

**Kansas Community College Leadership Institute Completers Perceptions About the
Curriculum**

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Abstract

Community College Grow Your Own (CCGYO) leadership programs have become common in community colleges and systems of community colleges. Though some aspects of CCGYOs are well-researched, such as learning outcomes pertaining to competencies, there has been little research investigating which andragogical elements are most effective. This study investigated the perceptions of completers of the Kansas Community College Leadership Institute (KCCLI), a state-level CCGYO in Kansas, about the impact of the program on their leadership competencies, behavior, self-efficacy, and roles in which they have served, andragogical elements which were most or least impactful, and topics and experiences that should be included or excluded from a CCGYO. A qualitative phenomenological research design was used in the current study. The researcher developed a semi-structured interview protocol. The interview protocol included three factual demographic questions, followed by 15 semi-structured interview questions aligned with the research questions. Eleven Kansas community college professionals who had completed the KCCLI between 2016 and 2021 participated in the study. Six themes were identified as a result of the data analysis of participant interviews. Seven of the 11 participants indicated the KCCLI had a positive impact on career advancement and had assumed a new role and more responsibility since participation. All participants indicated the KCCLI had provided them with a deeper knowledge and understanding of all eight of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) (2022) competencies, broadened their awareness of higher education and institutional functions, increased their confidence to assume greater responsibility within their respective institutions, and enhanced their communication competence. Andragogical

elements of the KCCLI that were most impactful to the growth and development of study participants included presentations by practitioners, networking, and introspective activities. While there was no consensus on least impactful elements of the KCCLI curriculum, individuals provided idiosyncratic or personal reasons for describing a least impactful element. Study participants indicated that instruction related to three AACC competencies - governance, partnerships and collaboration, and communication - were those about which the most impactful learning occurred. KCCLI participants identified two topics or experiences they believed should be included in a CCGYO: communication and governance with an emphasis on state level issues and actions that impact community colleges. KCCLI participants indicated that none of the current topics and experiences comprising the KCCLI curriculum should be excluded but indicated that some of the topics and experiences did not fit their personal interests or learning styles. Additional research is needed to determine which CCGYO andragogical elements are most effective in contributing to the development of community college leaders.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife and children, friends, and colleagues. My wife Leann kept the house in order and wrangled our two children on her own on the nights I had to attend lectures, or the weekends I spent locked in our home office doing homework, researching, writing, and analyzing data over the last three and a half years. You have also been as supportive and understanding as you have been patient. I love you – thanks for everything along the way. A shout out to my sister-in-law Sarah and niece Brynn as well for helping Leann on many of those nights.

To my children, Kaylie and Nate, thank you for your patience and continual forgiveness as I had to make the choice to focus on schoolwork instead of playtime with you. Please know this has been as much for you and your future as it has been for mine. Any personal ambition pales in comparison to my love for you. Nate, I've been in grad school almost as long as you have been alive, and for nearly half as long as Kaylie has been around. Now that this doctoral program is completed, it's time to make up for some lost time with both of you. Get ready for some DADventures.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Community colleges have been dealing with a shortage of qualified and competent presidents since the early 2000s. This gap has resulted from a combination of three factors: waves of retirements of presidents and upper administrators, mounting complex challenges, and a constantly evolving set of expectations imposed on community colleges (AACC, 2018b; Anaya, 2018; Artis & Bartel, 2021; Asadov, 2020; Davis, 2018; DeLozier, 2019; Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2017; Farley, 2019; Forbes, 2019; Forthun & Freeman, 2017; Gay & Tobia, 2019; Gray, 2016; Guse, 2021; Hohensee, 2012; Hutchins, 2023; Johnson, 2019; Kelley, 2017; Martin, 2021; Porter, 2017; Robinette, 2017; Smith et al., 2019; Thomas, 2019). Colleges now face a “variety of unimagined threats, stemming from socioeconomic changes, technological changes, and financial challenges” (Gray, 2016, 103). Anaya (2018) said presidents are asked to do far more than in decades past, including fundraising and lobbying, and that the role of a president is constantly evolving. In addition, higher education as an industry has faced added layers of accountability and expectations of transparency (The Aspen Institute & Achieving the Dream, 2013).

In an effort to prepare individuals for higher education presidencies in community college settings, many states and systems focused on growing leaders from within by implementing grow-your-own (GYO) leadership development programs. The curriculum has typically focused on skills development and introducing participants to the many facets of operating a community college including political, legal, and financial issues and meeting localized missions of institutions (Gray, 2016). Many of these programs

were designed to provide training in the competencies needed by upper administrators and presidents to fill the gap left by those currently serving in those roles but who will soon retire. A significant amount of the research on leadership development programs in higher education has focused on identifying which competencies should be taught (Anaya, 2018; Artis & Bartel, 2021; Asadov, 2020; Aspen Institute & Achieving the Dream, 2013; Bresso, 2012; Farley, 2019; Focht, 2010; Hutchins, 2023; Kelley, 2017; Reille & Kezar, 2010; Robison, 2014; Smith et al., 2019; Thomas, 2019; Wisniewski, 2019).

This chapter provides background on the current shortage of professionals qualified for upper administration in the community college sector of higher education as those holding these positions retire in droves through the next few years. Leadership development provided in various formats including doctoral programs, leadership institutes hosted by national associations, and home-grown leadership programs at the state or institution level have been identified as potential pieces of the shortage solution. This chapter describes the problem in detail and outlines the purpose of the study. The significance of the study is then discussed, followed by delimitations and assumptions. The research questions guiding the study are stated. Definitions of terms that may not be common and an overview of the organization of the study conclude Chapter 1.

Background

The problem of mass retirements of upper-level managers and chief executive officers is not a new topic. Gray (2016) said one way private industry has developed solutions for filling executive leadership positions is through succession planning. This approach involves a fluid process that addresses an organization's culture to grow and

groom potential leaders, rather than the traditional bureaucratic system of promoting individuals based on a rigid organizational chart. One of the tools private industry implemented was leadership development programs tailored to specific organizations. Gray (2016) explored the possibility that this framing and solution from private business and industry could be effective for community colleges.

