35.0$ ) have a slightly higher mean than enrollment management personnel ( $M = 33.1$ ). Enrollment management personnel showed a higher variability, with a standard deviation of 5.2, compared to executive leaders, with a standard deviation of 3.3. The *t*-test value (0.23) showed no significant difference between the two groups. Overall, although there were slight differences in the means and variability between executive leaders and enrollment management personnel in the questions in the clan (i.e., collaborate) quadrant, there was no significant distinction between the two groups.

#### **Adhocracy (i.e., Create) Quadrant**

Table 4.10 represents the findings related to the adhocracy (i.e., create) quadrant for all respondents ( $N = 189$ ), then separately for executive leaders ( $n = 101$ ) and enrollment management personnel ( $n = 88$ ). This table indicates the average responses to a guiding

statement from each of the CVCA categories on organizational culture. For the adhocracy quadrant, the statement is the second question in each of the six categories, as listed in the table.

Table 4.10. Results Shown by Average of the CVCA Adhocracy/Create Quadrant (B)

Category and guiding statement	All	Executive leaders	Enrollment management personnel
	<i>N</i> = 189	<i>n</i> = 101	<i>n</i> = 88
Dominant characteristics: 1B. The organization is a very dynamic and entrepreneurial place. People are willing to stick their necks out and take risks.	16.5	19.0	13.7
Organizational leadership: 2B. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify entrepreneurship, innovating, or risk-taking.	18.1	20.8	15.0
Management of employees: 3B. The management style in the organization is characterized by individual risk-taking, innovation, freedom, and uniqueness.	14.4	15.8	12.7
Organizational glue: 4B. The glue that holds the organization together is commitment to innovation and development. There is an emphasis on being on the cutting edge.	19.2	20.9	17.2
Strategic emphases: 5B. The organization emphasizes acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. Trying new things and prospecting for opportunities are valued.	20.9	21.3	20.5
Criteria of success: 6B. The organization defines success on the basis of having the most unique or the newest products. It is a product leader and innovator.	14.0	15.3	12.6
Overall averages	17.2	18.9	15.3

The table presented the average of respondents' assessment on a scale to 100 of each guiding statement in each category. In the dominant characteristics category (1B), which perceived the organization as dynamic and entrepreneurial, the breakdown showed executive

leaders had a considerably higher level of assessment (19.0) as compared to enrollment management personnel (13.7). In the category of organizational leadership (2B), where leadership in the organization is viewed as exemplifying entrepreneurship and risk-taking, executive leaders had a noticeably higher level of assessment (20.8) than enrollment management personnel (15.0).

For the management of employees category (3B), the breakdown showed executive leaders had a much higher level of assessment (15.8) than enrollment management personnel (12.7), that the management style encouraged individual risk-taking and innovation. In the organizational glue category (4B), which highlighted a commitment to innovation and development as crucial for organizational cohesion, executive leaders had a noticeably higher level of assessment (20.9) than enrollment management personnel (17.2).

The strategic emphasis category (5B) emphasized acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. The breakdown showed executive leaders had a similar level of assessment (21.3) than enrollment management personnel (20.5). Last, for the category of criteria for success (6B), which defines success as having unique or innovative products, executive leaders had a higher level of assessment (15.3) than enrollment management personnel (12.6).

The overall averages for all categories were 17.2 for all respondents, 18.9 for executive leaders, and 15.3 for enrollment management personnel. Of the four cultural quadrants, the adhocracy (i.e., create) quadrant received the lowest overall assessment from executive leaders and enrollment management personnel.

The findings showed variations in perceptions of organizational culture related to flexibility and individuality between executive leaders and enrollment management personnel across all six categories, with executive leaders showing higher averages compared to enrollment

management personnel on every item. The most noticeable difference in the assessment between executive leaders and enrollment management personnel was found in categories 1B and 2B. Although the assessment scores were lower, showing a lower perception of a risk-taking culture, the findings showed that executive leaders assessed the organization as more innovative, creative, and adaptable than enrollment management personnel. Table 4.11 compares responses from executive leaders and enrollment management personnel across various statistical measures for the adhocracy (i.e., create) quadrant.

Table 4.11. Statistical Variances Adhocracy/Create Quadrant (B)

Statistic	<i>Executive leaders</i> <i>N = 101</i>	<i>Enrollment management personnel</i> <i>N = 88</i>
<i>M</i>	18.9	15.3
Variance	7.2	9.5
<i>SD</i>	3.1	3.1
<i>t</i> -test one-tail	0.03	

The average scores from each group showed executive leaders ( $M = 18.9$ ) had a higher mean than enrollment management personnel ( $M = 15.3$ ). Enrollment management personnel and executive leaders exhibited similar standard deviations of 3.1. A  $t$ -test result of 0.05 would indicate significance. The  $t$ -test results for the adhocracy (i.e., create) quadrant showed a statistically significant difference in the means between the executive leaders and enrollment management personnel ( $p = 0.03$ ). The executive leaders assessed the organizational culture as innovative and adaptable, significantly more so than the enrollment management personnel.

### **Market (i.e., Compete) Quadrant**

Table 4.12 represents the findings related to the market (compete) quadrant for all respondents ( $N = 189$ ), then separately for executive leaders ( $n = 101$ ) and enrollment

management personnel ( $n = 88$ ). This table indicates the average responses to a guiding statement from each of the CVCA categories on organizational culture. For the market quadrant, the statement is the third in each of the six categories, as listed in the table.

Table 4.12. Results Shown by Average of the CVCA Market/Compete Quadrant (C)

Category and guiding statement	All	Executive leaders	Enrollment management personnel
	$N = 189$	$n = 101$	$n = 88$
Dominant characteristics: 1C. The organization is very results oriented. A major concern is with getting the job done. People are very competitive and achievement oriented.	21.0	21.6	20.2
Organizational leadership: 2C. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify an aggressive, results-oriented, no-nonsense focus.	24.0	23.6	24.5
Management of employees: 3C. The management style in the organization is characterized by hard-driving competitiveness, high demands, and achievement.	18.0	19.2	16.6
Organizational glue: 4C. The glue that holds the organization together is the emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment. Aggressiveness and winning are common themes.	18.9	18.1	19.9
Strategic emphases: 5C. The organization emphasizes competitive actions and achievement. Hitting stretch targets and winning in the marketplace are dominant.	19.0	19.2	18.8
Criteria of success: 6C. The organization defines success on the basis of winning in the marketplace and outpacing the competition. Competitive market leadership is key.	21.3	19.1	23.8
Overall averages	20.4	20.1	20.6

The table presented the average of respondents' assessment on a scale to 100 of each guiding statement in each category. In the dominant characteristics category (1C), which



characterized the organization as highly results-oriented, the breakdown showed executive leaders had a slightly higher level of assessment (21.6) than enrollment management personnel (20.2). For the organizational leadership category (2C), where leadership was perceived as aggressive and results-oriented, executive leaders showed a similar level of assessment (23.6) to enrollment management personnel (24.5).

In the management of employees category (3C), where the management style is characterized by competitiveness and high demands, executive leaders had a higher assessment (19.2) than enrollment management personnel (16.6), indicating executive leaders believed the organization sets high expectations for achievement and results. In contrast, enrollment management personnel may not perceive the same level of competitiveness and focus on being results-oriented in the external environment.

Regarding the organizational glue category (4C), which emphasized an organization's cohesion was based on achievement and goal accomplishment, the breakdown showed executive leaders had a slightly lower level of assessment (18.8) than enrollment management personnel (19.9), indicating enrollment management personnel saw the organization was placing a higher emphasis on winning than executive leaders.

The strategic emphasis category (5C) emphasized competitive actions and achievement. The breakdown showed executive leaders had a similar level of assessment (19.2) to enrollment management personnel (18.8). Last, for the category of criteria of success (6C), which defined that winning in the marketplace is crucial, executive leaders had a considerably lower level of assessment (19.1) than enrollment management personnel (23.8), indicating that enrollment management personnel viewed the strategy of enhancing competitiveness as more present in the organization than executive leaders.

The overall averages for all categories in the market (i.e., compete) quadrant were 20.4 for all respondents, 20.1 for executive leaders, and 20.6 for enrollment management personnel, indicating agreement related to their assessment of the presence of competition in the organization, with executive leaders showing nearly the same overall average to enrollment management personnel.

Table 4.13 compares responses from executive leaders and enrollment management personnel across various statistical measures for the market (i.e., compete) quadrant.

Table 4.13. Statistical Variances Market/Compete Quadrant (C)

Statistic	Executive leaders <i>n</i> = 101	Enrollment management personnel <i>n</i> = 88
<i>M</i>	20.1	20.6
Variance	4.2	9.1
<i>SD</i>	2.1	3.0
<i>t</i> -test one-tail		0.37

The average score from each group showed enrollment management personnel ( $M = 20.6$ ) have a slightly higher mean than executive leaders ( $M = 20.1$ ). Enrollment management personnel showed a higher variability, with a standard deviation of 3.0, compared to executive leaders, with a standard deviation of 2.1. The *t*-test showed no significant difference between the two groups ( $p = 0.37$ ). Overall, the results showed slight differences in means and variability between executive leaders and enrollment management personnel; however, there was no significant difference between the two groups in the market (i.e., compete) quadrant.

### **Hierarchy (i.e., Control) Quadrant**

Table 4.14 represents the findings related to the hierarchy (i.e., control) quadrant for all respondents ( $N = 189$ ), then separately for executive leaders ( $n = 101$ ) and enrollment

management personnel ( $n = 88$ ). This table indicates the average responses to a guiding statement from each of the CVCA categories on organizational culture. For the hierarchy quadrant, the statement is the fourth in each of the six categories, as listed in the table.

Table 4.14. Results Shown by Average of the CVCA Hierarchy/Control Quadrant (D)

Category and guiding statement	All	Executive leaders	Enrollment management personnel
	$N = 189$	$n = 101$	$n = 88$
Dominant characteristics: 1D. The organization is a very controlled and structured place. Formal procedures generally govern what people do.	23.4	21.9	25.0
Organizational leadership: 2D. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify coordinating, organizing, or smooth-running efficiency.	27.4	24.3	31.0
Management of employees: 3D. The management style in the organization is characterized by security of employment, conformity, predictability, and stability in relationships.	30.1	26.1	34.6
Organizational glue: 4D. The glue that holds the organization together is formal rules and policies. Maintaining a smooth-running organization is important.	27.8	25.7	30.3
Strategic emphases: 5D. The organization emphasizes performance and stability. Efficiency, control, and smooth operations are important.	31.5	28.7	34.7
Criteria of success: 6D. The organization defines success on the basis of efficiency. Dependable delivery, smooth scheduling, and low cost production are critical.	29.9	29.2	30.7
Overall averages	28.4	26.0	31.1

The table presented the average of respondents' assessment on a scale to 100 of each guiding statement in each category. For the dominant characteristics category (1D), where the

perception that the organization was controlled and structured, the breakdown showed executive leaders had a much lower level of assessment (21.9) than enrollment management personnel (25.0). In the organizational leadership category (2D), where leadership was viewed as coordinating and efficient, executive leaders had a noticeably lower level of assessment (24.3) than enrollment management personnel (31.1), indicating that enrollment management personnel perceived leadership as efficient and lead the organization with structure and coordination. In contrast, with a lower assessment average, executive leaders may have perceived a need for improvement in their leadership to strengthen procedures and processes.

For the management of employees category (3D), the management style in the organization prioritized security, conformity, and stability. The breakdown showed that executive leaders had a considerably lower level of assessment (26.1) than enrollment management personnel (34.6), indicating that enrollment management personnel felt a sense of security in their employment status and perceived that the leadership emphasized structure and stability. In contrast, executive leaders with a lower assessment score indicated a need to focus on clearly articulating expectations and coordination of resources and functions. Results in the organizational glue category (4D), which emphasized formal rules and policies as crucial for organizational cohesion, showed that executive leaders had a noticeably lower level of assessment (25.7) than enrollment management personnel (30.3), indicating that enrollment management personnel perceived the organization as having clear policies and procedures guiding their work. Conversely, with a lower assessment level, executive leaders identified an opportunity to evaluate systems and processes to ensure the organization was operating efficiently with established monitoring systems.

In the strategic emphasis category (5D), which emphasized performance and stability, executive leaders had a considerably lower level of assessment (28.7) than enrollment management personnel (34.7), indicating enrollment management personnel believed the organization was well organized, consistent, and operated in uniformity. However, executive leaders perceived a need to improve processes to enhance or create an efficient infrastructure for overall success. Last, in the category of criteria of success (6D), where success was defined based on efficiency, executive leaders had a similar level of assessment (29.9) to enrollment management personnel (30.7).

The overall averages for all categories were 28.4 for all respondents, 26.0 for executive leaders, and 31.1 for enrollment management personnel, indicating differences in perceptions of organizational culture across all categories, with enrollment management personnel showing a higher assessment compared to executive leaders in the hierarchy (i.e., control) quadrant.

The findings highlighted that enrollment management personnel assessed the organizational culture in Texas community colleges as one that emphasized structure, stability, and efficiency. Conversely, executive leaders reported a lower level of assessment; however, leadership prioritized efficient management and organizational coordination. Overall, the findings showed a focus on standardized processes and clear guidelines. Table 4.15 compares responses from executive leaders and enrollment management personnel across various statistical measures for the hierarchy (i.e., control) quadrant.

Table 4.15. Statistical Variances Hierarchy/Control Quadrant (D)

Statistic	Executive leaders <i>n</i> = 101	Enrollment management personnel <i>n</i> = 88
<i>M</i>	26.0	31.1
Variance	7.5	12.6
<i>SD</i>	2.7	3.6
<i>t</i> -test two-tail		0.01

The average scores from each group showed executive leaders ( $M = 26.0$ ) had a lower mean compared to enrollment management personnel ( $M = 31.1$ ). Executive leaders exhibited a lower variability, with a standard deviation of 2.7, compared to enrollment management personnel, with a standard deviation of 3.6. A *t*-test result of 0.05 would indicate significance. The *t*-test results for the hierarchy (i.e., control) quadrant showed a statistically significant difference in the means between the executive leaders and enrollment management personnel ( $p = 0.01$ ). The enrollment management personnel assessed the organizational culture as structured, controlled, and dedicated to formal processes.

**Average Assessment by Category, Size, and Enrollment Management Structure**

A comparison of the assessments of organizational culture by executive leaders and enrollment management personnel is summarized in Table 4.16. The table presents the results of the four quadrants of the CVCA: (a) clan (i.e., collaborate) A, (b) adhocracy (i.e., create) B, (c) market (i.e., complete) C, and (d) hierarchy (i.e., control) D. The averages represented the level of assessment in each quadrant for executive leaders ( $n = 101$ ), and enrollment management personnel ( $n = 88$ ), with the four quadrant scores totaling 100.

Table 4.16. CVCA Quadrant Average Assessments by Respondent Category

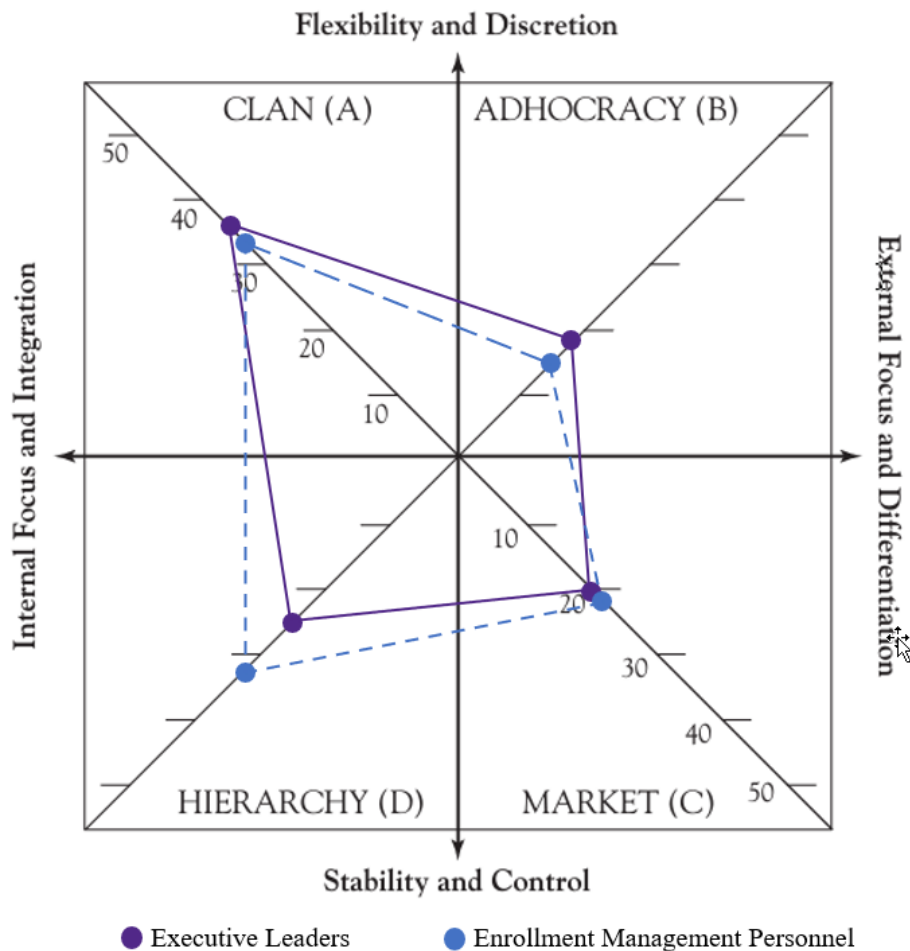
Quadrant	Executive leaders	Enrollment management personnel
	<i>n</i> = 101	<i>n</i> = 88
Clan (i.e., collaborate) A	35.0	33.0
Adhocracy (i.e., create) B	18.9	15.3
Market (i.e., compete) C	20.1	20.6
Hierarchy (i.e., control) D	26.0	31.1
Total	100	100

In the clan quadrant, characterized by collaboration, executive leaders and enrollment management personnel showed a high assessment, with a similar average of 35.0 for executive leaders and 33.0 for enrollment management personnel. For the adhocracy quadrant, associated with innovation, average results showed a lower level of assessment from executive leaders at 18.9 than enrollment management personnel at 15.3. The market quadrant, emphasizing competition, results showed similar results across groups, with an average of 20.1 for executive leaders and 20.6 for enrollment management personnel. Last, in the hierarchy quadrant, representing control, results showed an average of 26.0 for executive leaders and a higher average of 31.1 for enrollment management personnel.

Two primary axes defined the CVF. The vertical axis is characterized by flexibility or discretion and stability or control. The horizontal axis is characterized by internal focus or integration and external focus or differentiation. The axes form the four cultural quadrants: (a) clan, (b) adhocracy, (c) hierarchy, and (d) market. All four quadrants are represented in every organization, and each quadrant has a conceptual opposite. For example, the opposite of the adhocracy quadrant, which emphasizes creativity and risk-taking, is the hierarchy quadrant, which is characterized by control and formalized structures. An adhocracy culture is externally focused and thrives on flexibility, whereas a hierarchy culture is internally focused and values stability and control.

Figure 4.1 provides a visual representation of the assessment of organizational culture between executive leaders, represented in purple, and enrollment management personnel, represented in blue, at Texas community colleges. The intersections of the plotted lines represent the findings of this study, which identify the competing values of the clan (i.e., collaborate) and market (i.e., compete) cultures.

Figure 4.1. CVCA Plotting Results for Executive Leaders and Enrollment Management Personnel



Note. Adapted from “Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture: Based on the Competing Values Framework,” by K. S. Cameron and R. E. Quinn, 2006, p. 95.



Overall, each quadrant reflected varying levels of assessment among the two respondent categories, illustrating their perception of the organizational culture. The findings showed executive leaders and enrollment management personnel placed a high preference for a clan (i.e., collaborate) culture, as illustrated by the close placement of data points that are higher on the plotting diagram between the 30 and 40 average marks. The second highest assessed organizational culture characteristic among executive leaders and enrollment management personnel was a hierarchy (i.e., control) culture, identified on the plotting diagram in the lower left quadrant. The average score from executive leaders was plotted around the 20 average mark, and the average score from enrollment management personnel was plotted close to the 30 mark. The distance between the data points represented the difference in assessment between executive leaders and enrollment management personnel. The findings of the assessments from enrollment management personnel showed a higher level of assessment that control was highly valued, and there was a significant appreciation for structure and stable environments.