The need for succession planning and skilled upper higher education administration leadership remains and leadership programs still play a part in filling high profile vacancies. One option for preparing individuals for higher education administration roles is through doctoral programs in higher education leadership (Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2017). In addition to the proliferation of doctoral programs focused on training administrators, leadership development programs at both the state and institutional levels provide another option for addressing the shortage of upper level administrators.

Community college leadership development programs have been implemented at institutions and systems of institutions across the country in response to the shortage of upper administration caused by waves of retirements. After several years of cohorts graduating, these programs have evolved into something more than a response to a presidential succession planning crisis, and in many cases have become staples in the respective institutions and systems (Martin, 2021). Several researchers have argued for a new networked-leadership approach to leading community colleges, which requires competent leaders at every level of an institution working together across silos (Eddy and Garza Mitchell, 2017).

The Kansas Community College Leadership Institute (KCCLI) was created with an understanding that strong leadership competencies and a deep understanding of the inner workings of a community college or system of community colleges can have a positive influence on culture at all levels of employment (Kansas Association of Community College Trustees, n.d.). The KCCLI is offered in a cohort format spanning nine sessions, many of which last two days over nine months at a different community college campus each month (Kansas Association of Community College Trustees, n.d.). The curriculum consists of the development of personal leadership philosophies, a capstone project, and multiple guest speakers, including community college presidents, attorneys, and professionals in various administrative roles who speak on a myriad of topics (Kansas Association of Community College Trustees, n.d.). According to the Kansas Association of Community College Trustees (n.d.),

The KCCLI incorporates featured speakers on a broad array of topics including the Higher Education and the Kansas System, Key Characteristics of Effective Leaders, Assessing Personal Strengths and Personal Leadership Styles, Working Effectively with Internal and External Stakeholders, Managing Change and Conflict, Diversity in the Workplace, Media Relations, Power and Politics, Effective Communication, Strategic Planning, Collaboration, and Fundraising. (para. 3)

Leadership development programs like the KCCLI that focus on preparing leaders for all levels of community college leadership are often referred to in the literature as Community College Grow Your Own Leader Programs (CCGYO). Research related to CCGYO leadership competencies and how to teach them to adult learners is ongoing.

Statement of the Problem

The two-year community college sector of higher education in the United States has faced significant vacancies in upper administration in the last decade (Artis & Bartel, 2021; Asadov, 2020; DeLozier, 2019; Farley, 2019; Gay & Tobia, 2019; Guse, 2021; Hutchins, 2023; Johnson, 2019; Martin 2021; Smith et al., 2019; Thomas, 2019).

Leadership development programs were developed in part to prepare the next generation of community college leaders to face the increasing complexity and dynamic challenges of higher education administration (Bresso, 2012; Focht, 2010; Forbes, 2019; Reille & Kezar, 2010; Soares et al.; 2017; Thomas, 2019). These programs were designed as a succession planning tool to prepare employees for upper administration roles and to develop employees at all employment levels (DeLozier, 2019).

Researchers have begun to examine the elements that make these programs effective (Asadov, 2020; DeLozier, 2019; Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2017; Farley, 2019; Forbes, 2019; Gay & Tobia, 2019; Hohensee, 2012; Hutchins, 2023; Johnson, 2019; Thomas, 2019). However, the research dedicated to determining which elements or formats of andragogy are most effective for delivering the CCGYO curriculum and developing the chosen competencies is limited. Multiple researchers have acknowledged the importance of identifying andragogical elements most suitable for CCGYOs, and several have called for a focus in this area when providing recommendations for future research (Anaya, 2018; Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2017; Farley, 2019; Forbes, 2019; Smith et al., 2019). According to Forbes (2019):

Understanding the effectiveness of the program components in developing leadership skills needed for executive level positions may be of value. The data

could yield best practices for GYO leadership development programs and inform a process for ongoing program evaluation – thereby possibly cultivating more skilled and knowledgeable leaders into the talent pipeline. (pp. 124-125)

There is a need for more depth and breadth of knowledge regarding the impact leadership development programs can have on individuals' acquisition of leadership competencies, behavior, self-efficacy, and leadership roles, regardless of career ambitions. In addition, more research is needed to determine which elements, like duration, frequency of meeting times, readings, and activities of leadership development programs are most effective. Research dedicated to filling this gap in the literature could serve to inform states and institutions, and perhaps even graduate schools in higher education leadership, in their endeavors to create leadership development programs to address the leadership crisis facing the community college sector.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the perceptions of completers of the KCCLI, a state-level community college leadership development program, about its impact on personal development and growth as well as the usefulness of components of the program. The first purpose of the study was to examine KCCLI completers' perceptions about leadership activities they have engaged in as a result of participation in the leadership development program. The second purpose of the study was to investigate KCCLI completers' perceptions about the impact the leadership development program had on their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and achievement. The third purpose of the study was to assess KCCLI completers' perceptions about elements of the program that were the most impactful on development of leadership competency,

behaviors, self-efficacy, and achievement. The fourth purpose of the study was to identify KCCLI completers' perceptions about program elements that were least impactful on development of their leadership competency, behaviors, self-efficacy, and achievement. The fifth purpose of the study was to explore KCCLI completers' perceptions about program elements that should be included in future leadership development curricula. The sixth purpose of the study was to research KCCLI completers' perceptions about which elements of the program should be excluded in future leadership development curricula.

Significance of the Study

This study contributed to the growing body of research focused on leadership development programs in the community college sector of higher education, a topic that has garnered attention from researchers in only the last decade. The focus of the research was on perceptions of state-level community college leadership program completers' perceptions about leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and achievement and which elements were most or least effective, and which elements should be included in future curricula. The results of this study may be of interest to community college leaders or community college systems seeking to develop leadership competencies among their ranks to build a culture around leadership. Members of boards of trustees, presidents, and other upper administrators may also be interested in the results of this study as they seek to fill leadership vacancies. Aspiring community college leaders who want to develop their leadership toolkit, broaden their understanding of how community colleges function, and demonstrate their interest in career advancement to administrators may also benefit

from the results of this study. Researchers interested in leadership development programs in non-higher education settings might also be interested in the results of this study.

Delimitations

According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), “Delimitations are self-imposed boundaries set by the researcher on the purpose and scope of the study” (p. 134). Three delimitations were noted for this study.

- The study focused on leadership training provided by the KCCLI.
- The sample included completers of the KCCLI training from 2016 through 2021.
- All participants were employed at a community college in Kansas.

Assumptions

According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), “Assumptions are postulates, premises, and propositions that are accepted as operational for purposes of the research” (p. 135).

This study was conducted under three assumptions.

1. Participants answered the interview questions accurately and honestly.
2. Participants were attentive and receptive to new information while attending the KCCLI sessions.
3. The interpretation of the data accurately portrays the perceptions of study participants.

Research Questions

Six research questions guided the study.

RQ1

What are the perceptions of completers of the KCCLI about what leadership activities they have engaged in at their higher education institution as a result of their participation in the program?

RQ2

What are the perceptions of completers of the KCCLI about its impact on their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles in which they have served?

RQ3

What are the perceptions of completers of the KCCLI about the program's most impactful elements on the development of their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles in which they have served?

RQ4

What are the perceptions of completers of the KCCLI about the program's least impactful elements on the development of their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles in which they have served?

RQ5

What are the perceptions of completers of the KCCLI about what topics and experiences should be included in a community college leadership development program?

RQ6

What are the perceptions of completers of the KCCLI about what topics and experiences should be excluded from a community college leadership development program?

Definition of Terms

For this study, key terms have been identified and defined as they relate to the topic.

Andragogy

According to Graham (2017), andragogy refers to teaching and learning processes and strategies for adult learners. These strategies are fundamentally different than the processes used for teaching children which is known as pedagogy. Graham argued adult learners have several characteristics to consider when planning curriculum, like a maturing concept of self, more life experience, and increased readiness and motivation to learn.

Community College Grow-your-own Leadership Program (CCGYO)

Asadov (2020), DeLozier (2019), Farley (2019), Forbes (2019), Johnson (2019), and Thomas (2019) used the term Grow-Your-Own Leadership Program to refer to a cohort-based course or program designed to develop participants' leadership competencies and provide participants with knowledge of an institution or a system of institutions

CCGYO Elements

This study refers to andragogical approaches to learning utilized by CCGYOs as elements for the sake of clarity and simplicity, as several researchers who have explored

this aspect of CCGYOs used various terms like strategies, formats, components, or simply how leadership curricula should be delivered (Forbes, 2019; Hohensee, 2012; Smith et al., 2019).

Leadership Competencies

The AACC (2022) defined leadership competencies as the skills and abilities necessary for successful leadership in community colleges described by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC, 2022).

Leadership Behaviors

The first principle of leadership offered by the Kansas Leadership Association is that leadership is an activity, not a position (McBride, 2023).

Leadership Self-efficacy

McCormick et al. (2002) stated that leadership self-efficacy is grounded in social cognitive theory and is the belief that one has the capabilities and resources to perform a specific task – leadership. According to McCormick et al., a person’s beliefs can change based on different factors of function, such as self-esteem, competency, and end environment.

Leadership Roles

Farley (2019) and Johnson (2019) suggested that the term leadership roles is a broad term that can refer to participation in projects; membership on committees; and mid-level positions shared by varied professionals that include deans, directors, and department chairs or upper-level leaders like chief academic officers, chief financial officers, and vice presidents.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 included an introduction, background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, delimitations, assumptions, research questions, and definition of terms. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the crisis in community college leadership in the U.S. and a description of how the 2-year sector has attempted to address the crisis with various leadership development programs. Also discussed in Chapter 2 are studies that have focused on the impact, competencies, and elements of andragogy utilized in CCGYOs. In Chapter 3, the research methods of the study are described. This chapter includes a description of the research design, setting, sampling procedures, instrument, data collection procedures, data analysis and synthesis, reliability and trustworthiness, the researcher's role, and limitations. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. Chapter 5 includes a study summary, findings related to the literature, and conclusions.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The first purpose of the study was to examine program completers' perceptions about leadership activities they have engaged in at their higher education institutions after participation in the leadership program. The second purpose of the study was to investigate program completers' perceptions about the KCCLI's impact on their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and achievement. The third purpose of the study was to assess program completers' perceptions about elements of the KCCLI that were the most impactful on development of leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and achievement. The fourth purpose of the study was to identify elements of the KCCLI that participants perceived to be less valuable to their learning. The fifth purpose of the study was to explore program completers' perceptions about which elements of the KCCLI should be included in future leadership development program curricula. The sixth purpose of the study was to research program completers' perceptions about which elements of the KCCLI should be excluded in future leadership development program curricula.

This literature review provides an overview of leadership development programs that focus on preparing leaders for community colleges. The first section provides background on the need for leadership development programs as a response to the well-documented shortage of leadership in the two-year sector of higher education. Leadership development programs provided through doctoral programs, national professional association seminars and programs, and CCGYOs are then summarized. The impact of CCGYO leadership development programs is described in the third section. The fourth

section describes competencies included in CCGYO leadership development programs. The final section summarizes research on elements of successful CCGYO leadership development programs.