The market (i.e., compete) quadrant received similar assessments from executive leaders and enrollment management personnel, as represented by the data points on the plotting diagram being close together. These findings indicated a comparable assessment that competition holds notable importance, and there was a focus on achieving results. Finally, the adhocracy (i.e., create) cultural quadrant received the lowest average assessment scores of the four cultural quadrants. The assessment among executive leaders and enrollment management personnel, as illustrated by the data points being between the 10 and 20 average marks, indicated a lower perception of a risk-taking culture. The data points were plotted a further distance apart, showing a significant difference in the assessment between the two respondent categories.

The findings highlighted the importance of understanding the cultural preferences in an organization to align strategies and priorities with the values of leadership and employees. An emphasis on collaboration when encouraging innovation can enhance overall satisfaction and engagement among employees.

### **CVCA Summary**

This study examined how executive leaders and enrollment management personnel assessed organizational culture at Texas community colleges using Cameron and Quinn's (n.d.) CVCA. The findings showed overall, executive leaders and enrollment management personnel reported the highest assessment in the clan culture, which emphasizes collaboration, loyalty, and tradition. Executive leaders reported a higher level of assessment in the adhocracy culture than enrollment management personnel, which is focused on innovation and flexibility. Executive leaders and enrollment management personnel reported similar levels of assessment in the market culture, which prioritizes competition and results. Finally, the hierarchy culture, emphasizing stability and control, had a higher level of assessment with enrollment management personnel than with executive leaders.

Finally, statistical analysis indicated differences between executive leaders and enrollment management personnel across the cultural quadrants. Executive leaders had higher levels of assessment than the enrollment management personnel in the clan (i.e., collaborate) and adhocracy (i.e., create) cultural quadrants, and enrollment management personnel showed higher levels of assessment in the adhocracy (i.e., create) and hierarchy (i.e., control) cultural quadrants. Overall, the results showed varying assessments of organizational culture in Texas community colleges with two quadrants, adhocracy (i.e., create) and hierarchy (i.e., control), which had significantly different assessments of culture between the two groups. In the adhocracy (i.e.,

create) quadrant, characterized as a creative, dynamic, and entrepreneurial workplace, the assessment by the executive leaders was significantly higher than the enrollment management personnel. In the hierarchy (i.e., control) quadrant, characterized by control and efficiency, enrollment management personnel assessed the culture higher than executive leaders. These findings reflected a comprehensive understanding of how executive leaders and enrollment management personnel at Texas community colleges assess their organizational culture.

### **Open-Ended Questions**

The final section of the electronic survey included open-ended questions to gather additional information and perspectives from executive leaders and enrollment management personnel and to provide an opportunity for comments regarding organizational culture and the enrollment management environment. Of the 218 completed surveys received, 171 executive leaders and enrollment management personnel responded to the first open-ended question, and 172 responded to the second open-ended question. In the analysis, respondent names were anonymized; individuals were labeled by the size of the institution they represented, the position they held, and an assigned numeric.

The findings, presented by open-ended questions, are provided in the following sections. The researcher developed themes for the open-ended questions based on the responses from executive leaders and enrollment management personnel.

#### **Open-Ended Question 1: What Do You Think Has Contributed to Your Institution's Current Enrollment Management Strategies, Initiatives, or Activities?**

When asked this question, four themes emerged from the responses of executive leaders and enrollment management personnel: (a) collaboration, (b) change driven by challenges, (c) leadership, and (d) student success.

### ***Collaboration***

A notable theme that arose among the responses of executive leaders and enrollment management personnel at Texas community colleges was the importance of collaboration. Respondents highlighted external and internal collaboration had contributed to the enrollment management strategies at their institution. Regarding external collaboration, Medium Director of Admissions 1 shared their strategy, stating they have been “utilizing [their] networks in [their] local high schools to recruit students, developing workforce certificate programs that can help students get a career quickly, and targeted communications to applicants and potential students.” Small President 1 reported their approach as “reaching out and working closely with area schools, and helping guide students through their first inquiry to graduation.” Finally, Medium Assistant Director/Manager of Information Technology 1 articulated they were “listening to students’ needs and helping the struggling population to feel included and also working to keep the curriculum fresh and up to date with jobs in [their] area as well as those in other markets.”

Additionally, internal collaboration was a significant focus for executive leaders and enrollment management personnel. Medium Bursar 1 shared, “I believe that we exhibit teamwork and collaboration across many departments on campus. We focus on what is best for our current and prospective students while maintaining policies and procedures.” Similarly, Medium Assistant/Associate Registrar 1 articulated, “I think the different campus departments are collaborating to come up with the best strategies to improve enrollment management that benefits not only the college’s retention but also improves student engagement as well.” Large Dean of Instruction/Academics 1 reported, “The structure at the college works closely together to develop strategies to enhance enrollment and student support.” Finally, Large President 1

articulated, “Declining enrollment and the emergence of ‘finger pointing’ across divisions led to an intentional, collaborative enrollment management approach.”

### *Change Driven by Challenges*

Executive leaders and enrollment management personnel identified a second theme as a change driven by challenges, such as a lack or no enrollment management approach and the positive tactics that have contributed to the enrollment management strategies, initiatives, and activities at Texas community colleges. Executive leaders and enrollment management personnel highlighted enrollment management strategies at their institutions have led to change driven by challenges. Small Registrar 1 shared:

Current strategies are not so very different from previous initiatives. We are still trying to reach as many potential students as possible. Our current biggest challenge is moving our dual credit students to post-secondary. Our second biggest challenge is retention, especially among young African American men.

Small Director of Institutional Research 1 shared the challenges of a limited service area, reporting, “We have a limited, environmentally-bound service area, meaning our enrollment pool is unique to the area, with a few online program exceptions. Our growth must focus on retention more than new enrollment, although we manage both.” Finally, Large Associate Vice President for Student Affairs 1 stated, “The negative COVID impact and continued low enrollment have consumed our current path.”

Executive leaders and enrollment management personnel also expressed concerns about a lack of focus or the absence of enrollment management strategies at their institutions. Several respondents reported their institution did not place an emphasis on or prioritize enrollment management. Very Large Director of Counseling/Advising 1 shared, “Currently, we do not have

a cohesive strategy.” Dean of Admissions 1 shared, “We have one person who tries to drive through, initiative, analysis, but not enough people with focused time and intention on creating and implementing strategy.” Furthermore, Large Dean of Instruction/Academics 1 reported, “Much is based on past practice, familiar process, and the safety provided by what we know. There is some innovation and risk-taking, but only in pockets and not part of the institutional fabric.” Finally, Medium Executive Director of Information Technology and Learning Innovation 1 stated, “Over-reliance on ‘how things have always been done’” has been a challenge at their institution.

Lastly, executive leaders and enrollment management personnel shared strategies that have contributed to the enrollment management initiatives at Texas community colleges. Medium Director of Marketing/Communications 1 articulated, “The creation of the enrollment management task force has provided a forum for open communication amongst departments, idea generation, and a data-centered strategy.” Medium Dean of Enrollment 1 shared:

The institution has reorganized functional offices and aligned them with the student journey. This is the most efficient approach when managing enrollments. By having the main enrollment management functional offices (recruitment, admissions, testing, financial aid, registrar) under one Vice President, our current goals/strategies/tactics are attainable due to the seamless collaboration that is typically found under one administrator.

Additionally, Very Large Director of Recruitment 1 positively reported, “Creative and innovative enrollment leadership. The freedom to implement new initiatives and learn from their outcome. The use of data to support keeping initiatives or ending them.” Finally, Large Chancellor 1 expressed:

My institution's current enrollment management efforts are very positive. This is the direct result of acquiring executive and senior management leadership with the experience and talent to develop and implement successful strategies. Also, the engagement of a new marketing firm has made a difference.

### ***Leadership***

A third theme from the responses of executive leaders and enrollment management personnel was the impact of leadership. Responses included positive impacts, challenges of leadership, and the impact of new leadership on enrollment management strategies. Executive leaders and enrollment management personnel shared the positive impacts of leadership on enrollment management strategies. Medium Vice President/Chancellor of Academics 1 shared, "We have a dynamic, visionary president who has changed the way we do business and has challenged the status quo." Medium Director of Financial Aid 1 articulated, "The willingness of our leadership to keep up with what the market is demanding and providing any up-to-date equipment or programs that are needed to meet the goal." Finally, Very Large Assistant/Associate Director of Admissions 1 expressed, "Within our current structure, the VPs tend to set the tone for their division, which seems apparent upon interacting with each division and the 'feel' of their day-to-day activities."

Additionally, respondents identified leadership challenges that have contributed to enrollment management strategies and initiatives. Very Large Director of Financial Aid 1 reported, "The drive for personal achievement feels like some people want to move aggressively to pad their resume and get promoted." Medium Vice President/Chancellor of Student Services 1 articulated, "College culture had atrophied, so bringing in new blood was vital. The new blood clashes at times with the old blood, and that has created a split personality for the institution. It

will take time for this to change.” Finally, Very Large Director of Marketing/Communications 1 articulated the challenge of “pressure from the top to grow enrollment or else.”

Finally, executive leaders and enrollment management personnel reported on the presence and impact of new leadership at their institution. Medium Registrar 1 reported, “We have all new administration, so we are moving from valuing the status quo to embracing change.” Similarly, Very Large Director of Marketing/Communications 1 articulated, “We are stuck in old models of what enrollment management is supposed to be. With the new leadership we have in place, I see those silos breaking down so we can pivot and adjust to stay on pace.” Finally, Very Large Dean of Institutional Research 1 shared, “New leadership at the institution has shifted focus for enrollment strategies. The institution has become more focused on its marketing and public relations, as well as perception.”

### ***Student Success***

The fourth emergent theme from the responses of executive leaders and enrollment management personnel was an emphasis on student success initiatives. Small Vice President/Chancellor of Student Services 1 reported, “We believe meeting students face-to-face helps to develop a rapport where a student feels welcomed and appreciated. We use technology strategies to initiate contact with prospective students and then invite them to campus for a personal touch.” Similarly, Medium Director of Marketing/Communications 1 expressed, “Our focus is on student success, and we really focus on eliminating barriers and creating procedures that are best for creating a pathway to student success.” Finally, Large Vice President/Chancellor of Finance 1 articulated:

A significant turning point in our institution was identifying that our current enrollment practices were challenging students in our processes rather than in the classroom. We



modified our way of thinking about the enrollment management processes and created a “one-stop shop” where students could apply and register simultaneously. The ability to sit back and identify gaps in our operations has helped the college work together and identify innovative ways to help students.

### **Open-Ended Question 2: How Do You Make a Difference in Enrollment**

#### **Management at Your Institution?**

When asked how they make a difference in enrollment management at their institutions, three themes emerged from the responses of executive leaders and enrollment management personnel: (a) foster team unity, (b) data, and (c) employee empowerment leading to enhanced customer service.

#### ***Foster Team Unity***

An emergent theme from the responses of executive leaders and enrollment management personnel in response to open-ended question two was the necessity of fostering team unity. Respondents stressed connection, collaboration, belongingness, and participation as essential skills to make a difference in enrollment management. Very Large Recruiter 1 identified their role as “connecting with other departments to be able to refer students when [they] do not know everything. Also, have patience and understanding that everyone may not know the processes of going to college, attending high schools, college fairs, and programs to connect with students.” Very Large Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Engagement 1 articulated coordination in their role, stating:

I coordinate with our campus leadership to collaborate on new initiatives. Act as a liaison between campuses and help execute those initiatives at a system level so that the campus teams can focus on more specific and campus-driven initiatives.

Similarly, Small Vice President of Administration and Student Services 1 shared, “My contribution to enrollment management is making sure that all the committees and departments work together and coordinate their efforts so everyone is pulling in the same direction. I help keep people focused.” Finally, Very Large Registrar 1 expressed, “I look for ‘common points;’ something that can give stakeholders a sense of connection and belonging.”

### ***Data***

A notable theme among the responses of executive leaders and enrollment management personnel was the importance of leveraging data. Respondents emphasized their contribution to enrollment management strategies was ensuring college leadership had access to accurate data, using data to make informed decisions, and using the power of data for evaluation. Small Director of Institutional Research 1 expressed:

I ensure that leaders have the most accurate, rich data available to guide decision-making when asked. I truly believe enrollment management is everyone’s responsibility, regardless of title. I also contribute to enrollment management planning through the assessment process, which reports to my office.

Large Director of Outreach Services 1 reported:

I leverage data from previous efforts. I was able to reduce the cost of direct mail because we were unable to measure an ROI from it, and instead, we allocated those funds to areas that had a measurable impact. I ask questions from the perspectives of a student, faculty member, and administrator because I wear all of those hats at my institution.

Finally, Very Large Vice President/Chancellor of Student Services 1 articulated their contribution “by being an active participant and collecting and analyzing data on internal and external factors affecting enrollment and student success.”

### *Employee Empowerment Leading to Enhanced Customer Service*

Executive leaders and enrollment management personnel reported the value of employee empowerment, leading to enhanced customer service as a third theme of how they can make a difference in enrollment management at their institutions. Respondents highlighted ensuring employees understood their important role in enrollment management, embodying a hospitality attitude, and going the extra mile for students. Small Vice President/Chancellor of Student Services 1 reported:

We want all of our employees in the enrollment management process to know they are the foundation for a student's education in higher education. We ask them to answer every question they ask as if it was the first time they heard it, even if the students are frustrated. We want students to know they are valued, and we want them to have a smooth admissions and enrollment process.

Similarly, Medium Director of Financial Aid 1 expressed, "Our radical hospitality attitude and drive to assist students and meet them where they are" was how their staff contributed to enrollment management at their institution.

A focus on the students continued when Medium Vice President of Development 1 articulated, "Not only reminding all employees we are all recruiters of the college but also looking for ways to remove any barriers for students to enroll." Medium Vice President/Chancellor of Student Services 1 echoed, "I emphasize good customer service and teamwork at all times." Additionally, Very Large District Director of Student Financial Aid 1 reported their contribution as "responding to challenges, being willing to do whatever needs to be done for the student, regardless of whether it is efficient or not." Finally, Very Large Registrar 1 focused on belongingness by stating, "[they] try to create a sense of belonging to [their] staff,

which spills over into how [they] interact with [their] community. [They] tell the staff, ‘We are not just a community college; we are this community’s college.’”

### **Open-Ended Questions Summary**

Executive leaders and enrollment management personnel were provided an opportunity to express their thoughts on what had contributed to the enrollment management strategies, initiatives, and activities at their institutions and how they made a difference in enrollment management at their institutions. From the responses of the executive leaders and enrollment management personnel, the key themes of collaboration, leadership, and student success were emphasized as essential in institutions to support the organizational culture. Internal and external collaboration emerged as vital for effective enrollment management strategies. Findings showed leadership dynamics significantly influenced the formulation of strategies, initiatives, and activities associated with enrollment management. Finally, executive leaders and enrollment management personnel underscored the critical focus on student success through fostering team unity, leveraging data, and empowering employees for enhanced customer service.

### **Qualitative Research Findings**

The qualitative data for this study were collected through one-on-one interviews with executive leaders. For this study, executive leaders were defined as a president/chancellor or vice president/chancellor.

This section contains an analysis of the research findings related to RQ2 and have been presented as themes developed from the responses of 10 interview questions. RQ2 guiding this study was:

2. How do executive leaders at Texas community colleges respond to the changing enrollment management environment?

## Descriptive Demographics

Table 4.17 presents the number of interviews conducted by size of institution across the four institutional peer groups.

Table 4.17. Number of Interviews Conducted by Size of Institution

Institution size	Total interviews
Very large	3
Large	2
Medium	5
Small	2

*Note.*  $N = 12$ .

Among the 12 one-on-one interviews conducted, five executive leaders represented medium-sized colleges, three represented very large colleges, two represented large colleges, and two represented small colleges. The distribution of interviews by institution size was determined based on the institutional peer group reported by respondents on the electronic survey (see Table 4.6). The representation demonstrated varied sampling across institution sizes. Table 4.18 indicates the job titles of executive leaders who participated in the one-on-one interviews along with an assigned numeric code.

Table 4.18. Identification of Interviewees

Institution size	Job title	Numeric code
Small	Vice president of student services	Small VPSS 1
Small	Vice president of academics	Small VPA 1
Medium	President	Medium President 1
Medium	Vice president of student success	Medium VPSS 1
Medium	Vice president of student success	Medium VPSS 2
Medium	Vice president of academics	Medium VPA 1
Medium	Associate vice president	Medium AVP 1
Large	President	Large President 2
Large	President	Large President 3
Very large	Chancellor	Very Large Chancellor 1
Very large	Campus provost	Very Large Campus Provost 1
Very large	Associate vice chancellor and chief marketing officer	Very Large AVC 1

Overall, 12 executive leaders were interviewed during the qualitative phase of this research study: (a) four presidents/chancellors, (b) one campus provost, (c) three vice presidents of student services, (d) two vice presidents of academics, (e) one associate vice president of student services and enrollment management, and (f) one associate vice chancellor and chief marketing officer. The distribution represented a diverse range of roles of executive leaders and the multifaceted nature of institutional leadership.

### **One-on-One Interviews With Executive Leaders**

A total of 12 one-on-one interviews were conducted with executive leaders via Zoom. Interviews lasted no longer than 45 minutes, and participants were asked the same 10 semistructured interview questions. The findings, presented by interview questions, are provided in the following sections.

## **Interview Question 1: What Are Some Instances Unfolding at Your Institution That Have an Impact on Enrollment?**

When asked to identify instances impacting enrollment at their institutions, three themes emerged from the responses of executive leaders: (a) the value and perception of higher education, (b) the impact of external factors, and (c) adaptation and evolution.

### ***Value and Perception of Higher Education***

A notable theme that emerged among executive leaders at Texas community colleges was the value and perception of higher education. Concerns included perceptions about the decreasing value of higher education, challenges in communicating its importance, and the need to emphasize student success and retention. Participant Very Large Chancellor 1 explained:

The value proposition of higher education is being challenged. For the first time in anyone's memory or tracking, more people do not think that we are value added to their lives than those who think that we are. In particular, my concerns are that the exploding cost of universities has caused people to question the value of higher education.

Community colleges have not been good at telling our story and connecting with our audience as a way to separate us from this universal disdain for the exploding cost of a bachelor's degree. As a result, we have been wrapped up in this narrative that higher education is not worth its value, and we are losing students as a result.

Similarly, Small Vice President of SS 1 stated, "A lot more people, especially younger students, are starting to ask: 'Is it worth going to college? Is there value? Am I going to have a good return on my investment?'" Participant Medium Vice President of SS 1 reported:

The issues that the nation is having, we are having as well, such as the idea that education is not important anymore. We hear that not only from our students and potential students but also from some of the teachers in the schools.

Finally, Very Large Chancellor 1 stated, “Fifty-seven percent of high school graduates in the region go nowhere when they graduate. Our competition is between somewhere and nowhere—nowhere is winning.”

### ***Impact of External Factors***

Executive leaders identified external factors that have influenced enrollment at institutions of higher education (e.g., economic changes, legislative impacts, demographic shifts, the COVID-19 global pandemic). The executive leaders noted these factors, and others, have impacted enrollment patterns, resource allocation, educational practices, and student expectations, requiring institutions to adapt and respond. Participant Medium AVP 1 reported concerns, saying, “Changes in our local economy and the projected growth in businesses in rural areas are impacting enrollment because we are planning for a lot of growth in areas that are typically not where we see growth right now.” However, participant Very Large AVC 1 noted positively:

We are located in an area that has been growing significantly over the last few years. We have a good tax base, and it is growing. There is plenty of room to continue to grow, and all the evidence points to us continuing to do so.

Respondents reported the effects of the COVID-19 global pandemic as a significant concern impacting enrollment at their institutions. Participant Medium VPSS 1 observed:

We are still coping with the changes that COVID brought. Students who missed that year (plus) are not ready for college. Many of those students come into college, go into their



first class, spend an hour, and say, “I am done.” We are seeing a lot of students who are not prepared to come into a college classroom. They are not persisting.