The Community College Leadership Shortage

A combination of three phenomena has resulted in a shortage of qualified leaders in the community college sector of higher education since the turn of the century. The first phenomenon was a mass exodus of presidents during the last decade, primarily due to retirements. Artis and Bartel (2021) summarized Schults' (2001) report on the 2001 AACC Leadership Survey that described the looming leadership crisis in the two-year sector of higher education. Eddy and Garza Mitchell (2017) reported that 80% of college presidents intended to retire within 10 years. This trend, initially anticipated and acknowledged by the AACC in the early 2000s, has been well documented in the literature (AACC, 2018b; Anaya, 2018; Artis & Bartel, 2021; Asadov, 2020; Davis, 2018; DeLozier, 2019; Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2017; Farley, 2019; Forbes, 2019; Forthun & Freeman, 2017; Gay & Tobia, 2019; Gray, 2016; Guse, 2021; Hohensee, 2012; Hutchins, 2023; Johnson, 2019; Kelley, 2017; Martin 2021; Porter, 2017; Robinette, 2017; Smith et al., 2019; Thomas, 2019). The second phenomenon is that the challenges facing community colleges and their leaders have grown in both scope and complexity. Community colleges face fluctuations in financial resources, constant adoption of technology innovations, faculty shortages, and reduced enrollment (Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2017; Forbes, 2019; Gray, 2016; Guse, 2021; Hutchins, 2023; Johnson, 2019; Martin, 2021). The third phenomenon is that community colleges have been in the national spotlight facing pressure to grow the workforce and increase the number of U.S.

citizens with a certificate or degree, which comes with increased accountability and reporting requirements (Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2017; Hutchins, 2023; Johnson, 2019; Martin, 2021). In several State of the Union addresses, including his final address as president, Barack Obama advocated that two years of community college should be provided at no cost to U.S. citizens (The White House, 2016).

This combination of leaders leaving the community college sector, mounting challenges, and high expectations has created a perfect storm, as there have not been enough qualified replacements to fill high profile vacancies. According to Artis and Bartel (2021), “Nearly two decades later, community colleges are still scrambling to find leaders poised and ready to take on the dynamic and challenging environment of community college leadership” (p. 674). This ongoing problem has dominated the focus of the literature on community college leadership in recent years.

Forbes (2019) stated the problem succinctly:

Community colleges are currently experiencing a leadership gap. In an effort to continue their open-door mission and to serve the nation’s diverse student population, it is imperative to have leaders that possess the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the complex challenges facing community colleges today.

(p. 21)

Martin’s (2021) view of the leadership challenge was similar to that expressed by Forbes. According to Martin, “The new developments in community colleges bring new challenges that require leaders with a broad skill set” (p. 9).

The AACC in its 2018b monograph intended to outline best practices for boards of trustees as they facilitated the departure and onboarding of presidents, underscored the urgency of the problem facing today's community colleges:

The tectonic shifts in the structure of the American economy, globalization, and the ever-growing demand for a more technologically sophisticated and well-educated domestic labor force during the last quarter of the 20th century and the first two decades of the 21st century have placed significantly more pressure on the nation's 1,103 community colleges. Increasingly, they are being asked to enhance their role across multiple platforms— from workforce development and serving as students' higher education gateways to community development, proactively addressing equity and diversity social mandates and economic development. (p. 4)

Types of Leadership Development Programs

The two-year higher education sector has taken steps to navigate the leadership shortage as it unfolds before it becomes a true crisis. The primary mechanism to combat the leadership shortage and develop a form of succession planning has been leadership development programs (AACC, 2006; Gray, 2016). Three categories of leadership development programs are frequently described in the literature: doctoral programs in community college leadership, leadership programs under the auspices of national associations, and CCGYO programs at both the institutional level and state or system level (Forbes, 2019; Forthun & Freeman, 2017; Gray, 2016; Guse 2021; Thomas, 2019).

Doctoral Programs Focused on Community College Leadership

Forthun and Freeman (2017) indicated that the first university-based higher education leadership curriculum was created in 1893 at Clark University which offered a course focusing on higher education problems. The number of programs available grew steadily in the early 20th century, and then more than tripled between 1945 and 1963 to 87. There were more than 300 doctoral programs focused on higher education leadership and administration identified in 2007 (DeLozier, 2019). A search on the HigherEdJobs (n.d.) website revealed 40 university-based doctoral programs that offered either a course on community college leadership preparation or a specific program for community college leadership preparation as part of the curriculum.

A doctorate has historically been a prerequisite to advancement to upper administration at most institutions (DeLozier, 2019; Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2017; Forthun & Freeman, 2017; Kelley, 2017; Smith, et al., 2019; Thomas, 2019). This expectation has changed to some extent. A review of [higheredjobs.com](https://www.higheredjobs.com) in August of 2023 revealed that of 14 openings for community college president or chief academic officer positions, only four required a doctorate. The other 10 either required a master's degree or indicated a doctorate would be a preferred qualification (HigherEdJobs, n.d.). Forbes (2019) said there are also other credentials becoming popular in community college leadership and administration. According to Forbes, “increasingly alternative forms of credentialing via badges, previous experiences, and hiring outside of academics is occurring as colleges and their boards seek new solutions to today’s challenging problems” (p. 139).

Several researchers including Asadov (2020) and DeLozier (2019) have frequently noted several barriers or drawbacks to doctoral programs when considering them as part of the solution to the leadership shortage, including a substantial time commitment, lack of interaction with current practitioners, lack of real-world practice, and cost. According to Asadov (2020), many aspiring community college leaders attend graduate programs in general higher education leadership in which a large percentage of the curriculum is not relevant to the unique world of community college leadership. DeLozier (2019) said even doctoral programs that are specific to community college leadership have been criticized for how quickly they can lose touch with the reality facing modern community colleges because of the growing expectations and evolving nature of the challenges facing the two-year sector. Eddy and Garza Mitchell (2017) also said doctoral programs needed to do a better job of connecting candidates to real-world situations through bringing in speakers and mentors from the field to stay relevant.

Despite these downsides, candidates holding a doctorate still maintain an advantage over others when competing for jobs (Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2017; Forbes, 2019; Smith et al., 2019). According to Asadov (2020) and Guse (2021), those who complete doctoral programs in higher education or community college leadership also benefit from improved critical thinking skills, stronger leadership competencies, networking opportunities, and a deeper understanding of how institutions operate. Smith et al. (2019) recommended community college leadership faculty conduct a thorough review of local and state contexts facing the community colleges in their region prior to prioritizing learning outcomes or selecting competencies doctoral leadership programs. These researchers indicated doctoral programs play an important role in the development

of the next generation of community college leaders, but there is more to the puzzle. Asidov (2020) and Guse (2021) also recommended that leaders must gain skills to address the unique challenges facing community colleges as well as the idiosyncratic situations within systems of colleges and individual institutions.

National Professional Association Leadership Programs

Another resource consistently noted in the literature included leadership development programs offered by national associations serving the two-year sector of higher education. Some of these programs are highly specialized to train people in certain roles, like the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations (NCMPR) Leadership Institute, which is exclusively designed for community college public relations and marketing practitioners. Others are more general, like the John E. Roueche Future Leaders Institute, Future Presidents Institute, and Presidents Academy Summer Institute, which are hosted by the AACC. The League for Innovation in the Community College also hosts a leadership program titled The Executive Leadership Institute (AACC, 2023; DeLozier, 2019; Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2017; NCMPR, 2023). These programs were created with the intention of alleviating the community college leadership crisis. Many programs have also been designed to serve individuals who represent historically underrepresented groups in an effort to bolster the diversity of leaders serving community colleges, including the Leadership Symposium and Leadership Fellows Program hosted by the National Community College Hispanic Council, the leadership program hosted by the AACC Council of the American Association of Women in Community Colleges, and the Leadership Development Institute for African American Midlevel Administrators (Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2017).

DeLozier (2019) indicated that many of the national professional association programs have some of the same drawbacks as a doctoral program but to a lesser extent. According to DeLozier, these programs can be prohibitively expensive for smaller rural community colleges, as most programs charge a fee for participation and require hotels and travel to a major city, adding up to several thousand dollars. The national association programs also tend to be delivered in a seminar format over three days, which may limit the impact they can have on participants (DeLozier, 2019; Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2017; Forthun & Freeman, 2017). Barnard et al. (2021) reported the competencies taught in large national programs tend to be very general and broad, which means competencies that could be used to face the unique challenges of a particular institution or system of institutions might be overlooked. In other cases where the association is devoted to a particular role within community colleges, like the Leadership Institute created by the NCMPR, competencies might be tailored to a very specific set of responsibilities, and would not translate to other roles in the institution. National professional association programs are also typically expensive which adds a hint of irony to the lack of financial resources facing community colleges that new leaders will have to navigate (Artis & Bartel, 2021; Gray, 2016; Guse, 2021). Programs offered by national professional associations still have their place, but they contribute less to solving the broader leadership shortage problem.

The cost associated with participation in many professional development programs underscores a paradox in the world of community college leadership - managing limited financial and human resources. Many individuals or community colleges may not have the resources to utilize these types of professional development.

Localized institution level and system level leadership development programs have been the centerpiece of the two-year college sector's response to this paradox.

CCGYO Leadership Development Programs

CCGYOs conducted at the institution level and state or system level have been around for decades (Forbes, 2019; Thomas, 2019). More recently, CCGYOs were cited as a crucial part of the solution to the leadership gap by the AACCC (2018a). Nearly all the access barriers and drawbacks associated with the other forms of leadership development identified by including cost (Asadov, 2020), are sidestepped with CCGYO programs (Thomas, 2019). However, there are distinct differences between CCGYOs at the institution level versus those at the state or system level.

Institution-level programs tend to be the lowest in cost, as they can be administered by current staff and do not need large budgets for travel or admission fees (Thomas, 2019). They also come with the option of designing a curriculum that is highly tailored to the culture and challenges facing a particular institution or system of institutions. This specificity, while primarily a strength, can also be one of the limitations of institution-level programs, as the competencies and learning objectives chosen for the curriculum tend to be too narrowly tailored to an institution's culture and challenges, which can perpetuate internal or local bias (Forthun & Freeman, 2017; Reille & Kezar, 2010). Many institutions may also lack the staff and resources to create and maintain an internal leadership program.

Several researchers have advocated for state or system level CCGYOs versus programs at the institutional level. Reille and Kezar (2010) stated,

Another possible solution is to collaborate with other local community colleges in the creation of a GYO program that brings together employees from different campuses and shares resources, curriculum, and speakers. A multi-college program could reduce bias, increase the breadth and depth of the materials taught, provide a venue for job shadowing, and offer access to a variety of presenters and mentors from different institutions. Participants could interact with, and learn from, other employees at neighboring colleges. (p. 78)

Artis and Bartel (2021) studied the leadership development practices and challenges facing community college presidents in Illinois. Many of these challenges were identified at the state level and dealt with legislation, like decreased state funding and declining enrollment as a statewide trend. The authors advocated for a state-level leadership program for the Illinois community colleges in their recommendations.

While the focus of this study has been to determine the most effective elements of a statewide CCGYO, the remainder of this chapter provides a review of key studies of CCGYOs at both the institutional and state or system level. The literature has largely focused on measuring the impact on CCGYO participants, their lived experiences, and which competencies or learning objectives should be prioritized by program organizers (Asadov, 2020; Davis, 2018). Other researchers, including Artis and Bartel (2021), Thomas (2019), and Anaya (2018) explored whether CCGYO outcomes align with the AACC's identified competencies. First, research revealing the impact of CCGYO leadership programs is explored, then research on competencies and learning objectives is summarized, and finally the elements common to effective CCGYOs are explained.

The Impact of CCGYO Leadership Development Programs

The effectiveness of CCGYOs has garnered attention from researchers since the first edition of a publication titled *Competencies for Community College Leaders* (AACC, 2006), which advocated for the use of the competencies to guide the development of CCGYOs. The AACC has regularly updated the competencies every few years, with the fourth iteration released in 2022 (AACC, 2022). Studies of the impact of CCGYOs based on these competencies can be found in the months and years following the release of each edition.