Similarly, participant Large President 2 stated, “COVID changed students and their expectations. It changed students’ enthusiasm, desire, and ability to go to college.”

Additionally, participants reported positive and concerned impacts of legislative changes, such as Texas House Bill 8, which changed the funding model for Texas community colleges. Participant Medium VPA 1 stated, “House Bill 8 is a motivating factor causing us to take a hard look at our first-time-in-college students, how prepared they are when they come in, and then our three-year completion rates.” Participant Very Large Chancellor 1 positively reported, “The shift from an enrollment-based funding model to an outcome-based funding model is exciting. The opportunities that it creates and the conversations internally give me much hope, but it has created a lot of stress for the college.” Finally, Large President 2 noted, “Enrollment is looking very different, especially with the development of House Bill 8. We are seeing increases in enrollment because of that, but our enrollment is shifting very rapidly to dual credit.”

### ***Reassessing Educational Practices to Enhance Student Success and Enrollment***

Executive leaders emphasized the importance of reassessing traditional educational practices to enhance completion rates and student success while maintaining the foundational mission of community colleges. Respondents highlighted the impact of Guided Pathways, college-ready requirements, and access to community colleges as educational practices that have impacted enrollment. Medium VPSS 2 observed:

When we started researching the Guided Pathways movement, we realized that our students were taking a lot of excess credits and spending a lot of excess time and money in school; we developed our current model of defined career pathways with defined

degree and certificate programs. We reduced the menu of options, and students gravitated more towards that because then they could see the exact pathway that they could take, the courses needed, the potential jobs that they could be getting, or the institutions where they could be transferring.

Further, Medium AVP 1 reported the impact of underprepared students, noting:

We have had a tradition of enrolling underprepared students in the pre-TSI [Texas State Initiative] courses. When we took a hard look at our completion rates, we realized that about 19% of first-time-in-college students complete something in 3 years. What we are realizing is that by doing that, our enrollment is going to sharply decline in some of these courses because we are going to start telling students that if they are not college ready and want a full load, then these are the CTE options that will lead to a great paying career.

In regards to how students access a community college, Medium VPSS 2 stated:

We passed a bond allowing for some upgrades, and the welcome center was remodeled, where we put together a one-stop shop for admissions and testing. This is more attractive for the students, more welcoming, and structured better so that they can get through the enrollment funnel faster.

Finally, Participant Medium VPSS 1 articulated:

Our goal is still, obviously, to make sure that, as a community college, we have the community in mind. We still want to reach out to as many of those people in the community, both traditional and non-traditional students. We still want to make sure that we are making the opportunity available to everybody. However, it is not as much of an

importance level as far as how many we get to come in the door. We need to keep them through graduation.

**Interview Question 2: How Has the Enrollment Management Environment Evolved at Your Institution Over the Past Decade?**

In response to this question, executive leaders articulated a need for organizational changes involving people, processes, programs, systems, and urgency.

***People***

Responses from executive leaders highlighted a transition toward institutional ownership of enrollment management and emphasized the necessity for personnel and department realignment. Very Large Chancellor 1 reported, “Enrollment management is now no longer just an enrollment management problem. The concept of enrollment is owned by every fabric and every part of the institution. Everyone has a role in it.” Similarly, Medium VPSS 1 stated:

I met with the board when I first got here 3 years ago, and I told them SEM [strategic enrollment management] is not a quick fix. SEM is a process that you go through, and it only works if all the people involved pull their share of the weight.

Finally, in regard to the realignment of personnel and departments, Large President 3 articulated:

When I got here as president, the first thing I started to do was tackle the things I knew I could fix, which, for me, were low-hanging fruit. I made some readjustments of personnel and divided offices so that people would have focused responsibilities, allowing them to learn and grow within that area. Some days are much more challenging than others, but I know that the focus is shifting from being employee-centered to student-centered. Faculty are jumping along with us, and they are really happy.

## *Processes*

The need for broad organizational changes in the context of processes was a common theme represented by the responses of executive leaders. Respondents placed a notable emphasis on enhancing team structures, clarifying roles, and fostering a collective approach to enrollment management. Additional findings showed a focus on initiatives to transform the processes of the colleges, including the creation of standard operating procedures and mandatory orientation to improve student success. Large President 3 articulated a need to change internal processes and procedures reporting:

Standard administrative procedures did not exist here. We are working through all that and creating every process and every procedure for a standard administrative procedure. I explained why at the beginning: because the flow of students, the flow of employees, the flow of the way we do business changes.

Large President 3 continued by stating:

We started mandatory orientation in the summer. I was told nobody was going to come and that they would not show up. I said, you make it mandatory, and they will show up. Everyone kept saying nobody was going to show up. I said, well, watch me. We had about 1,700 students come through orientation over the summer—those who did not get a hold on their records and had to do an online orientation. We created the whole process that had never been created here. Things that make a difference in the success of students in college have to be changed.

To address enrollment processes, Medium President 1 stated:

The enrollment process overall has been a focus for us, and we are trying to map all the business processes and clean them up. At one point, we had a little over 100 holds that

automatically were on a student before they could register. We have been trying to eliminate as many of them as possible.

Similarly, Very Large AVC 1 explained:

Over the last decade, the college has had more awareness of enrollment management strategies and tactics, and more things have been put in place that more closely resemble what a different type of institution has had to do for a long time.

When meeting with the board and explaining that SEM is not a quick fix, Medium VPSS 1 reported:

What they heard was that I was going to make enrollment go up. I understand that is what they wanted, but one thing we were dealing with was that we did not have any infrastructure on campus for an enrollment system.

Finally, Very Large Chancellor 1 articulated:

In order to fix the processes, we had to fix our broken relationships, clarify our roles, and call each other to a higher purpose than just protecting my office or my division. Students helped expose that. They called us to it, and then we had to have the courage to listen and act. We are getting better at building out these teams and clarifying the roles that departments and academic departments play where each part of the college has a role in enrollment. With student success, we are getting better at speaking to those divergent roles and gluing them together in a more seamless process.

### ***Programs***

Executive leaders responded with a need to update programs and align course offerings with community needs, emphasizing workforce development, expanding quality online education opportunities, and embracing the 8-week semester format. Medium VPSS 1 observed:

We had the wrong academic programs, we had outdated programs, and we had gone forever without any new programs. Only recently, with the bringing on of a new president, have we been able to fix some of that. We are bringing new programs in now.

Medium AVP 1 stated:

The anticipated changes associated with the changes in the funding model mean that our focus has shifted to make sure we are providing students with options for credentials of value and that we are offering something that everybody in our community can benefit from. There is a lot of focus on the workforce and continuing education side.

Small AVP 1 reported an increased focus on online courses and observed:

We really tried to improve in the area where we knew the growth was going to come, which is online. By that, I mean we have tried to work on the quality of those online courses. Probably in the last decade, we have increased the number of classes that we have online.

Large President 2 emphasized the shift to offering 8-week courses and stated:

Moving to the 8-week semester was a huge thing for us, but it has proven to be extremely successful. I said, if we are not forcing the issue, they are never going to finish, and we need to get them out of here. In the fall, we had about 600 part-time students who rolled over into full time. That was a huge culture shock for the registrar folks, some of our faculty people who were so used to everybody being part time.

### *Systems*

Responses from executive leaders offered insights into the use of technology in enrollment management systems, which have evolved to reimagine and revolutionize student engagement. Very Large Chancellor 1 stated, “The biggest shifts are leveraging technology to

manage enrollment, recruiting, and outreach.” In response to how enrollment management has evolved at their college, Medium VPSS 2 explained:

It has involved more technology. We have a communications manager within our student information system. Two years ago, we purchased a CRM that allows students to access our staff from any device that has an internet connection. They can instantly chat, email, contact us, submit forms, and have virtual meetings. That is another big piece of technology that we have added. When I first started, recruitment was media-based commercials, billboards, and pamphlets. Now, technology has become the big thing that is used for enrollment management.

Finally, Medium VPSS 1 reported an evolution of manual processes with the use of technology by stating:

At one point during my visit to their [admissions] office, I asked what all the papers were over on the shelf. The response was that there were 800 applications that they could not get to. The process at the time was to send everyone to the online Texas application system (ApplyTexas); they would go online to fill out the information, we would print the application on paper, and then somebody would reenter the information into our system. We went out and found the technology, which has taken us a while, but now we have the technology that is doing that same operation in 30 seconds to a minute and a half.

### ***Urgency***

Responses from executive leaders underscored the importance of urgency in addressing enrollment challenges. Executive leaders emphasized the need for proactive engagement, future

planning, and collaboration to succeed in the changing enrollment management environment.

Large President 3 articulated:

The reason I was hired, and it is clear from the board, is that they wanted me to fix the enrollment issues. They knew they had a serious problem with enrollment. If you continue to do the same old thing, you are going to continue to get the same old results. We cannot, and that is not the expectation anymore. So, people have to decide whether they want to stay and be in an environment where I have created a very strong sense of urgency and change or go. Some have chosen to leave, and others have chosen to retool themselves. I have given everybody those opportunities. If you want to continue to grow, I am going to help you get there.

Very Large Chancellor 1 stressed the importance of a collaborative approach and stated:

Everyone is trying to do the same thing but not together. How do we build systems? How do we glue a community together, and how do we ensure that the community college is the center of that? The schools that figure that out are the schools that are going to thrive and grow enrollment. The schools that sit and wait for things to happen in their communities are the ones that are going to really struggle, get left behind, and potentially close.

Finally, Very Large Chancellor 1 reported the need for future planning, stating:

When I look at my own region, I look at population shifts, labor market outcomes, and projected labor market growth. I want to design myself for where we are going to be 10 years from now, not trying to respond to where we were 10 weeks ago.



**Interview Question 2a: Where Do You See Enrollment Numbers Heading in the Next 5–10 Years?**

When asked where the executive leaders see enrollment numbers heading in the next 5–10 years at their institutions, only a few of them identified projections. Medium AVP 1 stated, “We are anticipating growth. I heard that we are anticipating a 30% growth from our dual credit enrollment.” Similarly, Medium President 1 reported, “For us at this particular college, with the amount of resources and emphasis on workforce development and career tech, in 5 years, I would be disappointed if we were not up 15% to 20%.” Medium VPA 1 reported a potential decline in enrollment based on internal policy and observed:

If you go course by course and add up when we were supposed to deliver contact hours under the old funding model, we will see a decline in what we have been doing just because we are being more intentional and restrictive around what our underprepared students can take.

**Interview Question 3: When Did You Identify a Need to Change Processes or Focus to Address Enrollment Challenges at Your Institution?**

When asked this question, a few pinpointed specific events that led to change, such as the COVID-19 global pandemic or when the executive leader started their new role at the institution. Although respondents did not address when, executive leaders focused on the processes, strategies, and tactics implemented to address enrollment challenges, such as enhancing outreach, navigating organizational relationships, and identifying the institution’s competitive advantage.

### ***Enhancing Outreach***

Executive leaders have identified the need to upgrade the college website to enhance their digital presence and boost community engagement by hosting on-campus events, aiming to connect with current and prospective students and the local community. Regarding updating the college's website, Small VPA 1 reported:

One of the challenges we have is that we have a horrible website. We are upgrading that, and that is a huge step for us because your online presence is now more important than ever. Online is where students are going to get the first look and where they are going to go. Having a website with a friendlier atmosphere that is easy to navigate is one of the areas that we are really looking to improve.

Similarly, Medium VPSS 1 stated, "Another change we are making is to our website, which will be all about new students—everything else will be behind the portal." Medium VPSS 1 focused on the need to bring the community to campus by stating:

One thing that does not involve people on campus as much as it does people off campus is that I noticed we were "community college" by name only. The community never came to campus unless they were coming to a basketball game or a football game. Therefore, we started doing things on campus. We brought the local farmers market on campus. We brought the annual Christmas bazaar on campus. We had 100 different people on campus this year selling their stuff out of our gymnasium just to get the people on campus. It has been important to me to get the people, the community, back on the community college campus.

### *Navigating Organizational Relationships*

Another notable theme that emerged from the responses of executive leaders was the focus on navigating organizational relationships. The focus included executive leaders adjusting to their new roles in the organization, building and fixing relationships, and understanding the intricacies of the organization. Medium AVP 1 stated, “Coming into the position, I understood what needed to happen and that the status quo was not going to work.” Additionally, Very Large AVC 1 reported:

Coming from where I did, I was able to make inroads with some things that we needed to do. What it did was open the conversation to tactics that had not been considered to increase cross-college collaborations that were necessary. People’s ears opened more to the perspectives of folks who had done more of that.

Executive leaders also identified a need to change personnel or restructure departments to meet the changing enrollment management environment. Medium President 1 reported:

The thing that really demonstrates where I come from is that I view our college organizational chart like an etch-a-sketch. At any point in time, it can be erased. Anytime there is a vacant position, the first question is, why do you need to keep this position? When I arrived, there was such an emphasis on Noel Levitz: let us write a plan; it has to be on this plan, and it has to be detailed. It was so cumbersome. I was right away saying that this is not going to attract the kind of students we need. We were going to have to rethink that. It was a year-and-a-half-long journey to get that commonly accepted on the cabinet that we had to do things differently. It took changing personnel.

Further, Medium AVP 1 noted:

There had been administrative changes on the executive team that led us toward breaking down the silos that have been around forever and building dynamic relationships with people who are in the other areas so we support each other more.

Similarly, Medium VPSS 1 noted:

We completely restructured our enrollment services area because our AVP for enrollment management had no background in enrollment management. We moved some of the areas that she was responsible for under me or another AVP. We have whittled down the areas that AVP is responsible for. Now, everything that is under the AVP for enrollment management is actually an enrollment management function.

Finally, executive leaders reported needing an external perspective to understand internal processes and employee relationships. Very Large Chancellor 1 stated:

I contracted with an outside consulting firm. What was happening was that people knew things were not working, but they were in their division or even in their office mapping out the process specific to their work and not acknowledging the frustration our students were experiencing in that those processes were not linked and integrated with college-wide processes and created a lot of confusion and frustration. Therefore, I needed an outside voice to come in and help us map out across the college. That process of mapping our processes exposed deep fissures, trust, understanding, and value of other partners in the institution. I did not feel like we could act without an outside neutral voice challenging, questioning, and gluing.

Further, Medium VPSS 2 explained:

When I first started, you could see right away that there was a need to do a business process analysis. Therefore, we brought in some consultants to unpack our admissions,

financial aid, and registrar processes. We laid them all out to see where the pinch points were so that we could start addressing them. Right away, I knew we were going to have to reimagine what we did. I did a total reorganization at that point within student services, and we are almost done with a year or 2 to see how that is going to work.

Finally, Very Large Chancellor 1 reported:

I used secret shoppers and student secret shoppers to understand how they are receiving us. In many cases, I am finding we have really amazing people working their tails off, but students were receiving multiple messages from different parts of the college that were stepping on each other, contradicting each other, but not working in concert with each other. The secret shopper has helped me understand and gave me specific examples to explain so our employees could receive it and start working on it. Secret shoppers help us identify the brokenness. As a leadership team, we prioritize the processes that have the biggest impact on what we need to start with. Then, we start process mapping.

### ***Identifying Your Competitive Advantage***

Executive leaders emphasized the importance of identifying their competitive advantage by enhancing the campus's appeal and positioning themselves against other universities.

Respondents emphasized improving campus aesthetics, forming transfer partnerships with 4-year institutions, and leveraging student-driven marketing efforts to attract prospective students.

Regarding campus improvement, Medium VPSS 1 shared:

We made a big push for the beautification of the campus because we are a 75-year-old campus that looked like it. We have involved the whole campus in that process, but we are really making the campus look better. We have torn down a couple of buildings, and we have done some major work on campus to try to get things better.

Large President 2 reported the need to identify their competitive advantage, stating:

We serve a 14-county area in our service area. Our primary competition is universities and trying to convince students to go to this college. One of the things that we have looked at in consideration of enrollment management is, first of all, how we place ourselves in a competitive position, how we can be more appealing to a student, and what our competitive advantage is—secondly, partnering with 4-year universities to try to get the right transfer interests and transfer agreements in place.

Small VPA 1 shared the importance of leveraging student-driven marketing tactics, reporting, “We are trying to get a step ahead and try to figure out how we can market ourselves through students rather than through advertising.”

**Interview Question 4: How Did You Respond When/if You Identified a Need to Change Processes or Focus to Address Enrollment Challenges?**

When executive leaders were asked how they responded to the need to change, respondents focused on the need to identify and address inefficiencies to foster an environment of continuous improvement. Three overall themes arose from the responses of executive leaders: (a) openness, (b) deliberate communication, and (c) fostering a unified purpose.

***Openness***

A notable theme that emerged among the responses of executive leaders was the importance of openness in influencing change in processes or the focus of their institutions.

Medium President 1 reported:

One thing that I aggressively did before we changed personnel was invest a lot of time and energy in trying to see if the leadership in student services, with the recruiting part, was open to change. I spent a lot of one-on-one time with that individual, met with the

entire student services group, explained where we were going, and brought in a company to share personally why they exist, the purpose for it, and to reinforce the role of advisors. It was a lot of time understanding why we did this or that, combined with trying to move our student services folks, which is a challenge at most 2-year colleges, into the realm of truly understanding what we are trying to do from a student development standpoint.

Similarly, Very Large Chancellor 1 observed:

People in their offices know something is not working. They will talk about it with each other, but they loathe people outside the office to acknowledge what they already know. Then, it feels personal and painful, so we avoid the accountability and the trust-building of owning something that we do not know how to fix. That is why it takes courage. We have to have the courage to be honest and open with each other. We are afraid to do that, and I do not think it is unique to any institution. I think in higher education, we have an epidemic of ineffectiveness, but we are so myopic about protecting our work rather than improving it that we do not expose that to our colleagues who could help us fix it.

Finally, Medium VPSS 2 shared a personal approach demonstrating a willingness to engage with departments to be open and transparent, stating:

I knew I had to get trained in advising and student interactions from the student services side. I came from instruction, so I had to catch up very, very quickly. I embedded myself in people's offices many times to learn what was going on and what was happening. That is when I started to identify problems. I had to tell my directors that I was not micromanaging; rather, I was trying to learn what we were doing.

### ***Deliberate Communication***

Executive leaders highlighted deliberate communication as a key theme, using data to underscore challenges and promoting an understanding of necessary changes, all while respecting the institution's history and diverse perspectives. Medium VPSS 1 stated:

We have a very strong 75-year history, and the people here are proud of it. I wanted to try to make sure that we understood; therefore, rather than saying what we were doing was wrong, I would point to the result of what we were doing.

Additionally, Very Large Provost 1 shared:

I do not want the silos people have at other institutions between academics and student services. Every year, I invite the college and career counselors from our feeder high schools who support this campus and the other campus I am responsible for onto campus. I bring them all together, and we host lunch. I bring in all the key players from the campuses that they should know.

Finally, to foster intentional communication using data, Medium VPSS 1 reported:

I started almost every meeting that I had about any of this with the graph that showed our enrollment in 2009 and our enrollment now or then. The line went straight down, and then, of course, COVID did a dive off the end. I would say this is what we are trying to fix. I believe these things we have discussed will help us do that, and now they are in place. It has not been fast enough for half the people on campus, and it has been too fast for the other half.

### ***Fostering a Unified Purpose***

With a focus on fostering a unified purpose, executive leaders emphasized the importance of providing support to their teams, directly or indirectly. In their roles, executive leaders



highlighted ensuring they shared the same vision with their teams and offering support to align efforts toward common goals. Small VPA 1 stated, “I try to make sure that I support those who are directly involved in initiatives. I try to support them and help them have the same vision that I am seeing.” Very Large Provost 1 added, “What I try to do to support some of the functions is to provide as much support as I can to them because I get it.” Finally, Medium President 1 shared how their executive leadership team works in unity by stating:

It has been adopted for all the units under the VPs to say, are we organized the best way?