Asadov (2020) interviewed 13 graduates of a CCGYO created by a South Jersey Community College to ascertain the effectiveness of the program in achieving its learning objectives based on the second edition of the AACC (2013) *Competencies for Community College Leaders*. The researcher used the Kirkpatrick (1959) model for analyzing the impact of the participants' experiences. The model utilizes four levels. Level 1, reaction, refers to feedback from participants about whether they believed the experience to be positive or negative, and why. Level 2, learning, refers to whether the learning objectives were met, and to what extent. This usually involves a pre- and post-test. Level 3, behavior, refers to whether participants have implemented and utilized what they learned. Level 4, results, refers to how the behavior change has impacted the organization or the participant's outcomes in the field. These levels were used to measure the reaction, learning, behavior, and results of the participants as they pertained to the competencies identified by the AACC (2013): organizational strategy; institutional finance, research, fundraising, and resource management; communication; collaboration; and community college advocacy. Asadov (2020) found the participants overwhelmingly viewed the

experience positively for each of the six competencies. In terms of the impact the program had on the participants and the institution, examples of tangible results included re-organization of administration, redesigned courses, the adoption of new software to improve efficiency, a successful grant application, new fundraising efforts, and a program to help students apply for financial aid. Participants also became proficient at aligning goals to the institution's strategic plan in order to request funds. Asadov's study demonstrated that the CCGYO had a significant impact on both participants and their institution.

Thomas (2019) surveyed 14 graduates of the Western Pennsylvania Community College Leadership Institute to determine the perceived impact on participants. The author used the AACC (2013) competencies to measure the program's success in developing participants' leadership knowledge and skills. The author concluded, "The current study suggests that GYO leadership institutes do in fact provide an effective means of professional development for today's emerging community college leaders" (p. 54). Relationship building, networking, conflict resolution, shared governance, customer service, and collaboration were identified as the areas in which participants reported the greatest impact.

Forbes (2019) interviewed eight graduates of a CCGYO at Edge Water Community College system to discover their lived experience during and after participation in the program. The third of three themes reported by the author was meaningful leadership impact, which referred to participants "having a sense of leading positive change and knowing the lasting impact experienced by the GYO program" (p. 97). This theme emerged primarily from participants describing the implementation of

their capstone projects, the purpose of which was to address a challenge facing the institution. The impact of the CCGYO was two-fold: participants felt valued and confident after completing a project that was important for the college, and the college benefited from resolved challenges or new resources. Participants also reported a desire to continue to grow as a leader, develop leadership capacity in others, and consider career advancement.

Gray (2016) examined CCGYOs in the context of succession planning elements typically employed by private-sector businesses. From this perspective, CCGYOs were found to be effective at identifying employees who “had the desire to lead, the ability to think strategically, and who sought a broader knowledge of the organization” (p. 120). Gray said in some cases leadership development programs helped institutions look internally for candidates for key roles and eliminated the need for an external leadership search, which saved the institution both time and money. Research conducted by Hutchins (2023) is closely related to Gray’s succession-planning approach that focused on studying leadership in community colleges. Hutchins described the formal and informal leadership development experiences of community college practitioners who were promoted from within to mid-level positions at Washington State Community Colleges. Mid-level leaders were administrators with decision-making power, program management duties, and supervisory responsibilities. In the Washington State Community College system, most mid-level leaders in academic affairs held the titles of Dean or Associate Dean, and their counterparts in student and business affairs held the title of Director, though these roles and titles varied between institutions. Hutchins (2023) said formal learning experiences that incorporate informal learning concepts such as

leadership development programs that incorporate a cohort model, were “highly impactful for the mid-level leaders’ development of leadership skills” (pp. 174-175).

Barnard et al. (2021) researched the personal and institutional impacts of a leadership development program for women working in higher education in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. Although the research was conducted in countries other than the U.S., the sample size (1,094) makes this a compelling study worth reviewing when considering the impact of leadership development programs. The authors reported several impacts related to the leadership development program. The following list displays the impacts reported by at least half of respondents 3-6 months after completing the program. Respondents said their participation in the program increased the extent to which they:

- sought out leadership roles
- demonstrated the people skills needed for leadership roles
- knew what they wanted from their careers
- put themselves forward for career advancement
- felt comfortable in positions of authority
- engaged in leadership at work that was not part of their job description or role (Barnard et al. 2021)

Delozier (2019) interviewed 10 employees of Guilford Technical Community College in North Carolina to determine if their participation in a CCGYO titled President’s Leadership Seminar led to any change in the participant’s competencies, relationships, or the organization. The major themes reported were improved understanding of the college and what others do, expanded networks, improved

communication skills, better work relationships, and stronger preparation for professional opportunities. Minor themes included improved decision-making, the development of friendships with fellow participants, and a deeper understanding of how participants' roles at the college support the institution's mission.

Farley (2019) interviewed eight participants of a rural CCGYO to determine the program's impact on their leadership skills and competencies, career advancement behaviors, and understanding of institutional culture and institutional knowledge. The main areas where participants reported a substantial positive impact included:

- Networking skills and communication among peers across campus.
- Enhanced empathy for those in leadership positions.
- Enhanced awareness of their leadership style and strengths.
- Better problem-solving skills.
- Increased capacity to collaborate with others.
- Stronger holistic understanding of the college and how it operates.
- New relationships formed with other participants.
- More active role in leadership on campus.
- Decisions to pursue more formal education and career advancement.
- Gained knowledge of strategic planning, goal setting, and resource management.

Several researchers (Asadov, 2020; Barnard, et al. 2021; Forbes, 2019; Gray, 2016) indicated that CCGYOs have a substantial and lasting impact on participants and institutions. Participants have consistently reported the experience as beneficial to their ability to form and maintain relationships with others on campus, understanding of the

inner workings of institutions, willingness and ability to lead, and perceptions of their career trajectories. Institutions benefitted from more engaged employees and a stronger pool of applicants for key leadership positions. Besides their impact, the next most researched aspect of CCGYOs is which competencies are taught, and which ones should be taught.