This understanding, along with discussions within departments as far as VP divisions, keeps us from staying static within the organization. That has become part of the part of the culture where every VP immediately starts looking for ways to do things more efficiently. It also gives us a tool to reward employees, so that has been a major shift.

**Interview Question 5: How Has the Changing Enrollment Management Environment Caused You to Lead Differently?**

In response to this question, executive leaders reported a shift in their leadership approach, focusing on communication, education, and empowerment. Three primary themes surfaced from the responses of executive leaders: (a) intentionally collaborative, (b) educating and understanding, and (c) empowering autonomy among leaders.

***Intentionally Collaborative***

In navigating the changing enrollment environment in Texas community colleges, executive leaders highlighted a shift toward intentional collaboration with an emphasis on building internal and external relationships to enhance the effectiveness of enrollment management initiatives. Medium AVP 1 stated:

The changing environment has led me to be intentionally collaborative with other areas of the college, understand the importance of relationship-building outside of the institution, and understand all of the players involved. Beyond the college, it goes to our local economic development organizations and local school boards. It all comes down to building collaboration that was not present or previously fully implemented.

Similarly, Very Large AVC 1 stated, “Cross-functional collaboration is really imperative to making enrollment management work. It does not work if it just sits in student services and never goes outside of that.”

### ***Educating and Understanding***

A notable theme that emerged among executive leaders at Texas community colleges was the crucial role of education and understanding in navigating change and fostering institutional success. Emphasis was placed on the importance of informing employees, having data-driven awareness to drive necessary changes, and the significance of ongoing education to enhance employee understanding and engagement. Large President 2 focused on informing employees and highlighted the importance of the message coming directly from the president, reporting:

The changing enrollment management environment has required me to inform, and I would not say differently because it has always been a goal of mine to educate our employee base, but I think it is so important. I had to place a continued emphasis and additional emphasis on explaining to our employee base, our faculty, and our staff how we are going to be funded and how each one of them can impact that funding. Education is one of the things I found important. Educating employees on how to identify what their role is and how I identify how they can help students be successful and, subsequently, the institution be successful. I have gone out and tried to talk to a lot of students in our

service area, educating them about what we offer and what we do. Sometimes, it comes best from not just an advisor's standpoint or a recruiter's standpoint but from the president's standpoint.

Medium VPA 1's approach was to use data to increase awareness and understanding, stating:

When I went to faculty meetings in the fall, I showed them our success data. I said this is our 3-year completion rate; these are the numbers; this is the percentage of our students now who are not TSI complete in reading, writing, and math. I created an awareness of what the data actually says, inquired about what are the thoughts of the faculty, presented a plan to change, gathered thoughts on this plan, and, if they do not like it, what is their idea other than the status quo because clearly, the status quo is not working.

Similarly, Very Large Provost 1 stated, "I am much more aware of data because everyone in these roles needs to depend on data." Medium VPSS 1 highlighted that timing is everything in fostering change, observing:

In my approach, I did not bring everything up at once. If I had, I would not be here anymore. For instance, I started working immediately on getting a modernization in the recruiting program and developing an actual plan for going out into the field. However, I waited almost 2 years to start working on marketing. I had someone who was fairly competent in marketing and did everything they had been told to do. I knew they were not going to help me, so I waited until we had seen the results of what we were doing in the recruiting area so I could show people what the results would be if we changed what we were doing in marketing. The result of what I had when I got here was a much slower rollout than what we would have been able to do otherwise. Everything that we brought up, I will not say, was an argument, but it was almost like there was a feeling of "that

hurt.” You can only hurt so many people for so long before you start to lose your effectiveness and credibility.

### *Empowering Autonomy Among Leaders*

A common theme among the responses of executive leaders was a focus on empowering autonomy among leaders. Respondents highlighted a shift in leadership approach from fostering an existing culture where employees thrive independently to challenging individuals to evaluate their roles and contributions, emphasizing the importance of empowering departments, rather than individuals, to take charge of responsibilities to achieve institutional success. Medium VPSS 2 highlighted the positive impact of autonomy, stating:

It has caused me to realize that once you have a good process and workflow in place, if you have directors that you are constantly in touch with and provide them an atmosphere where they feel like they can work in autonomy, you can step back and let them be professionals and do their thing. Once we untangled the Christmas lights and hung them up on the house, they pretty much shine themselves, as long as you plug them in, support them, and make sure that no bulbs are missing.

Similarly, Medium President 1 empowered the executive cabinet, stating, “I am trying my best to listen better and, whenever possible, give the cabinet members as much delegated authority as possible to put together how they want things to work in their area.” Large President 2 shifted the leadership approach to challenging employees, identifying:

My goal all along, but I think probably a greater emphasis on this, is challenging each person to evaluate their position, evaluate what they do at the college, evaluate their student interactions look like, and then interpret how they can lead each student to success through their role. I try to focus people on our mission. Our mission is to change

our students' lives and help them achieve success—probably not unlike every other community college mission out there. However, making it important to people that the mission is not a set of words, but it really applies to what we do here, how we accomplish that, and to take it seriously, to take to heart how they can actually achieve that mission of the college.

Finally, Very Large Chancellor 1 emphasized a shift from delegation by executive leaders to empowering active ownership by departments, reporting:

As a president and chancellor, my biggest shift has been that I have to own the enrollment management plan. Enrollment management is now a college-wide issue that everyone owns—it is not an office. There may be a group of people that lead our enrollment management plan, but I have to own that plan, not just challenge an office to build one and never think about it again.

**Interview Question 6: How Have You Had to Look at Your Own Institutional Culture and Change to Address the Changing Enrollment Environment?**

In response to how executive leaders had to look at their institutional culture, respondents emphasized institutional culture is about the people. Two themes emerged from executive leaders that underscored the importance of culture: (a) the student experience and (b) employee connectivity and belongingness.

***Student Experience***

A prominent theme from the responses of executive leaders was a deliberate focus on reshaping organizational culture to better serve students. Respondents emphasized the importance of fostering a student-focused, team-oriented culture and transforming the

institutional culture toward collaboration and student centeredness to enhance the overall student experience. Medium AVP 1 set the student experience as a top priority, stating:

The focus on evolving the culture within my division was my top priority over the last year. It focused on changing our culture to be more student focused. The culture focused on being more of a team and operating as one unit—the college rather than only one department.

Very Large Chancellor 1 focused on the voice of the student and reported:

The culture that I have found is a culture of competition rather than collaboration, a culture of complaint rather than support, and a culture of bureaucracy rather than effectiveness. Our students were hungry. I asked them to design the perfect college for them, and the values came out of that. The values that they [students] challenged us with is that we will be a place where every employee shows courage, compassion, joy, and yes. Get your culture set intentionally focused on students, process management, data analysis, and listening. Then, the enrollment management process and plan will thrive.

Further, Large President 2 emphasized the look of campus to meet student expectations, sharing:

One of the things that we have really placed a lot of emphasis on is really changing the look of our college and changing what that student experience might be in our college. We really have focused a lot on trying to make the experience by making the campus look appealing and drawing students to our campus.

### ***Employee Connectivity and Belongingness***

A second emergent theme from executive leaders was placing a concerted effort to foster connection and belonging among employees. Efforts include reestablishing positive relationships, instilling compassion and encouragement as core values, intentionally uniting

individuals across all levels, and promoting a shared sense of purpose and camaraderie. Small VPA 1 focused on hiring new employees and expressed:

When we hire people, we want to make sure they fit our family atmosphere. We try to make sure that everybody on this campus feels like they are a part of this campus and that we are invested, whether they are here for an hour or the whole semester.

In regard to reestablishing connections, Medium President 1 stated:

I came in knowing the biggest push was to pay attention to the tangled web of relationships between our employees at multiple levels, the board members, and the community. From the very get-go, that was one of my biggest challenges, but the opportunity was to reestablish connections between people in a positive way. There are three words we use over and over: compassion, encouragement, and making connections. We are working with the faculty who have adopted those things. We have to take care of our people.

Very Large Chancellor 1 emphasized the importance of uniting all employees by stating, “In higher education, we were so beholden to the histories of our semesters, structures, and bureaucracy that we have a collection of leaders who have not been intentional about gluing people together for a common purpose.” Very Large Provost 1 highlighted inclusivity and belongingness, sharing:

When I have meetings initially, I am very pointed about this. I said, I am so happy you are here, whether you have chosen to be here or you were hired to be here, but I told them that whether they are a physical plant worker, police officer, or another faculty member, please do not turn your head around away and not say hello. I pounded it for the first couple of semesters. I do not care if you are cleaning the floors; say hello. If you are a

police officer, say hello. I believe everyone working here now knows that is the culture. Several people have said they get it, and they can see how it is working. It is a small thing, but it has been important as we open this campus.

**Interview Question 6a: What Are Some Examples of Changes in Culture or Processes That Were Made?**

Overall, when asked to provide examples of changes in culture or processes that were made in their institutions to address the changing enrollment management environment, the majority of executive leaders did not provide specific examples. Instead, executive leaders focused on what they needed to do in their institutions, such as expanding outreach, implementing the caring campus initiative, and being more available to online students. Two executive leaders shared specific examples of changes in processes that addressed the changing enrollment management environment. Medium VPSS 1 reported on strategic recruitment and selection strategies, stating:

One of the things that we have done is anytime a position came open in one of these vital areas, we worked really hard before we ever brought anybody to the table to say what it was that we were looking for. What does this person have to have as a personality? What do they have to have as background? What do they have to have as a willingness to collaborate? When we interviewed the people, we have been able to hire really, really well.

Further, Very Large AVC 1 shared the importance of understanding the view of the college from the community's perspective, reporting:

We do reputation and brand assessment studies to try to understand what is important in the community. Our last reputation and brand assessment study included a general



population survey in our service area. It included a survey of prospective students, current students, faculty, staff, and focus groups. We are able to take a look at the different perspectives of what is important to those different segments side by side. We can see the difference between what we think of ourselves versus what a prospective student thinks of us or what someone in the general public thinks of us. Those things are not the same. We do engage students in our marketing strategies, including our enrollment marketing strategies, as well as the general public and our internal audiences.

**Interview Question 7: What Leadership Strategies or Traits Do You Think Helped You Through Periods of Declining Enrollment?**

When asked this question, several themes arose from the responses of executive leaders. The themes included (a) innovation, (b) transparency, (c) accountability, and (d) personality.

***Innovation***

A notable theme that surfaced from the responses of executive leaders was the need for innovation, regardless of the size of the institution. Respondents underscored innovation as an essential component of navigating challenges and fostering continuous improvement. Medium VPSS 2 reported:

We need to be innovative. It goes back to thinking outside of the box, putting a team together, not panicking, and not being afraid to try new things. Do not be afraid to fail because if you are not failing, you are stagnant, marking time.

From the perspective of a rural education setting, Small VPA 1 stated, “When you are from a rural school, you already have the mindset that you have to be resourceful—whether enrollment is up or down—you are still trying to get the best bang for your buck.”

### *Transparency*

A common emphasis on authenticity and transparency emerged as a second theme.

Executive leaders stressed the importance of genuine transparency in addressing concerns and building trust while also highlighting a commitment to openness and leading by example. Very Large Chancellor 1 reported:

I will always be my authentic self, and that requires saying, I do not know when I really do not know. It requires saying I am sorry when something does not work and it hurts people. That kind of authentic transparency is really important. I talk about the why in every communication I have. I have town halls, both physical and virtual. I send emails, and I try not to overcommunicate, but I try very intently to flatten the communication and then have the courage to ask our employees about what is keeping them up at night so we can hear and respond.

Similarly, Medium VPSS 1 reported, “I am very open and transparent about what we are trying to do.” Very Large AVC 1 stated, “We need to lead by example, we need to demonstrate what we expect from people, and we need to be kind.”

### *Accountability*

The theme of accountability emerged as an additional theme from the executive leaders regarding the leadership strategies that assisted during periods of declining enrollment. Executive leaders emphasized the importance of empathy, respect, and high expectations and stressed the value of accountability and collaboration. Very Large AVC 1 stated, “We need to lead by example, we need to demonstrate what we expect from people, and we need to be kind.”

Likewise, Large President 3 reported, “It is just being empathetic, treating people with respect

and dignity, and, at the same time, having very high expectations. I do not expect people to do anything I would not do.” Additionally, Medium VPSS 1 reported:

I also have never been afraid to hold people accountable, and that starts with me. You never know yourself as well as you can watch someone else and point fingers. I try to hold people accountable, and I do not work in silos.

Large President 3 noted:

I give people the benefit of the doubt, and I think that probably 8 times out of 10 if you give people the opportunity to grow and develop, they are going to live up to the expectation. It is when you do not train them, and they do not know how to do something, that people make mistakes. They know what my expectations are, but I think from an employee standpoint, most people, especially those who have worked with me for a long time, know that I am a reasonable person. They know that I am going to listen, and then, at the end of the day, we are going to make a decision collectively.

Finally, Large President 2 articulated:

I meet with every single new faculty we have, and I have a discussion with them about my expectations of student success and student centeredness. I am going to say things that are simple, like student kindness and student encouragement, and those things that are intangible but make all the difference in the world. That is what my expectations are.

### ***Personality***

Although not classified as leadership strategies, responses from executive leaders demonstrated the personalities that guided them through periods of declining enrollment and changes in the enrollment management environment. Medium President 1 identified:

What I think helped me a lot when we think about the downturns is to stay focused on the daily and make sure you give the highest quality you can, never forgetting that we are still trying to bring more people in.

Very Large Chancellor 1 shared, “I do a lot of listening to understand. I spend as much time pulling disparate parts of the college together and facilitating the group doing the same thing—listening to understand, communicating, and connecting.” Large President 3 expressed:

I am a doer. I am a very active leader. I am very much in the know. I do not want to sit just in my office and not know what is going on around campus. I am not going to do that. I have to know what is happening all the time, everywhere. I do not expect people to do anything I would not do.

**Interview Question 7a: Were There Any Specific Traits or Strategies You Needed to Strengthen to Address Declining Enrollment for Your Institution?**

When asked if there were specific traits or strategies needed to be strengthened, executive leaders provided insights into their focus on personal growth and identified strategies. Areas include embracing nontraditional educational pathways such as career tech and workforce, managing the balance between oversight and micromanagement, and recognizing the importance of collaboration and respect among leadership teams. Medium President 1 identified:

Personally, the biggest evolution for me as a community college leader, from a person who benefitted enormously from the transformation, has been to completely embrace career tech and workforce development to the point that we have reorganized and committed significant resources.

Small VPA 1 reported:

My biggest weakness right now is that I like to put my thumb on things. I do not want to micromanage, but I feel like there are so many things going on that I need to manage. If the things I have asked people to do are not getting done, if my division chairs are not stepping up and making sure things are happening, then I am going to have to do it. That is hard for me because I do not want to be that person. You hate to be that person—the micromanager.

Finally, Very Large AVC 1 stated:

So much is reeling focus, no matter what is happening, on maintaining collaboration with the other associate vice chancellors who are a part of these projects. I have worked really hard at that; they worked really hard, too, and it is working. There are no silos. There cannot be silos. I have respect for what people actually know. I do not know admissions. I do not know advising. I have been here a long time, so I understand the words, but I do not have tangible strategies and tactics for improving those things. Likewise, they do not know marketing, and they have to learn that because everybody thinks they do. They really had to learn that, and we had to develop together as a team, have respect, and earn that respect from each other. It was worth it.

### **Interview Question 7b: What Is the Biggest Lesson You Learned?**

When asked to share the biggest lesson learned from the changing enrollment management environment, three dominant themes emerged: (a) fostering a dynamic environment, (b) authentic leadership, and (c) empathetic leadership.

#### ***Fostering a Dynamic Environment***

Executive leaders emphasized the importance of fostering a dynamic environment through adaptability, effective communication, and collaboration. Medium President 1

articulated, “The biggest thing that became very clear to me is that every single employee is an advocate and an ambassador, but they are not recruiters.” Very Large Chancellor 1 focused on communication, stating, “My biggest lesson is that information is not communication, and communication is a two-way street. Sending emails, sending out letters, and putting press releases out are not forms of communication.” Further, Medium VPSS 2 emphasized creativity, noting:

You have to think outside the box. That is one of the big things because if your current strategies are not working, you have to be able to pivot. You also have to be able to gather a team together and assign duties. You also cannot panic.

Additionally, Medium VPSS 1 highlighted:

I like to keep current with best practices, and I like to make sure my people are current with best practices, but the biggest lesson I have learned is that you can be perfect. If you do not have either the support or the cooperation of your counterparts, you can still fail.

Finally, Medium VPSS 2 focused on student access reporting:

I have learned that as long as you make the door as wide open as you can and help the student come into the door, then you have done a good deed. You have given them an opportunity. What we are in the business of is providing opportunities to change lives and neighborhoods, regions, and the state.

### ***Authentic Leadership***

Authentic leadership was a notable theme from executive leaders when asked what was the biggest lesson learned from the changing enrollment management environment. They highlighted the value of integrity, relationship building, and genuine engagement. Medium AVP 1 articulated:

What is important is that the staff have to believe in you before they buy into what you are selling or what you are trying to get them to buy into. It has been very important that I am integrated within every area, that they know me, and they know that I am not going to ask them to do something I am not going to do myself. Everything comes down to building the relationship with your leadership team and then building the relationship with yourself and the various departments.

Large AVC 1 expressed the importance of leading by example and shared, “I try to lead by example. Characteristics and traits that impacted enrollment are being flexible and being willing to say our marketing is not resonating—and not taking that personally, but being able to change it.” Large President 3 reported being described as a parental figure, sharing:

I had a faculty member who told me we are so happy that you lead like a mom who cares about her children, and that includes us, your faculty. She said we feel like you are the mom, and no matter what we do or say, as long as you know, first, you are going to help us fix it.

Additionally, Very Large Chancellor 1 reported:

What I found is that if I can authentically validate that I hear them, even if I disagree with them, that anger dissipates. I almost screwed it all up because I did not understand that, and it was the biggest mistake I made. My deepest gratitude is that I worked with colleagues who gave me a second chance.

Finally, Very Large Provost 1 emphasized the importance of engagement, expressing:

The other thing is to show up for things. If you can show up for that night program where that one faculty member is excited about bringing in a speaker and you show up, what a

world of difference it makes. Show up at basketball games. I am not everywhere all the time, but just show up.

### ***Empathetic Leadership***

Responses from executive leaders highlighted the theme of empathetic leadership as a third theme. They focused on empathy, kindness, and understanding the diverse needs of students and employees. Very Large Provost 1 emphasized the importance of caring for people, stating, “Be kind to people and show people that you care about them. Talking to people and really getting to know them has helped me in my career.” Medium VPSS 2 articulated:

I had to learn a lot more empathy. I had to understand that the student population that I was dealing with was not what it was when I started. You have to be more empathetic and understand that not everybody is in the same spot.

### **Interview Question 8: How Do You Perceive the Relationship Between Organizational Culture and Effectiveness of Enrollment Management?**

When executive leaders were asked this question, responses centered on the influence of culture on two prominent groups: (a) students and (b) employees.

#### ***Culture and the Students***

Culture and the students was a primary theme from the responses of executive leaders. Insights included the crucial role culture plays in student retention and satisfaction, valuing every student, the importance of collaboration, and the impact of organizational culture on recruitment and the student experience. Medium AVP 1 articulated:

Every student matters. Previously, we have accepted and anticipated some stopouts and dropouts. We had accepted it as normal. The changes in the formula funding model, for



example, do not matter if you only get them in the seat. Every student matters, and every situation is important, and you cannot just let it go.

Regarding the relationship between recruitment and organizational culture, Medium VPSS 1 stated:

I can have a great recruiting program, but if I have no programs to recruit them for, I cannot bring students to the table. If my orientation sets them off, and they do not want to come back to school after that. If the first time they go in dining, the dining services area has horrible food, or if they walk into a dilapidated dorm, they might stay for the first semester, but then they leave.

Similarly, Medium AVP 1 expressed, “If the organizational culture is not collaborative, friendly, or genuinely student focused, you might be able to get the students in the door, but you are not going to keep them.” Additionally, the student experience related to organizational culture was emphasized when Medium VPSS 2 reported:

It is absolutely crucial that organizational culture is there, or else you are slowing everything down, and the student takes longer to get through to the admissions funnel, takes longer to get advised, and takes longer to be successful as they move through the program. The culture is everything, and it has to be there.

Similarly, Large President 2 shared:

The organizational culture has to be student centered. The culture has to be one where everyone involved, the faculty particularly, but the administration and student services, everything has to be completely focused on the same thing, and that is the student success, student ease, and the student experience. At this college, we have a really strong

culture of student success and student centeredness. We have to get students to come here to experience it.

Finally, Medium President 1 highlighted the importance of feeling welcome, stating:

In our case, we want to say that if you come here, you are going to feel welcome. You are also going to feel a lot of compassion for what is going on in your life, and I want that for employees as well as students. I expect people to be encouraging to one another.

### ***Culture and the Employees***

Responses from executive leaders highlighted the notable theme of culture and the employees. Executive leaders offered insights into how culture shapes the identity and operation of the institution, the importance of understanding roles, and the influence of executive leadership on institutional culture. Medium President 1 expressed the need for everyone to be well-informed, stating, “Enrollment managers, if you are talking about from start to finish, prospect to graduate, has to be completely knowledgeable of its role in creating and sustaining culture.” Similarly, Very Large Provost 1 expressed the value of supporting employees, expressing:

The culture will be impacted by the increased enrollment. You need to support the people who are doing it and making it happen. Reward and applaud them. So many of them are on the front line. Everyone on the frontline is tired.

Very Large AVC 1 articulated, “Organizational culture is in the tone of the institution, and the priorities of the institution are set by senior leadership, and they can completely impact the direction that you go.” Similarly, Small VPSS 1 noted:

When it comes down to culture, you can walk into a building, you can walk into an institution, and you can feel the culture. What we say at our college is that you have to

make it inviting. It is like when you invite someone into your own home. How do you want to make them feel?

Executive leaders highlighted leaders modeling the culture. Medium VPSS 1 shared, “I am a cheerleader for students and the community. If I cannot be a cheerleader, then I cannot get you on my side.” Finally, Small VPA 1 stated, “I believe organizational culture bleeds into how our faculty interacts with students, whether they are face-to-face or online.”

**Interview Question 9: What Did You Learn From the Enrollment Management Crisis That Will Help You With Future Change and the Ever-Changing Environment at Your Institution?**

The responses from executive leaders about what they have learned from the enrollment management crisis that may help them with future change have been categorized into two dominant themes: (a) adaptation and (b) meeting student expectations. Respondents focused on the necessity to be forward thinking, flexible, and aligning institutional practices with student needs, providing a compelling reason for students to choose their institution.

***Adaptation***

A prominent theme of adaptation emerged when executive leaders highlighted the importance of being forward thinking and flexible when in an atmosphere of competitiveness and an ever-changing enrollment management environment. Medium AVP 1 shared:

What the enrollment management crisis has taught me is that you must always be forward thinking and think outside of the box. The way you have always done things will not work forever. It is better to think outside of the box and think forward when times are good rather than waiting until times are bad, and you are reacting to poor numbers.

Additionally, Small VPA 1 reported:

The community college atmosphere is getting more competitive in all aspects. With that decline in enrollment, it made us look harder at every piece of the puzzle. We knew the transient piece had gone down, but dual credit was another piece. We have stayed steady, but at the same time, we have the clients there, and they have choices. Now, we have 4-year institutions that are doing dual credit, and everyone is trying to get their hand in the pot. What used to be givens are no longer givens.

Medium VPSS 1 articulated the need to understand and evaluate processes, stating:

Most colleges are great at providing lists of 140 things they want to have happen next year, and they are not so great at telling you how to make them happen, how to see if they did happen, or how to assess them. You have to start with a plan, and that plan has to know where you want to go with your enrollment.

Finally, Medium VPSS 2 reported:

If you have a bright enough light, a big enough light, then everybody starts to flock to it. If you are always in the same processes and never evaluating, those processes do not get better. It is just like a muscle; if you are not working it, it still can begin to move but is not as strong and effective as it can.

### ***Meeting Student Expectations***

The theme of meeting student expectations developed as executive leaders emphasized understanding what students want and expect from an institution. Executive leaders underscored the importance of providing students with a reason to want to come to their institutions. Medium VPSS 2 shared:

The student and college relationship right now is really transactional. Students are coming in with certain expectations that are not aligned with how you are doing business.

There are so many competitive institutions around here that are very close by. Therefore, giving them a reason and making sure that you are meeting them where they are and trying to meet their expectations is huge.

Medium VPSS 2 further shared:

I learned that you have to get a student to follow you. You have to give them a touchstone that they understand, feel comfortable with, and they want to pursue. You have to give them a reason why it is important.

**Interview Question 10: Is There Anything Additional You Would Like to Add or Include That We Have Not Covered During This Interview?**

Despite receiving few responses to this final question, two themes emerged: (a) student-centered culture and (b) leadership influence. The responses centered on meeting students where they are, understanding student behaviors, and the role of leadership in organizational success.

***Student-Centered Culture***

The theme of student-centered culture arose as executive leaders emphasized the need to prioritize student well-being at their institutions. Large President 2 articulated, “As community colleges, I think one thing we must focus on with respect to enrollment management is that we have to be where students are.” Small VPSS 1 reported:

Student outcomes will not change until adult behaviors change. Whatever those outcomes are that you are trying to improve things on your campus, you need to make sure the adults who are responsible for those outcomes have a student-centered mindset, keeping the students in mind and focusing on successful outcomes for those students. If that is not what is ending up, then the adult behavior needs to change. As adults, after we have been

in for a while, we develop habits and behaviors that either we do not want to change, or we have to step out of our comfort zone to try to create new behavior.

### ***Leadership's Role in Organizational Success***

Executive leaders highlighted the important role that leadership has in the overall success of the organization. Responses focused on people, removing ego from the role of an executive leader, and obtaining buy-in from the entire organization. Medium VPSS 1 shared:

If I were giving myself advice from 25 years ago, I would say never forget the people because the people will help you get where you need to go. It is not about you. It is not about me. It is about helping them to understand. It is not about us; it is about the kids. It is about the community. It is about doing our jobs and making sure everything we do works.

Finally, Medium AVP 1 reported:

I have been in a place where I have tried to affect change at midlevel, and the challenge was that I could not get going. When I see a lot of positive steps taking place, I see it is coming from our president and our vice presidents. If they support him and buy in, then the whole organization falls in line and gets on board. The role of your executive team is so important because if they do not buy in and believe, then why would your frontline people?

## **Qualitative Summary**

Regardless of the size of the institution or respondent position, executive leaders shared four common overarching themes in response to the changing enrollment management environment. The first theme focused on external and internal factors. Executive leaders universally acknowledged the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic on their institutions,

which led to enrollment declines. Moreover, changes in state legislation, such as House Bill 8, promoted executive leaders to reassess processes and operations. Additionally, there was a consensus on the importance of leveraging technology and enhanced marketing tactics to engage current and prospective students. Finally, human resources management emerged as a key focus for addressing hiring, professional development, and organizational restructuring to adapt to the changing enrollment management environment.

The second theme emphasized leadership and the role of executive leaders in organizational success. Responses focused on the importance of deliberate communication, stressing that information is not communication; true communication is a two-way street. In addition, executive leaders acknowledged attributes and traits such as leading by example, being flexible, being present for teams, and demonstrating genuine care for people to make a significant difference. Furthermore, executive leaders highlighted accountability, including holding themselves accountable, as being critically important.

The third overarching theme from the findings of this study was the evaluation and possible changes in organizational processes and systems as a result of the changing enrollment management environment. Executive leaders highlighted a transition toward institutional ownership of enrollment management, which could result in the need for personnel and department realignment. A focus was placed on enhancing team structures, clarifying roles, and fostering a collaborative approach to enrollment management. Further, executive leaders expressed the need to evaluate and transform processes to improve student success through updating programs, aligning course offerings with community needs, expanding online program offerings, and adopting an 8-week semester format. Finally, responses underscored the role of using technology in a changing enrollment management environment.

The fourth theme focused on the students. Executive leaders stressed the important role of leadership in organizational success, highlighting a priority as student well-being and fostering a student-focused, team-oriented culture. Responses emphasized a need to remove egos from leadership roles, obtain buy-in from the entire organization, and transform the institutional culture toward strong collaboration and student centeredness to enhance the overall student experience.

### **Summary**

This chapter began with a review of the research questions and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks guiding this study. The researcher then presented an analysis of the data and findings of the mixed-methods study. The quantitative phase of the study compared how executive leaders and enrollment management personnel assessed organizational culture at Texas community colleges. The qualitative phase allowed the researcher to understand how executive leaders responded to the changing enrollment management environment. Chapter 5 provides further analysis of the research questions, alignment related to the findings of the literature collected for this study, and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks guiding this study. Finally, the researcher concludes with the implications of the findings and recommendations for future research.



## **Chapter 5 - Conclusions and Recommendations**

This chapter provides an overview of the study and conclusions drawn from the findings presented in the previous chapter. The chapter includes the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks guiding this study. The chapter also includes a description of the methodology and data collection and analysis. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings from the research, the implications of the study, and recommendations for future research.

### **Statement of the Problem**

According to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC, 2019a), “Community college enrollment has been declining since their peak in 2010 by an average of 2.2% each year” (p. 2), and “14.4% over the course of seven years” (p. 4). Institutions nationwide, particularly public community colleges, have suffered significant enrollment declines and have struggled to rebuild. Significant declines in enrollment pose a threat to higher education institutions, including public community colleges, potentially leading to their closure or consolidation with larger, more financially stable institutions. According to Zirkel (2023), “Since 2020, enrollment at community colleges has declined 5.4%, which has prompted institutions to reflect on practices that impact student success and barriers students face in their pursuit of higher education” (para. 1). Zirkel reported the driver of postpandemic enrollment recovery at community colleges has been in dual enrollment, which saw an 11.5% increase in Fall 2022. Although this increase has been encouraging, it has highlighted the importance of not only attracting but also retaining students (Hossler, 2002). An additional population experiencing growth has been in postsecondary noncredit workforce education programs. For example, the Community College Research Center (2024) reported many community colleges enroll more

noncredit students than credit students, and significant growth in noncredit program offerings has provided students with access to credit programs, facilitating the long-term pursuit of degrees (Van Noy et al., 2008). Therefore, implementation of strategic enrollment management, including recruitment and retention, is considered an essential strategy because student demographics have been changing, the pool of prospective students has been decreasing, and the future of higher education has been forever changed because of economic pressures. Adapting to the changing enrollment environment requires effective leadership and a potential shift in the organizational culture to align with the evolving educational environment.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to compare how executive leaders and enrollment management personnel assessed organizational culture at Texas community colleges and to understand how those executive leaders responded to the changing enrollment management environment.

### **Research Questions**

Two research questions guided this study:

1. How does the assessment of organizational culture differ between executive leaders and enrollment management personnel in Texas community colleges when measured by the Competing Values Culture Assessment tool?
2. How do executive leaders at Texas community colleges respond to the changing enrollment management environment?

## Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

The theoretical framework guiding this study was Schein's (1986) organizational culture theory. Schein (1986) proposed, "Culture is a deep phenomenon, merely manifested in a variety of behavior" (p. 30). Schein's (1986) organizational culture theory posits:

For any given group or organization that has had a substantial history, culture is the pattern of basic assumptions that the group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaption and internal integration and that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relations to those problems. (pp. 30–31)

According to Schein (1986), considering organizational culture served as the status quo for the organization, flexibility and adaptability can disrupt the evolution of an organization's culture. Schein (2004) wrote, "Culture is a stabilizer, a conservative force, and a way of making things meaningful and predictable" (p. 365). This study focused on understanding how executive leadership and enrollment management personnel at Texas community colleges assessed organizational culture.

The conceptual framework guiding this study was the competing values framework (CVF; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983), which examines relationships between organizational culture and effectiveness. CVF categorizes values into three competing sets: (a) structure, (b) focus, and (c) means and ends (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1981). CVF has two primary dimensions: (a) control or flexibility and (b) internal or external constituents (Howard, 1998). The researcher used the Competing Values Culture Assessment tool, which emerged from empirical research on Quinn

and Rohrbaugh's (1983) CVF, to compare how executive leaders and enrollment management personnel assessed organizational culture.

## **Methodology**

The researcher employed an explanatory sequential design mixed-methods study to collectively form a comprehensive understanding of how executive leaders and enrollment management personnel assessed organizational culture in Texas community colleges and how executive leaders responded to the changing enrollment management environment. An explanatory research design was selected because as Lochmiller and Lester (2017) explained, it "can be used to explain what is or what could be" and "seeks to provide an answer to why practices, policies, programs, and processes interact or act as they do" (p. 9). In this study, Research Question 1 (RQ1) was designed to gather quantitative data, and Research Question 2 (RQ2) was designed to gather qualitative data.

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

The researcher used two sources of data in this study: (a) quantitative survey and (b) qualitative interviews. The researcher developed a survey instrument using Qualtrics (2023), a secure online survey platform, for the quantitative phase to understand how executive leaders and enrollment management personnel assessed organizational culture in Texas community colleges. A total of 1,352 electronic surveys were distributed to executive leaders and enrollment management personnel in 49 of the 50 Texas community college districts. Before distributing the electronic survey instrument, the researcher piloted the survey to a selected population.

From the 1,352 surveys distributed, 218 executive leaders and enrollment management personnel responded to the survey. Among these, 109 surveys were completed by executive

leaders, 105 surveys were completed for enrollment management personnel, and four surveys did not identify the respondent's function with the institution.

Data for the qualitative phase of the research study were collected using one-on-one semistructured interviews with questions designed to understand how executive leaders at Texas community colleges responded to the changing enrollment management environment. Of the 109 executive leaders who completed the online survey, 47 responded they were willing to participate in a follow-up interview. Overall, 12 executive leaders were interviewed. Prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher piloted the interview questions with college executives. All interviews followed the interview protocols (see Appendix G).

### **Discussion of Findings and Related Literature**

In this study, the researcher examined organizational culture at Texas community colleges and how executive leaders responded to the changing enrollment management environment. To compare the assessment of organizational culture by executive leaders and enrollment management personnel, the researcher used the Competing Values Culture Assessment tool, which emerged from empirical research on Quinn and Rohrbaugh's (1983) CVF. Goodman et al. (2001) determined employing the CVF and Competing Values Culture Assessment offered practitioners a valuable framework for understanding organizational culture. Used in higher education and business sectors for over 25 years, the tool pinpoints the elements that contribute to the effectiveness of organizations (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983). Lincoln (2010) also used the CVF to help organizations improve global performance. Schein's (1986) organizational culture theory was used to understand how executive leaders responded to the changing enrollment management environment.

The findings of the quantitative and qualitative approaches illustrated that executive leaders and enrollment management personnel encountered internal and external challenges, which had positive and negative effects on enrollment at their institutions. These challenges created unique opportunities to reconsider traditional approaches and reimagine strategies to fulfill the foundational mission of community colleges and meet the expectations and desires of students, employees, and the broader community. Furthermore, the findings highlighted the varying assessments of organizational culture in Texas community colleges among executive leaders and enrollment management personnel, which emphasized the importance of understanding the organizational culture to have an impact on people, processes, and systems. Presented next are the findings of this study by research questions as they related to the assessment of organizational culture in Texas community colleges (i.e., RQ1) and the response of executive leaders to the changing enrollment management environment (i.e., RQ2).

### **Research Question 1**

The researcher used survey data to address RQ1. RQ1 asked: How does the assessment of organizational culture differ between executive leaders and enrollment management personnel in Texas community colleges when measured by Cameron and Quinn's (n.d.) Competing Values Culture Assessment tool?

By analyzing the data gathered directly from executive leaders and enrollment management personnel at Texas community colleges through the quantitative phase of this study, the researcher found the highest assessment of organizational culture among the two categories of respondents was one of collaboration, representing the clan (i.e., collaborate) quadrant on the CVF. The assessments from executive leaders and enrollment management personnel supported the values of a clan culture presented by Cameron and Quinn (2006) of being family-oriented,

held together by loyalty and tradition, and leaders were considered mentors. Cameron and Quinn further described the clan (i.e., collaborate) culture as “an organization that focuses on internal maintenance with flexibility, concern for people, and sensitivity” (p. 67). The findings showed that executive leaders and enrollment management personnel perceived the organizational culture in Texas community colleges as one that built sustaining partnerships, avoided conflicts, and where success was defined by meeting the needs of the employees, and caring for others was a guiding value.

In addition, the findings showed that the adhocracy (i.e., create) quadrant received the lowest average assessment scores of the four quadrants from the assessment of executive leaders and enrollment management personnel. Cameron and Quinn (2006) explained the adhocracy (i.e., create) culture as “an organization that focuses on external position with a high degree of flexibility and individuality” (p. 67). Leaders in an adhocracy culture were described as innovators, entrepreneurs, and visionary. The assessment from executive leaders and enrollment management personnel in Texas community colleges showed varying views related to flexibility and individuality between the respondent groups. Executive leaders perceived they encouraged individual initiative, freedom, and risk-taking. In contrast, enrollment management personnel may not feel a sense of autonomy or empowerment from leadership. Based on the findings from this study, the researcher found that (a) open communication, (b) team building, (c) empowerment, and (d) creativity were all quality strategies vital to balancing the clan and adhocracy cultures by incorporating an internal approach to organizational culture.

### **Open Communication**

First, employing the strategy of open communication promoted transparent and accessible communication channels to ensure all team members felt they had a voice and were

valued. Encouraging an open-door policy allowed employees to feel comfortable approaching leaders and other team members with ideas or feedback, which assisted in fostering a culture of mutual respect. Additionally, fostering open communication leads to increased trust and a cohesive working environment. By prioritizing open communication, Texas community college leaders can build trust by ensuring all communication is consistent, transparent, and aligns with the organization's mission, goals, and values.

### **Team Building**

Second, investing in team building activities and initiatives can reinforce a family-oriented culture in Texas community colleges. A focus on fostering collaboration and camaraderie among staff can increase loyalty in the organization. The changing enrollment management environment encouraged collaboration across departments and created opportunities for staff from different areas to work together on the common goals of increasing enrollment and student success. Therefore, ensuring faculty and staff embody a team mindset can increase collaboration. Finally, encouraging an environment of continuous improvement can drive innovation and promote a team building atmosphere. Texas community college leaders can create a collaborative work environment with the goal of enhancing employee satisfaction and increasing organizational effectiveness by adopting strategies to promote team building.

### **Empowerment**

Third, implementing strategies that empower employees can enhance job satisfaction, performance, and commitment to the organization. To build trust and demonstrate confidence in the abilities of their teams, Texas community college leaders can encourage delegation of responsibility and empower team members to take ownership of their work. Additionally, an intentional focus on professional development for all team members through training programs,



educational support, and mentorship programs can increase overall employee and job satisfaction. Implementing these strategies can empower faculty and staff to take more initiative and collaborate on a higher level, increasing buy-in and a positive and productive work environment.

### **Creativity**

Furthermore, encouraging creativity between departments and across the college can provide unique opportunities to think outside the box, explore new ideas or approaches, and promote autonomy. Recognizing and awarding creative efforts and innovative solutions is essential when fostering creativity and risk-taking. Additionally, creating flexible and collaborative workspaces, such as collaboration rooms or ad hoc task force groups, can promote cross-collaboration and encourage teams to step outside of their routine to develop strategies and tactics to address challenges and opportunities that arise. Finally, community college leaders can encourage and promote the value of diverse perspectives, which often can produce creative and innovative solutions. Embedding these practices in Texas community colleges not only supports a collaborative and family-oriented culture but encourages creativity and innovation.

Furthermore, when assessing organizational culture between executive leaders and enrollment management personnel, the intersections of the plotted lines represent the competing values of the clan (i.e., collaborate) and market (i.e., compete) cultures. The highest overall averages in the clan (i.e., collaborate) quadrant (35.0 for executive leaders and 33.1 for enrollment management personnel) indicated a shared emphasis on internal maintenance, flexibility, concern for people, and sensitivity. A friendly work environment, mentorship, teamwork, consensus, morale, satisfaction, and personal growth characterize this culture. The lowest overall averages in the market (i.e., control) quadrant (20.1 for executive leaders and 20.6

for enrollment management personnel) suggested a lower emphasis on outpacing competitors. Instead, these organizations focused more on internal processes, employee satisfaction, and maintaining a positive work environment, with leaders being more nurturing and supportive than results-driven.