CCGYO Competencies

The AACC has provided the community college sector of higher education with research-based competencies for nearly two decades through its publication, “Competencies for Community College Leaders” (AACC, 2006; AACC, 2013, AACC 2018a, AACC 2022). The first edition was published in 2006 after nearly two years of research and consulting with members of AACC affiliate councils, individuals involved with state-level and institution-level CCGYOs, representatives of colleges in underserved areas, and professionals involved with doctoral programs in higher education leadership. The AACC (2006) stated:

In other words, these respondents, who make up a significant percentage of U.S. community college leaders and leadership development program personnel, indicate that each of the six competencies is essential to community college leadership but that the integration of these competencies is not as well established. These findings suggest a crucial need to establish this framework and to promote these competencies in the curricula of community college leadership programs. (p. 3)

The six competencies initially published were organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, community college advocacy, and professionalism (AACC, 2006). Under each competency, examples were listed to

illustrate how the competency could manifest in the workplace. For example, under professionalism, there were 11 clarifying statements, including “Demonstrate transformational leadership through authenticity, creativity, and vision” and “Weigh short-term and long-term goals in decision making” (p. 6). The second and third editions were released in 2013 and 2018, respectively.

Nine competencies were identified in the most recent edition, which was released in 2022: institutional and cultural awareness; governance, local, state, and federal policy; student access and success; leadership; institutional transformation; fiscal planning and resource development; advocacy; partnerships and collaboration; and communication (AACC, 2022). The publication was organized in sections titled faculty, entry-level, manager, executive, and chief executive officer, with examples of how professionals at each level can demonstrate mastery of the competencies. The authors stated the publication was designed to be used by individuals looking to hone their skills in their current role, and to provide a clear pathway for individuals to improve to advance to higher levels. According to Forbes (2019), the AACC competencies have been used by institutions and systems to guide the development of CCGYOs, and researchers have also used the competencies to measure program effectiveness. Martin (2021) stated, “The efforts of the AACC contribute to the current model of a leader as a learner. Thus, community colleges could use the competencies as a road map to design leadership development programs for any individual interested in community college leadership” (p. 16). The competencies from each edition of the AACC’s publication are provided in Table 1. According to the AACC (2018a), the third edition represented a different approach to the competencies compared to the prior editions in that it was designed to be

aspirational and comprehensive, and it would be unrealistic to expect a community college leader to demonstrate mastery of all the competencies included.

Table 1*AACC Competencies for Community College Leaders*

First edition AACC (2006)	Second edition AACC (2013)	Third edition AACC (2018a)	Fourth edition AACC (2022)
Organizational strategy	Organizational strategy	Organizational culture	Institutional and cultural awareness
Resource management	Institutional finance, research, fundraising, and resource management	Governance, institutional policy, and legislation	Governance, local, state, and federal policy
Communication	Communication	Communications	Communication
Collaboration	Collaboration	Collaboration	Partnerships and collaboration
Community college advocacy	Community college advocacy	Advocacy and mobilizing/motivating others	Advocacy
Professionalism		Institutional leadership	Leadership
		Institutional infrastructure	Institutional transformation
		Student success	Student success
		Information and analytics	
		Fundraising and relationship cultivation	
		Personal traits and abilities	

Note. The order in which they are listed is intended to make it simpler to visualize how the competencies were adapted over the years, and they are not presented in the order provided in the respective editions.

The competencies provided by the AACC over the years have dominated the research on CCGYOs and the community college leadership shortage. Researchers have examined the use of the competencies in two primary ways. In some cases, researchers investigated the lived experiences of presidents, boards of trustee members, or others in leadership positions, then determined if their perceptions of the competencies needed to lead community colleges aligned with AACC competencies (Anaya, 2018; Artis & Bartel, 2021). In other research, the AACC competencies were viewed as learning outcomes to measure whether a CCGYO had been effective based on interviews with program graduates. In most cases the program's impact was found to be aligned with the AACC competencies (Asadov, 2020; Farley, 2019; Robison, 2014; Thomas, 2019). In both approaches, the nature of the competencies investigated have largely focused on technical competencies pertaining to managing the day-to-day operations of a community college. Fewer studies have focused on relational competencies including traits or personality attributes. The following sections describe research that has focused on technical competencies followed by research that has focused on relational competencies.

Technical Competencies

Robison (2014) utilized a survey delivered to 273 institutions that used open-ended questions. The author determined that most CCGYOs tended to align their learning outcomes with the AACC competencies, though they were not given equal treatment, as some were emphasized more than others. Professionalism and community college advocacy were the competencies that were emphasized the most, while resource management was the least emphasized. Robison recommended that CCGYOs put more

emphasis on training participants in competencies related to institutional finance and resource management.

Anaya (2018) interviewed 13 community college presidents to identify the competencies they found important to future community college leaders and determined to what degree those competencies were aligned with those provided by the AACC. According to Anaya, alignment was strong in most cases, but there were some gaps between the skills needed versus those identified by the AACC. Anaya recommended the need to develop communication skills, relationship building and collaboration skills, and listening skills, and that future community college leaders be honest, gain an understanding of fundraising and finances, develop political savvy, learn to take calculated risks, commit to student success, and understand the importance of an institution's mission, vision, and goals. The author also recommended new presidents employ the services of an executive coach, and that boards of trustees should support the professional development and training of new presidents to help them keep pace with the growing and changing nature of challenges facing community colleges.