This study supported previous research by Flanigan (2016), who found a preference for clan (i.e., collaborate) culture aspects at Virginia Commonwealth University. These results supported the findings of Cameron and Quinn (2011), who found through prior studies that one or two CVF quadrants dominate most organizations. These findings also affirmed the findings from Cameron and Freeman (1991), who found the cultures that most frequently appeared in a survey of 334 4-year colleges and universities in the United States were clan (i.e., collaborate) and market (i.e., compete). Furthermore, according to Cameron and Quinn (2006), “Many high-performing organizations simultaneously emphasize the clan culture along with the market culture,” which “shows a sign of strength as much as a sign of weakness” (p. 80). Additionally, findings from the quantitative phase of this study aligned with Quinn and Rohrbaugh’s (1983) CVF, indicating that Texas community colleges can strive to balance their internal focus on collaboration and employee well-being with a more strategic approach to external competitiveness and performance.

## **Research Question 2**

The researcher used one-on-one semistructured interviews with executive leaders to address RQ2. RQ2 asked: How do executive leaders at Texas community colleges respond to the changing enrollment management environment? By analyzing the responses from executive leaders, the researcher identified several factors influencing the impact of enrollment changes and the responses of executive leaders at Texas community colleges. First, executive leaders

expressed concern with the sentiment of how higher education is perceived and valued, acknowledging the impact of external factors such as the COVID-19 global pandemic, economic conditions, and state policies. Second, an emphasis was placed on the necessity for a change in behaviors and viewpoints in people, processes, programs, and systems. Similarly, to address enrollment challenges, executive leaders identified a need to improve outreach and organizational relationships and address inefficiencies through collaboration, transparency, and a unified purpose.

Moreover, executive leaders stressed the significance of the student experience and employee connectivity, highlighting a necessary shift toward collaboration, professional development, and ownership. Furthermore, several leadership strategies were identified as crucial during periods of declining enrollment, including innovation, transparency, accountability, personal development, and fostering respect. Additional insights underscored the importance of meeting students' needs, understanding their behaviors, and recognizing the crucial role of leadership in organizational success. Based on the findings from the responses of executive leaders, strategies such as addressing the perceptions of the value of higher education, adapting to external factors, and addressing inefficiencies can better position Texas community colleges in the changing enrollment environment.

### **Addressing the Perceptions of the Value of Higher Education**

First, executive leaders expressed concerns about the perceived value of higher education. Through building and expanding partnerships with local businesses, industry, and community organizations, Texas community colleges can showcase its relevance and importance as an economic engine by training the workforce of today and tomorrow. Executive leaders responded with concerns that community colleges do not adequately tell their stories. Therefore,

developing and launching communication plans focused on sharing student success stories and the impacts of community colleges on the local community and state can influence and boost the public's perception of higher education.

### **Adapting to External Factors**

Second, the changing enrollment management environment presents opportunities and challenges to the higher education sector nationwide. Adapting to external factors and a changing higher education landscape has become a central focus for Texas community college leaders. No longer can community colleges sit back and wait for students to approach their doors; rather, engagement in targeted outreach and recruitment activities is one avenue for reaching potential students. Additionally, fostering strong relationships with the local workforce to collaborate on programs and training needs strengthens connections and builds community interest. Finally, engaging in local and state legislative affairs and advocacy efforts can positively influence policy to support higher education needs.

### **Addressing Inefficiencies**

Third, to stay relevant in a changing enrollment management environment, community college leaders should continually address inefficiencies and evaluate programs and procedures. Continuous improvement and monitoring are essential in response to changing internal and external environments, with communication and transparency playing critical roles. Promoting a culture of transparency by regularly communicating goals, challenges, and progress can encourage feedback and buy-in from internal and external stakeholders. Additionally, addressing inefficiencies and implementing change requires casting a clear vision. A clear vision can create buy-in and unify employees around a shared purpose, promoting collaboration among faculty, staff, and the community.

## **Schein's Organizational Culture Theory**

Findings gained from this study reinforced Schein's (1986) three interrelated levels of organizational culture: (a) artifacts, (b) espoused beliefs and values, and (c) underlying assumptions. The responses from executive leaders emphasized visible artifacts (e.g., new processes, outreach initiatives, the aesthetics of campus) and deeper nonvisible but identifiable cultural values (e.g., student success, accountability, collaboration). The dual focus, highlighted by executive leaders, of aligning surface-level practices with deeper cultural values was affirmed in this study and supported by Schein's (2004) presentation of artifacts as "visible organizational structures and processes" (p. 26).

Furthermore, findings from this study were consistent with Schein's (1986) organizational culture theory and previous literature, which suggested that culture assists organizations in navigating their external environment, including adaptation to external factors. They also emphasized the important role of leadership in shaping organizational culture, with Schein (2004) highlighting the evolution of organizational culture often occurs in response to changes in the external environment. Executive leaders responded with examples such as the COVID-19 global pandemic, state legislation, and competition from other community colleges and universities. Findings based on the responses of executive leaders highlighted the need for continual adaptation and flexibility as they face changing enrollment patterns and external pressures. However, these findings diverged from Schein's (2004) organizational culture theory, suggesting that organizational culture serves as the status quo for the organization and that flexibility and adaptability can disrupt the evolution of an organization's culture.

Additionally, the findings of this study depicted the importance of the role of leadership in forming, transmitting, and changing the organizational culture. Responses from executive

leaders underscored the significant impact executive leadership has on addressing enrollment challenges, unifying a campus community, and promoting a student-centered culture. Executive leaders reported adapting their actions and approaches to foster collaboration, emphasize transparency, and ensure deliberate communication, which reflected Schein's (2004) perspective that leaders play a critical role in shaping and influencing organizational culture through behaviors, values, and communication styles.

Findings of this study revealed a strong emphasis from executive leaders on shared goals and the reinforcement of shared values such as student success, innovation, and adaptability. Executive leaders focused on being intentional about building a student-centered culture, fostering a sense of belonging for students and employees, and promoting collaborative leadership. These findings affirmed Schein's (2004) explanation of espoused beliefs and values as being "the strategies, goals, philosophies, and other justifications group members use to portray the culture to themselves and others" (p. 26). These results were also supported by the competing values framework developed by Cameron and Quinn (2011), which identified the role of leadership as shaping and embedding culture by aligning it with organizational strategies and goals and fostering the desired cultural values and behaviors.

Furthermore, findings from this study highlighted strategies used by executive leaders to navigate cultural change, such as intentional communication, fostering a dynamic environment, and embodying authentic and empathetic leadership. Executive leaders identified a need to adapt their actions and approaches to understand the changing enrollment management environment, make decisions, and interact with others. The findings of this study affirmed Schein's (2004) findings: "Transformative change implies that the person or group that is the target of change must unlearn something as well as learn something new. Transformative change will therefore

almost always involve culture change to some degree” (pp. 320–321). These strategies affirmed Schein’s concept of organizational culture’s underlying assumptions, which explore the unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings that are the ultimate source of values and action.

### **Additional Findings Related to the Literature**

Additional findings from this study supported previous research on the role of leadership; it is critical in navigating the challenges of organizational culture change, coupled with the importance of understanding culture as a key factor in facilitating successful change initiatives (Goodman et al., 2001; Mathis & Roueche, 2019; Schein, 2004). Mathis and Roueche (2019) articulated, “They [leaders] must anticipate constantly shifting needs—within their college, the state, and the nation—while crafting viable strategies to compete in the larger global community” (p. 249). From this study, one executive leader shared, “Our competition is in between somewhere and nowhere. Nowhere is winning.” This quote represents the internal and external environment impacting higher education, not only in Texas but across the nation. According to the American Association of Community Colleges (2019a), “Community college enrollment has been declining since their peak in 2010 by an average of 2.2% each year” (p. 2), and “14.4% over the course of seven years” (p. 4). Furthermore, declining birth rates, financial concerns, and questions about the value of college have contributed to an enrollment crisis (Kelderman, 2019), which community college leaders are diligently trying to address for their respective institutions. Mathis and Roueche (2019) noted, “Purposeful and passionate leaders are unyielding in their pursuit of effective and sustainable solutions that will transform institutions—without overwhelming the very stakeholders who are needed to implement them” (p. 267). The findings of this study affirmed prior research from LoBasso (2005), where survey responses from

28 Florida community colleges “indicated that the right leader is important to the success of enrollment management” (p. 84).

Additional findings in this study also identified several leadership strategies as crucial during periods of declining enrollment, including innovation, transparency, accountability, personal development, and fostering respect. These findings have been supported by previous research from Mathis and Roueche (2019), which emphasized the perspective of transformative leaders is “based on the importance of respect for people and the relationships that are fostered through continuous communication, collaborations, and sustenance in traveling toward shared vision, values, and goal” (pp. 264–265). Similarly, executive leaders expressed the pivotal role of education and understanding in navigating change and fostering institutional success. Emphasis was placed on informing employees, using data-driven awareness, and promoting ongoing education to enhance employees understanding and engagement. These findings were also supported by previous research from Goodman et al. (2001), who found through a questionnaire of 276 staff members that a crucial element in facilitating change is the ability to comprehend the prevailing organizational culture.

Furthermore, the findings of this study underscored that people are at the center of the organization, regardless of their function or position. Executive leaders expressed everything they do, and the decisions they make are all about the students, faculty, and staff. These findings were supported by Collins (2001), who examined 1,435 companies over 15 years, where findings indicated that people were the center of success for these companies. Similarly, based on prior research findings, following a survey of 21 comprehensive community colleges in Alabama, Abston (2010) reported, “Retention and academic advising were two integral components that were lacking in many of the respondent’s institutions” (p. 129). However, each community



college department, administrator, faculty, or staff member has an impact on a student's persistence and continued enrollment, highlighting the importance of people in the organization. Additionally, as Kotter (2012) found in his study, executive leaders expressed the importance of hiring decisions to ensure individuals share the organization's core values and are committed to the mission and purpose of the institution. The findings of this study showed connectivity and belongingness of employees positively contributed to the organization's success.

Overall, the findings of the qualitative phase of this study illustrated how executive leaders at Texas community colleges have been actively engaging with and shaping the organizational culture at their respective institutions in response to the changing enrollment management environment. This engagement aligned with Schein's (1986) organizational culture theory and previous research, which underscored the critical role of leadership in maintaining and evolving a culture that supports adaptability, continuous improvement, and student success.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

Through this explanatory sequential design mixed-method study, the researcher aimed to contribute to the body of knowledge on the perceptions of organizational culture and enrollment management in higher education. The researcher sought to inform executive leaders and enrollment management personnel about the assessment of organizational culture and how executive leaders responded to the changing enrollment management environment at Texas community colleges. Through this study, the researcher gained a deeper understanding of these cultural assessments and the leadership responses to changes in enrollment management.

#### **Understanding Organizational Culture and the Role of Leadership**

One implication identified by the researcher was the importance of understanding organizational culture and the role of executive leadership in affecting and impacting change,

people, processes, and systems in organizations. Schein (2004) emphasized culture is not a static entity, but a dynamic and evolving phenomenon created through socialization; newcomers to an organization learn the values, norms, and assumptions through socialization by observing stories, rituals, and symbols. The findings from this study demonstrated the varying assessments of organizational culture among executive leadership and enrollment management personnel, which illustrated the diversity of perceptions in Texas community colleges.

Recommendations for understanding the organizational culture include:

- Conduct an assessment of the current organizational culture using tools such as surveys, interviews, and observations. Regular cultural audits will also assist in tracking changes over time and the impact of interventions or changes and allow for addressing cultural misalignment promptly.
- Provide training opportunities for leaders to recognize and share organizational culture. Leadership has an impact on culture, and leaders should model the values and behaviors desired by the organization.
- Ensure the organizational culture aligns with the overall strategy and goals of the organization. This alignment will assist organizations in achieving strategic goals and objectives.
- Incorporate cultural fit assessments into the recruitment processes to ensure potential employees have values that align with the culture of the organization.

### **Texas Community College Funding Model**

Another implication identified by the researcher was that executive leaders expressed concerns and uncertainty regarding changes to the community college funding model in Texas. This implication underscored the need for executive leaders to focus on external and internal

factors impacting Texas community colleges. Medium VPSS 1 expressed, “The new funding model completely changes the landscape of how we are doing things.” Similarly, Very Large AVC 1 shared, “The change in our funding model will change the way that we create programs, market programs, and how we are funded. That is going to impact enrollment.” Finally, Very Large Chancellor 1 shared the new funding model “creates opportunities despite creating a lot of stress for the college.” In response, Medium AVP 1 shared:

The anticipated changes associated with the changes in the funding model mean that our focus has shifted to make sure we are providing students with options for credentials of value and that we are offering something that everybody in our community can benefit from.

These responses emphasized how the new funding model drastically alters operations, impacts program creation, and provides new opportunities for Texas community colleges. This study highlighted the widespread apprehension and cautious optimism among Texas community college leaders as they navigate the changing enrollment management environment.

Strategies to assist in navigating the uncertainties associated with the new funding model for Texas community colleges include:

- Enhance financial planning and diversify funding sources to adapt to funding shifts by creating flexible budgets. Strategies include pursuing grants, developing partnerships, increasing fundraising efforts, and exploring new revenue-generating programs to mitigate risks associated with changes in the state funding model.
- Implement a comprehensive data analytic system to monitor enrollment trends, program performance, and financial metrics. Fostering a data-driven culture enables leaders to make informed decisions about program offerings and resource allocation.

- Engage with policymakers to ensure the interests of their institutions and students are represented in state funding decisions. Building relationships and participation in policy dialogue provides an avenue to share the implications and advantages of state-level policy decisions.
- Develop and implement systems and processes that are responsive to the new funding model. These systems can include targeted recruitment efforts, a shifted focus on retention and persistence efforts, and support services aimed to increase enrollment and success.

Although the implementation of the new funding model for Texas community colleges brings uncertainty and anticipation, implementing these recommendations can assist executive leaders in navigating the uncertainties leveraging opportunities for growth and innovation.

### **COVID-19 Global Pandemic**

Another implication identified by the researcher was that although community colleges have not changed in decades, the COVID-19 global pandemic provided an opportunity to rethink and reimagine processes, offerings, and approaches. Prior research has revealed 53% of students said they considered not attending or returning to college due to concerns about COVID-19 (Whissemore, 2021). Executive leaders in this study affirmed prior research and highlighted the need to focus on the students. The researcher discovered the pandemic served as an opportunity for executive leaders to hit the restart button at their institutions. Very Large Provost 1 summarized that “everyone will probably share that COVID will be the first thing that comes to mind” when thinking about enrollment. Medium President 1 stated, “When trying to identify the cultural impacts of COVID, one of my biggest opportunities was to reestablish connections between people in a positive way.” Very Large AVC 1 expressed that “COVID was a trigger,”

allowing the institution to “open conversations to tactics that had not been considered. People’s ears opened more.”

Executive leaders were united in their responses that the COVID-19 global pandemic required institutions to shift their focus to the online learning environment. Small AVP 1 shared, “When COVID hit, everybody had to go online. So many institutions had probably never taught online before, and all of a sudden, they had online courses.” Executive leaders reported a shift in course modalities as a result of the pandemic, which has continued postpandemic, with students expecting multiple course delivery options, including face-to-face, hybrid, and online learning. Medium VPSS 2 stated, “We have to understand that the college campus is not going to have hundreds and thousands of students walking around because the modes of delivery have changed. The majority of our courses are now hybrid or online.” This study emphasized a paradigm shift underscoring the lasting impact of the pandemic, requiring institutions to adapt and respond to the changing environment continuously.

To remain relevant in an evolving environment and meet the needs of students, recommended strategies include:

- Engage students in an online environment and encourage faculty to explore innovative educational practices, such as incorporating more interactive and multimedia content in online courses or using virtual and augmented reality for an immersive learning experience.
- Invest in online education infrastructure to enhance online learning platforms, including training and support to ensure high-quality online instruction.

- Develop and promote short-term certificates, credentials, and stackable awards to meet workforce needs, increase industry and community partnerships, and rapidly respond to changing industry needs.
- Cultivate a culture of flexibility and adaptability, preparing students and employees for pivots and adjustments to changing circumstances. These can be facilitated through continuous feedback, evaluations, and responsive administrative processes.
- Enhance communication and collaboration internally and externally to ensure clear and effective communication among all stakeholders. The COVID-19 global pandemic highlighted the importance of clear, effective, and timely communication.

Developing these strategies may require a comprehensive understanding of student expectations, resource allocation, and garnering buy-in from faculty and staff.

### **Marketing, Recruiting, and Outreach**

An additional implication identified by the researcher is the necessity of increasing, developing, using, and evaluating marketing, recruitment, and outreach tactics to address the changing enrollment management environment. The findings of this study emphasized the importance of evaluating and changing organizational processes and systems as a result of the changing enrollment management environment. Very Large AVC 1 reported on the success of implementing new enrollment marketing tactics, stating, “Since we were able to make organizational changes and implement new marketing tactics, we have been able to drive up the number of prospects in our funnel significantly. Applications have grown, and enrollment is up.” In addition to new tactics, executive leaders reported evaluating current marketing strategies to ensure they are reaching their targeted audience. Medium VPSS 1 shared, “We reshaped our marketing program to now market to new students, which should be the focus of everything we

do.” Another innovative marketing strategy was the use of a reputation and brand awareness study to understand what is important to the community. Very Large AVC 1 shared, “The survey included prospective students, current students, faculty, staff, and focus groups allowing us to see the difference between what we think of ourselves versus what a prospective student or someone in the general public thinks of us.” The approach to incorporate innovation and the evolution of existing strategies emphasized the essential role of adaptable marketing and recruitment tactics in navigating the changing enrollment management environment.

Executive leaders also reported on tactics and initiatives that have been implemented to increase recruitment and outreach in their communities. For example, executive leaders shared the use of technology such as a customer relationship management system and a variety of third-party software to manage enrollment, recruiting, and outreach. Respondents have also reinvested in a focus on traditional outreach methods such as community recruitment events, engaging the high school population to encourage a college-going culture, and bringing the community to the college campus. Medium VPSS 1 shared:

I noticed that we were “community college” by name only. The community never came to campus unless they were coming to a basketball or football game. Therefore, we brought the local farmers market and annual Christmas bazaar to campus. It has been important for me to get the people and the community back on the community college campus.

This study highlighted, through these combined efforts, the vital role of innovative and traditional outreach methods in effectively managing enrollment and fostering stronger community connections. Community colleges should shift from the status quo of marketing, recruitment, and outreach tactics and embrace new methods, such as:

- Establish a culture of continuous evolution and innovation in marketing, recruitment, and outreach tactics by regularly assessing the effectiveness of current strategies and practices and be open to implementing new approaches to adapt to the changing enrollment management environment.
- Invest in technology, such as customer relationship management and third-party software, to streamline enrollment management processes, enhance communication with current and prospective students, and improve outreach efforts.
- Reinforce connections with the local community by hosting events and activities that encourage community members to visit the college campus.
- Strengthen partnerships with workforce organizations by engaging in targeted outreach and recruitment through customized training opportunities, developing collaborative programs, and providing hands-on, on-site training to prepare students for real-life job scenarios.
- Base decisions on data and analytics to measure the effectiveness of marketing and recruitment strategies. Examples can include conducting studies, such as the reputation and brand survey, to gain insight into community perceptions and preferences. Using data optimizes the effectiveness of strategies and allocation of resources.

By implementing these recommendations, institutions can enhance their marketing, recruitment, and outreach efforts to address the changing enrollment management environment better and attract a diverse pool of prospective students.



## **Human Resources**

A final implication identified by the researcher was the importance of human resources in regard to hiring, professional/leadership development, and aligning personnel to meet the current and evolving needs of the institution. Johnson McPhail (2016) articulated the importance of community colleges rethinking organizational structures to meet the needs of today's students and new emerging programs adequately. Johnson McPhail (2016) further provided, "The old hierarchical bureaucracies and silos in many of the nation's community colleges are obstructing effective and efficient delivery of services" (p. 57). Executive leaders highlighted the need to rethink organizational structures, noting that change could involve restructuring departments, removing personnel, or investing in growing personnel to meet the needs of the institution. Medium VPSS 2 shared, "Right away, I knew we were going to have to reimagine what we did. I did a total reorganization within student services." Large President 2 reported, "When I got here as president, I made some readjustments of personnel and divided offices so that people would have focused responsibilities, allowing them to learn and grow in that area." Executive leaders also focused on the traditional organizational chart present in all organizations, describing them as ineffective and archaic. Medium President 1 views the organizational chart as an "etch-a-sketch," stating, "At any point in time, it can be erased." This study highlighted the need to reconsider organizational structures to best serve the students of today and tomorrow.

Additionally, executive leaders highlighted the importance of being mindful and strategic with hiring decisions. Small VAP 1 shared, "When we hire people, we want to make sure they fit our family atmosphere." Executive leaders shared their approaches to hiring employees, including clarifying what they are looking for in terms of background, knowledge, and

personality before bringing anyone into a position. Furthermore, Medium President 1 challenged the executive team to evaluate if their units were organized most effectively.

Finally, executive leaders underscored the importance of setting clear expectations, including focusing on professional development and individuals evaluating their respective roles to determine if they are being effective and efficient. This study reinforced the necessity of reevaluating organizational structures to better meet the evolving needs of community college students. Executive leaders emphasized strategic hiring practices, setting clear expectations, and promoting professional development to ensure personnel alignment with institutional goals and priorities.

Recommendations for practice related to hiring, professional development, and organizational structures include:

- Prioritize the reevaluation of organizational structures to ensure they are agile, efficient, and align with the needs of current and future students. Executive leaders cannot be afraid to make difficult decisions, such as restructuring or removing personnel, to break down silos and foster a culture of collaboration and innovation.
- Implement strategic hiring practices to prioritize candidates who not only possess the necessary skills and qualifications but also align with the community college and institution's mission, values, and culture. This approach ensures a cohesive and supportive environment focusing on student success.
- Invest in professional development, prioritizing training programs, workshops, leadership academies, and mentorship opportunities to enhance skills, foster growth, and keep employees engaged and motivated.

- Promote a supportive and inclusive work culture through open communication, recognizing achievements, and fostering a sense of belonging where employees feel valued, empowered, and motivated to contribute to the institution's mission.

Implementation of these recommendations requires intentional actions from executive leaders in order to enhance their overall effectiveness, support employee growth and development, and serve the needs of students and communities.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Drawing from the results of this study, several recommendations for future research can be considered. First, with the changing enrollment management environment higher education is experiencing, the researcher recommends conducting a similar study with community colleges outside of the state of Texas to understand how the changing enrollment management environment is impacting community colleges across the nation.

Second, the results of this study highlighted the apprehension of the new funding model; however, since the funding model was implemented during this study, the impacts on Texas community colleges are yet to be determined. Therefore, the researcher recommends repeating this study in 5–10 years to determine the impact of the change in the funding model for Texas community colleges.

Third, this study focused on two categories of personnel in Texas community colleges: (a) executive leaders and (b) enrollment management personnel. The researcher recommends conducting a similar study comparing the results based on the size of the institution. Similarly, this study sought to understand how executive leaders responded to the changing enrollment management environment. Regardless of the subject or study participants, the findings of this

study laid the groundwork for future research in other departments in community colleges since the context can encompass a wide range of topics for future research.

Fourth, this study employed an explanatory sequential design mixed-method study using quantitative and qualitative data to collectively form a comprehensive understanding of how executive leaders and enrollment management personnel assessed organizational culture in Texas community colleges and how executive leaders responded to the changing enrollment management environment. The researcher recommends the design of a qualitative study through a case study or multicase study research design focusing on the human experience.

Fifth, this study examined the assessment from executive leaders and enrollment management personnel of the current organizational culture in Texas community colleges using the competing values culture assessment. The researcher recommends conducting a similar study using other established organizational culture assessment tools to garner a broader understanding of organizational culture.

Finally, although the purpose of this study was to compare the assessment of organizational culture between executive leaders and enrollment management personnel, the researcher recommends a qualitative research design to explore the impact of leadership styles on organizational culture at community colleges. Using Schein's organizational culture theory as a guiding framework, the examination of the relationship between leadership approaches and the three levels of organizational culture (i.e., artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions) would provide insights into how leaders and leadership practices can effectively shape and transform organizational culture.

## Conclusion

Community college leaders have the opportunity to positively impact transformational change through transparent, authentic, and courageous leadership. Transformational change cannot happen in isolation but through strong coalitions led by individuals committed to successful change and performance. College leaders must have an unwavering focus on their students and communities. Schein (1986) emphasized that unwavering support from leaders is essential for establishing and maintaining a strong and cohesive organizational culture. This cohesion is demonstrated through the actions, decisions, and communications from leadership to signal what is important while also consistently reinforcing the organizational missions, values, and goals.

Furthermore, Schein's (1986) organizational culture theory established that leaders play a pivotal role in creating, embedding, and managing organizational culture. Therefore, leaders should continually evaluate their reactions to internal and external factors impacting their institutions, how they interact with faculty, staff, students, and the community, and consistently reinforce the desired behaviors and values they want to be embedded in the culture of their institutions. Organizational culture is dynamic, and leadership members' roles are to have an ongoing focus on maintaining and evaluating an evolving culture, ensuring the institutions remain relevant and focused on their foundational mission.

Based on the comparison of organizational culture by executive leaders and enrollment management personnel, overall, respondents believed the culture of Texas community colleges was one of teamwork, respect, loyalty, and trust. The findings showed similarities in the responses from both categories of respondents, including a focus on people and leadership styles. Furthermore, the findings showed that despite the changes to the internal and external enrollment

management environment, executive leaders and enrollment management personnel have a sense of camaraderie with a dedication to their institutions, teams, students, and community. This was evident with the findings of the clan (i.e., collaborate) culture, which emphasizes a family-oriented atmosphere with high levels of loyalty, participation, and teamwork. These findings highlighted a deeply integrated collaborative atmosphere that exemplifies the resilience and unity of Texas community colleges. The findings of this study also underscored Quinn and Rohrbaugh's (1983) CVF, highlighting the preference from Texas community colleges for a supportive, participative, and collaborative organizational culture that prioritizes the development and well-being of its employees and students.

This study revealed that regardless of the size of the institution or the executive leader's position, Texas community colleges have been experiencing the same enrollment challenges and opportunities. The overall sentiment among executive leaders was they viewed themselves as survivors of the internal and external factors affecting enrollment at their institutions. The impacts included the COVID-19 global pandemic, the quality of online learning, economic factors, the sentiment and perception of the value of higher education, and the overall student experience. Therefore, community college leaders are pivotal in guiding institutional teams as they embrace the need to adapt to the impending challenges and practices presented by the changing enrollment management environment.

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## Appendix A – Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

### Institutional Peer Groups

Very Large Colleges	
Institution Name	Total Student Enrollment (2021 THECB Almanac)
Alamo Community College District	61,662
Austin Community College	36,868
Collin County Community College	34,491
Dallas College	57,601
El Paso Community College District	25,303
Houston Community College System	38,020
Lone Star College District	68,819
San Jacinto College District	31,110
South Texas College	27,710
Tarrant County College District	57,305
Large Colleges	
Amarillo College	9,102
Blinn College	17,955
Central Texas College	7,649
Del Mar College	10,678
Laredo Community College	5,236
Navarro College	7,065
North Central Texas College	8,191
South Plains College	8,867
Tyler Junior College	11,726
Medium Colleges	
Alvin Community College	5,591
Angelia College	4,073
Brazosport College	3,829
Cisco College	3,251
Coastal Bend College	4,105
College of the Mainland	4,335
Grayson County College	4,032
Hill College	4,038
Kilgore College	5,089
Lee College	4,271
McClennan Community College	7,742
Midland College	4,763
Odessa College	6,978
Paris Junior College	4,386
Southwest Texas Junior College	6,377
Temple College	4,507
Texarkana College	3,810
Texas Southmost College	8,777
Trinity Valley Community College	5,673
Victoria College	3,212
Weatherford College	5,390
Wharton County Junior College	6,099

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Small Colleges	
Clarendon College	1,417
Frank Phillips College	1,540
Galveston College	2,060
Howard County Junior College District	3,764
Northeast Texas Community College	2,758
Panola College	2,529
Ranger College	2,304
Vernon College	2,773
Western Texas College	1,442

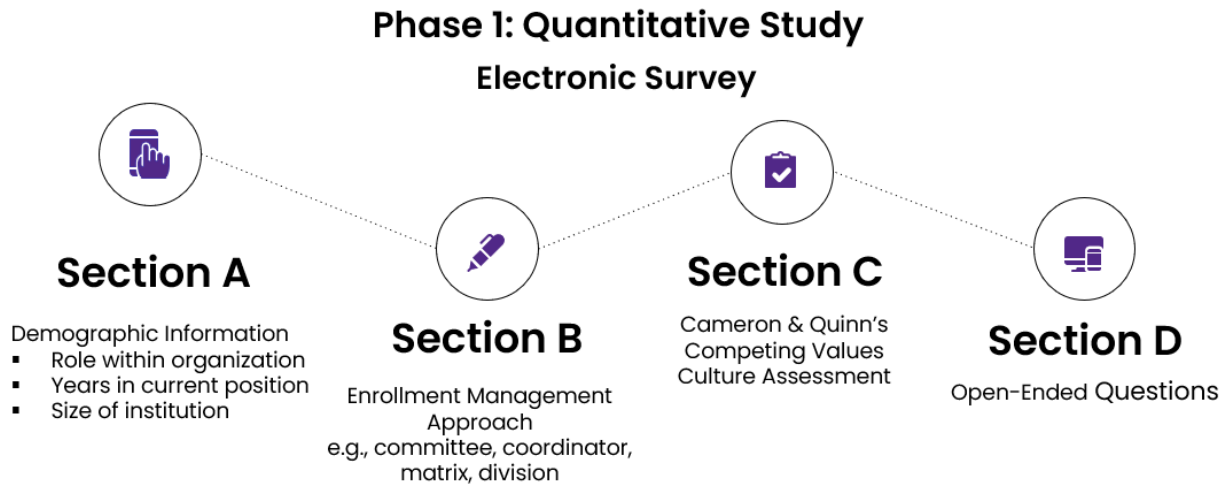
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## Appendix B – Alignment Table

Problem Based on Literature Findings	Research Questions	Survey and Interview Questions	Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks	Methodology
<p>Culture is where basic assumptions are shared (Schein, 2004)</p> <p>Embedding culture (Bolman &amp; Deal, 1991; Buller, 2015; De Bono 1985/1999; Goodman et al, 2001; Kotter, 2012; Mathis &amp; Roueche, 2019; Schein 2004)</p> <p>Transformative change involves culture (Schein, 2004)</p> <p>Leadership traits (Blanchard, 2012; Collins, 2001; Kouzes &amp; Posner, 2011; Mathis &amp; Roueche, 2019; Yukl, 2013)</p> <p>Trust (Blanchard, 2012; Collins, 2001; Kayser, 2011)</p> <p>Transformational change and leadership (Buller, 2015; Kotter, 2012; Mathis &amp; Roueche, 2019; Schein, 2004)</p>	<p><b>RQ1.</b> How does the assessment of organizational culture differ between executive leaders and enrollment management personnel in Texas community colleges when measured by the Competing Values Culture Assessment tool?</p>	<p>Survey Sections A, B, C, D</p>	<p>Quinn and Rohrbaugh’s (1983) competing values framework</p>	<p>Quantitative: survey with open-ended questions</p>
<p>Transformational change and leadership (Buller, 2015; Kotter, 2012; Mathis &amp; Roueche, 2019; Schein, 2004)</p> <p>Leadership traits (Blanchard, 2012; Collins, 2001; Kouzes &amp; Posner, 2011; Mathis &amp; Roueche, 2019; Yukl, 2013)</p> <p>Embedding culture (Bolman &amp; Deal, 1991; Buller, 2015; De Bono 1985/1999; Goodman et al, 2001; Kotter, 2012; Mathis &amp; Roueche, 2019; Schein 2004)</p>	<p><b>RQ2.</b> How do executive leaders at Texas community colleges respond to the changing enrollment management environment?</p>	<p>Semistructured Interview Questions: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5a, 6, 7 a and b, 8, 9, and 10</p>	<p>Schein’s (1986) organizational culture theory and Quinn and Rohrbaugh’s (1983) competing values framework</p>	<p>Qualitative: one-on-one interviews with executive leaders</p>



## Appendix C – Approach to Collecting Quantitative Data



**Appendix D – Survey Instrument: Assessing Organizational Culture  
at Texas Community Colleges**

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Start of Block: Section A: Descriptive Information

Question 1 Please indicate the role in the institution that most directly relates to your position.  
(select one)

- President
- Chancellor
- Vice President/Chancellor of Enrollment (Chief Enrollment Officer)
- Vice President/Chancellor of Academics (Chief Academic Officer)
- Vice President/Chancellor of Finance (Chief Financial Officer)
- Vice President/Chancellor of Student Services
- Dean of Enrollment
- Dean of Institutional Research
- Dean of Student Services
- Director of Counseling/Advising
- Dean of Instruction/Academics
- Advisor
- Director of Admissions
- Registrar
- Assistant or Associate Director of Admissions
- Assistant or Associate Registrar
- Director of Business Services
- Bursar
- Director of Financial Aid
- Director of Marketing/Communications

- Recruiter
  - Director of Institutional Research
  - Director of Information Technology (Chief Information Officer)
  - Assistant Director or Manager of Information Technology
  - Other, please describe \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Question 2 Please indicate how many years you have been in your current position at your institution.

\_\_\_\_\_

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Question 3 What category best describes the size of your institution?

- Very Large College
- Large College
- Medium College
- Small College

**End of Block: Section A: Descriptive Information**

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**Start of Block: Section B: Enrollment Management Structure**

Question 4 Regardless of your institution's official title of the enrollment management function at your institution, of the four structures described below, which one most closely describes the structure at your institution? (select one)

- Enrollment Management Committee:** An advisory committee with a focus on marketing, admissions, and student retention or takes a holistic view of enrollment. It involves a few key faculty members, middle management administrators, and a senior officer. The committee has no real organizational authority.
- Enrollment Management Coordinator:** A middle-level administrator with assigned responsibilities to coordinate and monitor the institution's enrollment management activities. The position has little influence on policy and procedures; rather held accountable for monitoring activities.
- Enrollment Management Matrix System:** Links administrators directly responsible for the enrollment of students, with one senior-level administrator ultimately responsible for the process. This model provides a greater possibility of direct impact on policy and procedures but is still fairly dependent on the senior administrator's communication skills and influence.
- Enrollment Management Division:** Provides the most centralized systems approach. All major offices within the institution report to a single senior-level administrator, usually with a direct link to the provost or president. This approach provides the most responsive system to significant change in the process.
- Other, please describe \_\_\_\_\_
- None of the above exist at my institution.

End of Block: Section B: Enrollment Management Structure

---

Start of Block: Section C: Organizational Culture

Question 5 These six questions ask you to identify the way you experience your organization right now.

**In the survey, “the organization” refers to the college/district managed by your president/chancellor (or the organization in which you manage or work).**

Please rate each of the statements by dividing 100 points among alternatives A, B, C, and D, depending on how similar the description is to your institution (100 would indicate very similar, and 0 would indicate not at all similar). The total points for each question must equal 100.

You may divide the 100 points in any way among the four alternatives in each question. Some alternatives may get zero points, for example. Remember that the total must equal 100.

“Organization” refers to the college/district managed by your president/chancellor.

**Dominant  
Characteristics**

Now

A. The organization is a very personal place. It is like an extended family. People seem to share a lot of themselves. (1)

B. The organization is a very dynamic and entrepreneurial place. People are willing to stick their necks out and take risks. (2)

C. The organization is very results oriented. A major concern is with getting the job done. People are very competitive and achievement oriented. (3)

D. The organization is a very controlled and structured place. Formal procedures generally govern what people do. (4)

**Total** (must equal 100 in each column) (5)

Question 6

“Organization” refers to the college/district managed by your president/chancellor.

**Organizational  
Leadership**



	Now
A. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify mentoring, facilitating, or nurturing. (1)	
B. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify entrepreneurship, innovating, or risk-taking. (2)	
C. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify an aggressive, results-oriented, no-nonsense focus. (3)	
D. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify coordinating, organizing, or smooth-running efficiency. (4)	
<b>Total</b> (must equal 100 in each column) (5)	

Question 7

<p>“Organization” refers to the college/district managed by your president/chancellor.</p>	<p><b>Management of Employees</b></p>
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	Now
A. The management style in the organization is characterized by teamwork, consensus, and participation. (1)	
B. The management style in the organization is characterized by individual risk-taking, innovation, freedom, and uniqueness. (2)	
C. The management style in the organization is characterized by hard-driving competitiveness, high demands, and achievement. (3)	
D. The management style in the organization is characterized by security of employment, conformity, predictability, and stability in relationships. (4)	
<b>Total</b> (must equal 100 in each column) (5)	

Question 8

“Organization” refers to the college/district managed by your president/chancellor.	<b>Organizational Glue</b>
---	--------------------------------

	Now
<p><b>A.</b> The organization emphasizes human development. High trust, openness, and participation persist. (1)</p>	
<p><b>B.</b> The organization emphasizes acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. Trying new things and prospecting for opportunities are valued. (2)</p>	
<p><b>C.</b> The organization emphasizes competitive actions and achievement. Hitting stretch targets and winning in the marketplace are dominant. (3)</p>	
<p><b>D.</b> The organization emphasizes performance and stability. Efficiency, control, and smooth operations are important. (4)</p>	
<p><b>Total</b> (must equal 100 in each column) (5)</p>	

Question 9

<p>“Organization” refers to the college/district managed by your president/chancellor.</p>	<p><b>Strategic Emphases</b></p>
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	Now
A. The glue that holds the organization together is loyalty and mutual trust. Commitment to this organization runs high. (1)	
B. The glue that holds the organization together is commitment to innovation and development. There is an emphasis on being on the cutting edge. (2)	
C. The glue that holds the organization together is the emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment. Aggressiveness and winning are common themes. (3)	
D. The glue that holds the organization together is formal rules and policies. Maintaining a smooth-running organization is important. (4)	
<b>Total</b> (must equal 100 in each column) (5)	
Question 10	
“Organization” refers to the college/district managed by your president/chancellor.	<b>Criteria of Success</b>

	Now
A. The organization defines success on the basis of the development of human resources, teamwork, employee commitment, and concern for people. (1)	
B. The organization defines success on the basis of having the most unique or the newest products. It is a product leader and innovator. (2)	
C. The organization defines success on the basis of winning in the marketplace and outpacing the competition. Competitive market leadership is key. (3)	
D. The organization defines success on the basis of efficiency. Dependable delivery, smooth scheduling, and low cost production are critical. (4)	
<b>Total</b> (must equal 100 in each column) (5)	

End of Block: Section C: Organizational Culture

Start of Block: Section D: Open-Ended Questions

Question 11 What do you think has contributed to your institution's current enrollment management strategies, initiatives, or activities?

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Question 12 How do you make a difference in enrollment management at your institution?

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Question 13 Please provide any additional comments or feedback regarding organizational culture and enrollment management structures that you believe would benefit this study.

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Question 14 Please provide your contact information if you are willing to participate in a follow-up interview.

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# Appendix E – Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument - Student Permission Letter



## OCAI – STUDENT PERMISSION LETTER Updated 2023

Dear Tracee Watts,

Thank you for your inquiry regarding the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI). Professor Cameron copyrighted the OCAI in the 1980s. Hundreds of other culture assessment instruments have been created based on this instrument and research.

The instrument may be used free of charge for student research purposes only. If you are a student, you may use it for this purpose. In special cases, with our explicit permission, it may also be used unpaid engagements with a non-profit organization.

If the instrument is to be used for monetary gain by individuals, consulting firms or any other entity, we require a fee. Please contact Sherry Slade at Behavioral Data Services [REDACTED] for pricing and a full list of services. BDS can distribute the instrument on-line, tabulate scores, and produce feedback reports for a fee. These reports include comparison data from approximately 10,000 organizations--representing many industries and sectors, five continents, and approximately 100,000 individuals. Professor Cameron is also able to provide additional consulting services, such as analyzing data and presenting to your organization virtually or in person.

Please be sure all surveys and your research include the appropriate copyright information (© Kim Cameron). Professor Cameron appreciates you sharing your results with him when you finish your study. Please send your results to [REDACTED]@gmail.com.

Best wishes,

The Kim S. Cameron Team

## Appendix F – Interview Protocol and Questions

**Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date and Time of Interview:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant and Institution Identifiers:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Interview Introduction:**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview for my research study. No identifying names or participants, institutions, or family members will be included in the study. Please know that you may withdraw your consent to participate at any point in the interview.

The purpose of this study is to measure how executive leaders and enrollment management personnel assess organizational culture at Texas community colleges and to understand how those executive leaders perceive and respond to the changing enrollment management environment.

The interview is expected to take no more than 45 minutes. I would like to video and audio record this interview. You will have the opportunity to review this transcript to ensure the accuracy of your responses. All recordings will be kept confidential and in a secure location.

Do you consent to me recording this interview?

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Do you agree to participate in this interview and study?

### **Interview Questions**

#### **Semistructured Questions:**

1. What are some instances unfolding at your institution that have an impact on enrollment?
2. How has the enrollment management environment evolved at your institution over the past decade?
  - a. Where do you see enrollment numbers heading in the next 5–10 years?

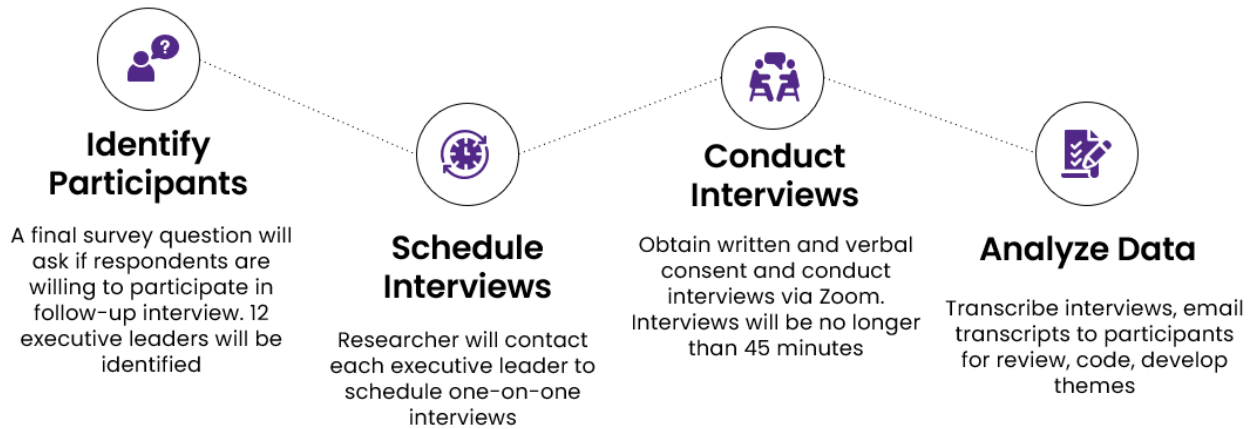


3. When did you (or have you) identify(ed) a need to change processes or focus to address enrollment challenges at your institution?
4. How did you respond when/if you identified a need to change processes or focus to address enrollment challenges?
5. How has the changing enrollment management environment caused you to lead differently?
6. How have you had to look at your own institutional culture and change to address the changing enrollment environment?
  - a. What are some examples of changes in culture or processes that were made?
7. What leadership strategies or traits do you think helped you through periods of declining enrollment?
  - a. Were there any specific traits or strategies you needed to strengthen to address declining enrollment for your institution?
  - b. What is the biggest lesson you learned?
8. How do you perceive the relationship between organizational culture and effectiveness of enrollment management?
9. What did you learn from the enrollment management crisis that will help you with future change and the ever-changing environment at your institution?
10. Is there anything additional you would like to add or include that we have not covered during this interview?

# Appendix G – Approach to Collecting and Analyzing Qualitative

## Data

### Phase 2: Qualitative Research One-on-One Interviews



## **Appendix H – Request for Support to Texas Association of Community Colleges**

Texas Association of Community Colleges  
Attention: Ray Martinez III, J.D.  
President & CEO

Dear Mr. Martinez,

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Tracee Watts, and I am a doctoral candidate pursuing my Doctor of Education in the Community College Leadership Program at Kansas State University. I also serve as the Vice President of College Advancement and Enrollment at Brazosport College. I am writing to humbly request the support and assistance of the Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC) in conducting research for my doctoral dissertation.

The purpose of my dissertation is to compare how executive leaders and enrollment management personnel assess organizational culture at Texas community colleges and to understand how those executive leaders respond to the changing enrollment management environment. To achieve the purpose of my study, I plan to employ a mixed-methods study to better understand how executive leadership and enrollment management personnel at Texas community colleges assess organizational culture. As the backbone of higher education in the state, community colleges play a pivotal role in shaping the academic and professional futures of thousands of students. Therefore, studying organizational culture and the changing enrollment management environment at Texas community colleges is timely and relevant.

I am kindly requesting your assistance in reaching out to the 50 Texas community college district presidents or chancellors on my behalf. The study participants for my study include the president or chancellor, executive-level enrollment leaders, and enrollment management personnel at each of the Texas community college districts. I believe their invaluable insights and perspectives on their institutions' organizational culture and enrollment management structures will significantly contribute to the depth and comprehensiveness of my research.

The support I am seeking from TACC includes the following:

Facilitating communication: I kindly request your help contacting the 50 community college district presidents or chancellors to introduce my research and request their participation in a brief electronic survey.

Data access: If there is any relevant data, such as the most current enrollment data or reports the association possesses, which could aid my research, I would be deeply grateful for the opportunity to access such information with appropriate confidentiality and permissions.

Recommendations: Any guidance or recommendations from the association on enhancing the research's relevance and usefulness would be warmly welcomed.

I assure you that all collected information will be used solely for academic purposes and treated with the utmost confidentiality. Any reports or published material resulting from this research will not disclose the identities of individual colleges or their representatives without explicit consent.

I understand the demands on your time and resources, but I sincerely hope that the TACC sees the potential value of this research and its contribution to our state's continual improvement of community college education. To assist with the process, I have provided a sample email below for your use in communicating with the college presidents/chancellors. If you are willing to send the email on my behalf, I kindly request the communication be sent by (insert date). My targeted timeline for distributing the survey is November or December 2023.

If you require further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you very much for your time and attention. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Tracee L. Watts  
Doctoral Student  
Kansas State University  
Department of Educational Leadership, College of Education  
John E. Roueche Center for Community College Leadership  
XXXX@brazosport.edu; XXX@ksu.edu

**Sample email to Texas community college presidents/chancellors**

Dear Texas Community College Presidents/Chancellors,

I trust this message finds you well. Today, I am contacting you on behalf of a doctoral candidate, Tracee Watts, who is pursuing her Doctor of Education in the Community College Leadership Program at Kansas State University. Tracee serves as the Vice President of College Advancement and Enrollment at Brazosport College.

Tracee's doctoral research holds significant promise in advancing our understanding of organizational culture within Texas community colleges and the dynamic field of enrollment management. Her study seeks to compare the perspectives of executive leaders and enrollment management personnel, shedding light on the responses of executive leaders to the evolving enrollment management environment. This research is timely and relevant, given our community colleges' pivotal role in shaping the academic and professional futures of countless students across the state.

The success of Tracee's research depends greatly on the participation of leaders like you. She kindly requests your support in the following ways:

**Participation:** We ask your willingness to participate in a brief electronic survey as part of her research. Your insights as presidents or chancellors of Texas community colleges are invaluable to achieving the study's objectives.

**Encouragement:** Please encourage your executive-level enrollment leaders and enrollment management personnel within your college/district to participate in this study. Their perspectives will contribute significantly to the depth and comprehensiveness of the research.

We understand the demands placed upon your time and responsibilities as leaders of our community colleges, but we sincerely hope you recognize the potential value of this research in enhancing the quality of community college education in our state.

If you have any questions, require further information, or are ready to participate, please do not hesitate to contact Tracee Watts directly at XXX@brazosport.edu or XXX@ksu.edu.

Thank you very much for your consideration and commitment to the advancement of community college education in Texas. Tracee eagerly anticipates your positive response.

Sincerely,

Ray Martinez  
President & CEO  
Texas Association of Community Colleges

## **Appendix I – Request for Support to Community College**

### **Association of Texas Trustees**

Community College Association of Texas Trustees  
Attention: Nicole Eversmann  
Director

Dear Ms. Eversmann

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Tracee Watts, and I am a doctoral candidate pursuing my Doctor of Education in the Community College Leadership Program at Kansas State University. I also serve as the Vice President of College Advancement and Enrollment at Brazosport College. I am writing to humbly request the support and assistance of the Community College Association of Texas Trustees (CCATT) in conducting research for my doctoral dissertation.

The purpose of my dissertation is to compare how executive leaders and enrollment management personnel assess organizational culture at Texas community colleges and to understand how those executive leaders respond to the changing enrollment management environment. To achieve the purpose of my study, I plan to employ a mixed-methods study to better understand how executive leadership and enrollment management personnel at Texas community colleges assess organizational culture. As the backbone of higher education in the state, community colleges play a pivotal role in shaping the academic and professional futures of thousands of students. Therefore, studying organizational culture and the changing enrollment management environment at Texas community colleges is timely and relevant.

I am kindly requesting your assistance in reaching out to the 50 Texas community college district trustees and regents on my behalf. The study participants for my study include the president or chancellor, executive-level enrollment leaders, and enrollment management personnel at each of the Texas community college districts. I believe their invaluable insights and perspectives on their institutions' organizational culture and enrollment management structures will significantly contribute to the depth and comprehensiveness of my research.

The support I am seeking from CCATT includes the following:

Facilitating communication: I kindly request your help contacting the board chair of the 50 community college district to introduce my research and request their college president or chancellor to participate in a brief electronic survey and one-on-one interview.

I assure you that all collected information will be used solely for academic purposes and treated with the utmost confidentiality. Any reports or published material resulting from this research will not disclose the identities of individual colleges or their representatives without explicit consent.

I understand the demands on your time and resources, but I sincerely hope that the CCATT sees the potential value of this research and its contribution to our state's continual improvement of community college education. To assist with the process, I have provided a sample email below for your use in communicating with the board chair. If you are willing to send the email on my behalf, I kindly request the communication be sent by (insert date). My targeted timeline for distributing the survey is November or December 2023.

If you require further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you very much for your time and attention. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Tracee L. Watts  
Doctoral Student  
Kansas State University  
Department of Educational Leadership, College of Education  
John E. Roueche Center for Community College Leadership  
XXX@brazosport.edu; XXX@ksu.edu

### **Sample email to Texas community college board chairs**

Dear Texas Community College Board Chairs,

I trust this message finds you well. Today, I am contacting you on behalf of a doctoral candidate, Tracee Watts, who is pursuing her Doctor of Education in the Community College Leadership Program at Kansas State University. Tracee serves as the Vice President of College Advancement and Enrollment at Brazosport College.

Tracee's doctoral research holds significant promise in advancing our understanding of organizational culture within Texas community colleges and the dynamic field of enrollment management. Her study seeks to compare the perspectives of executive leaders and enrollment management personnel, shedding light on the responses of executive leaders to the evolving enrollment management environment. This research is timely and relevant, given our community colleges' pivotal role in shaping the academic and professional futures of countless students across the state.

The success of Tracee's research depends greatly on the participation of the leaders within our Texas colleges. She kindly requests your support in the following ways:

**Encouragement:** Please encourage your presidents/chancellors and executive-level enrollment leaders within your college/district to participate in this study. Their perspectives will contribute significantly to the depth and comprehensiveness of the research.

We understand the demands placed upon the time and responsibilities of leaders of our community colleges, but we sincerely hope you recognize the potential value of this research in enhancing the quality of community college education in our state.

If you have any questions, require further information, or are ready to participate, please do not hesitate to contact Tracee Watts directly at XXX@brazosport.edu or XXX@ksu.edu.

Thank you very much for your consideration and commitment to the advancement of community college education in Texas. Tracee eagerly anticipates your positive response.

Sincerely,

Nicole Eversmann  
Director  
Community College Associations of Texas Trustees



## Appendix J – Email to Participants

Dear [Participant's Name],

My name is Tracee Watts, and I am pursuing my doctoral degree in the Community College Leadership Program at Kansas State University. I also serve as the Vice President of College Advancement and Enrollment at Brazosport College. As part of my academic journey, I am undertaking a dissertation research project on organizational culture at Texas community colleges and the changing enrollment management environment.

The purpose of this email is to kindly request your participation as a research participant for my dissertation study. Your insights and experiences are incredibly valuable, and your contribution would significantly enhance the depth and significance of my research.

The specific details of the research, including the objectives, procedures, and any potential risks and benefits, have been approved by the Kansas State University Institutional Review Board to ensure the ethical conduct of the study and the protection of participants' rights.

Participating in this research will involve completing a brief electronic survey (**insert link**). Rest assured that any information you provide will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and only be used for academic purposes. All collected data will be assigned a unique identifier rather than your name to ensure anonymity.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any point in the study without any repercussions. If you decide to participate, I will be more than happy to address any questions or concerns, and I will provide you with a detailed informed consent form outlining the study's purpose and procedures.

Thank you for considering my request, and I sincerely hope you will choose to be a part of this meaningful research endeavor. Your participation will undoubtedly make a significant difference, and I am truly grateful for your time and support.

Sincerely,

Tracee L. Watts  
Doctoral Student  
Kansas State University  
Department of Educational Leadership, College of Education  
John E. Roueche Center for Community College Leadership  
XXX@brazosport.edu, XXX@ksu.edu

# Appendix K – Kansas State University Informed Consent Form



University Research  
Compliance Office

## Institutional Review Board (IRB) Informed Consent Template Form

**PROJECT TITLE:**

Organizational Culture at Texas Community Colleges and the Leadership Response to the Enrollment Management Environment

PROJECT APPROVAL  
DATE:

PROJECT EXPIRATION  
DATE:

LENGTH OF  
STUDY:

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

Dr. Margaretta B. Mathis

CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):

Tracee L. Watts

CONTACT DETAILS FOR PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS:

Tracee L. Watts, Doctoral Student, Community College Leadership Program, Kansas State University, [REDACTED]

IRB CHAIR CONTACT INFORMATION:

Lisa Rubin, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, [REDACTED]  
Brad Woods, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, [REDACTED]

PROJECT SPONSOR:

**PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:**

The purpose of this study is to compare how executive leaders and enrollment management assess organizational culture at Texas community colleges and to understand how those executive leaders respond to the changing enrollment management environment.

**PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED:**

This research study will employ a explanatory sequential design mixed method study to understand how executive leaders and enrollment management personnel assess organizational culture and how executive leaders respond to the changing enrollment management environment at Texas community colleges.

**BIOLOGICAL SAMPLES COLLECTED (Describe procedure, storage, etc.):**

[Select a statement from the drop down menu]
[Select a statement from the drop down menu]

**ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES OR TREATMENTS, IF ANY, THAT MIGHT BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO SUBJECT:**

--

**RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED:**

--

**BENEFITS ANTICIPATED:**

--

**EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY:**

[Select a statement from the drop down menu]

**IS COMPENSATION OR MEDICAL TREATMENT AVAILABLE IF INJURY OCCURS?**      Yes    No

**PARENTAL APPROVAL FOR MINORS:**

**PARENT/GUARDIAN APPROVAL SIGNATURE:**

--

**DATE:**

--

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

(Remember that it is a requirement for the P.I. to maintain a signed and dated copy of the same consent form signed and kept by the participant).

PARTICIPANT NAME:

--

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE:

--

DATE:

--

WITNESS TO SIGNATURE:  
(PROJECT STAFF)

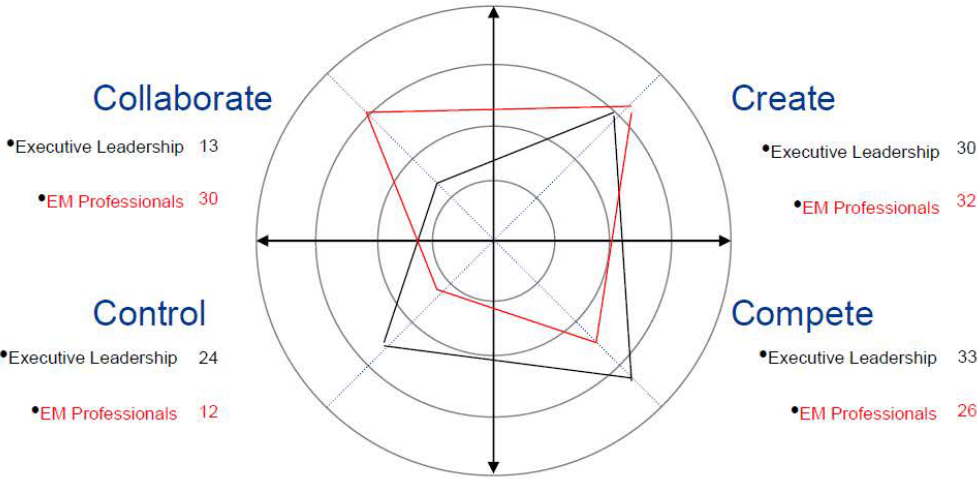
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DATE:

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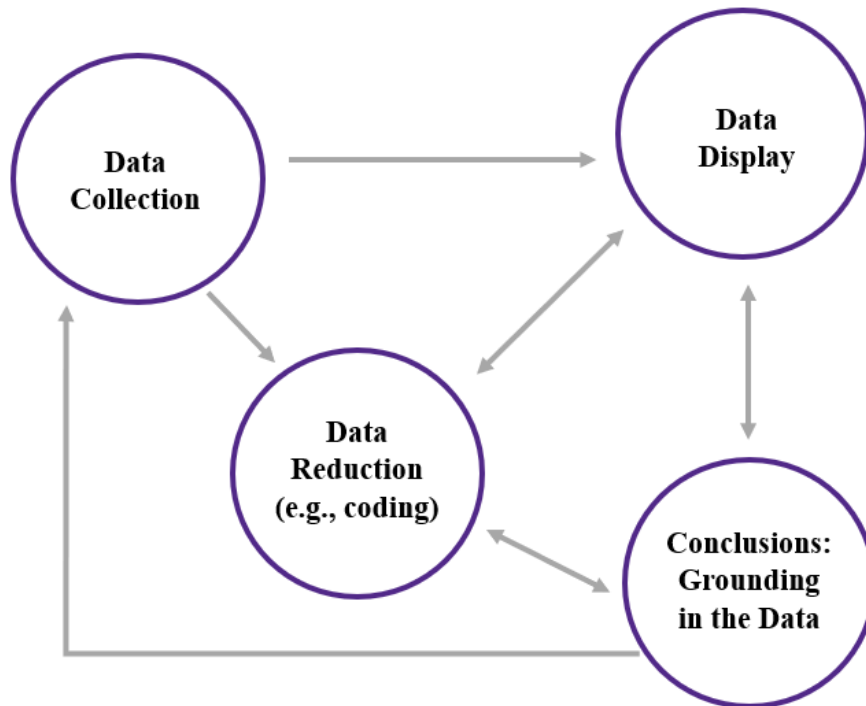
# Appendix L – Example of the Competing Values Culture Assessment

## Plotting Diagram



*Note.* Adapted from “The Competing Values Culture Assessment,” by K. S. Cameron and R. E. Quinn, n.d., p. 12.

## Appendix M – The Iterative Qualitative Data Analysis Process



*Note.* Adapted from “An Introduction to Educational Research: Connecting Methods to Practice,” by C. R. Lochmiller and J. N. Lester, 2017, p. 168.