Similar to Anaya (2018), Davis (2018) also took an open-ended approach to learning what competencies would be most relevant for future community college leaders. The author interviewed trustees and presidents about their perceptions of the challenges facing community colleges and the competencies needed to address them. Davis used a framework that divided competencies into three categories: human competencies, technical competencies, and conceptual competencies. The most dominant themes pertaining to human competencies were related to personal attributes like listening skills and communication, and relationship management with both external and

internal stakeholder groups. The most dominant themes pertaining to technical competencies were related to delegating and institutional finance. The most dominant themes pertaining to conceptual competencies were related to the development of a vision, mission, and strategic plan.

Farley (2019) interviewed eight employees who completed a small rural CCGYO to determine its impact on the participants in several ways, including which competencies were taught and whether they aligned with the AACC competencies. While the author reported strong alignment, some additional benefits and competencies not acknowledged directly by the AACC were noted by interviewees. These included an enhanced sense of trust among cohort members, and comfort in mentoring new employees and encouraging others to pursue leadership development.

Eight graduates of a CCGYO at the Edge Water Community College system participated in a study by Forbes (2019), who investigated their lived experience during and after participation. The author found the topics covered by the program to be in alignment with the AACC competencies. The following were the subject areas covered by the CCGYO:

- Community College History
 - Introduction of community colleges, past to present
- Edge Water Community College History and Organization
 - Organization structure, mission, vision, and values.
 - Historical perspective
- Workforce Development
 - Career and technical education, corporate college

- Resource Development
- Securing and managing grant funding
- Accreditation
 - The agency rules and documentation needed to prepare for an accreditation process
- Labor Relations
 - Civil rights, FERPA, faculty and staff
- Human Resources
 - Employee relations, hiring, coaching, terminations, faculty and staff
- Campus Safety and Security
 - Campus violence and campus security, inclusive emergency plans and preparedness, security audits
- Finance and Administration
 - Budgeting, operations, allocation, and strategic planning
- Student Development
 - Role of student development in community college
- Communication
 - Communicating using a positive focus
- Conflict Resolution
 - Scenarios of techniques required to resolve conflict (p. 109)

Smith et al. (2019) sought to determine the best methods for incorporating the AACC (2018) competencies into graduate programs in community college leadership.

The authors reported their recommendations could also apply to CCGYOs. They said, “Although the AACC competencies were designed and targeted at a macro, national level, they can serve as a guide for developing state-specific, contextually relevant leadership preparation programs” (p. 118). Smith et al. also recommended that not all competencies should be prioritized, as the list is intended to be comprehensive and it is not realistic to expect graduates to have mastered every competency.

Relational Competencies

Artis and Bartel (2021) interviewed 11 presidents to examine which competencies were important in community college leadership. Similar to results noted by other researchers, Artis and Bartel reported that the AACC’s competencies were aligned with those identified by the presidents. However, the interviewees “also expressed the need for presidents to exhibit courage, curiosity, self-awareness, self-reflection, and the importance of providing mentorship to emerging leaders” (p. 685). This acknowledgement of the existence of traits and behaviors beyond the technical competencies commonly studied was recurrent in the literature.

Martin (2021) said the list of competencies is only a partial picture of what it takes to be successful in community college leadership. He suggested the AACC competencies should be viewed as a set of guidelines to start with rather than a comprehensive and final doctrine. According to Martin, participants in many studies list personal traits or behaviors, like ethics, humility, passion, listening skills, and motivation, as critical to successful community college leadership. Martin concluded, “In this light, the role of future community college leadership programs is to integrate organizational

competencies and personal traits to ensure effective identification and preparation of community college leaders” (pp. 16-17).

Eddy and Garza Mitchell (2017) cautioned against the potential for too narrow of a focus on a handful of technical competencies when the challenges facing community colleges are dynamic, complex, and idiosyncratic to systems and institutions:

While the AACC competencies provide a baseline for learning about the duties of leadership in a community college that are easily taught in leadership programs, they do not adequately address the concepts of what it means to be a leader or what it means to lead a community college. (p. 130)

The AACC (2018a) also acknowledged the importance of personal traits and abilities in addition to the technical competencies and included them in the list of competencies in the third edition of *Competencies for Community College Leaders* (AACC, 2018). These personal traits and abilities were omitted from the fourth edition’s list of competencies. Instead, the authors elaborated briefly on them in the publication’s introduction. Those mentioned in the introduction section of the fourth edition included:

- Authenticity
- Emotional Intelligence
- Humility
- Compassion
- Resilience and Flexibility
- Ethics
- Change Agents
- Growth Mindset

- Develop Formal and Informal Networks
- Scheduling Times for Self-Care
- Mentoring and Counseling
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Wear Multiple Hats

Forthun and Freeman (2017) reported a similar trend for community college presidents to emphasize the relational, rather than technical competencies. Forthun and Freeman cited a study by Fox (2008), who indicated that ethics, modesty, passion, and listening were among the relational competencies most frequently mentioned.

Porter (2017) interviewed 12 women senior administrators to determine which experiences in their career most effectively developed their leadership abilities. The researcher utilized the AACC (2013) competencies as a framework for measuring development of technical competencies. However, Porter's findings extended beyond the list of competencies and the author noted an emphasis on the importance of the ability to nurture relationships.

Guse (2021) conducted a mixed-methods study of the perceptions of aspiring leaders from a Midwestern community college system to determine the importance of change leadership skills in leading community colleges. The author reported six competencies were important for aspiring leaders. Half of the competencies could be considered technical in nature with a focus on understanding the nature of change leadership and how it aligns with an institution's mission. The other half could be considered relational, with a focus on self-reflection, building meaningful relationships, and knowing how to demonstrate empathy and vulnerability. Anaya (2018) also

identified a set of relational competencies and summarized them in a separate theme titled “other key leadership competencies.” These competencies included relationships, listening, politics, integrity, and honesty.

Elements of Successful CCGYO Leadership Development Programs

The review of the literature revealed six elements of CCGYOs most frequently mentioned. These six elements in order from most frequently mentioned to least used are hands-on learning and/or capstone projects, mentorship, opportunities for introspection/self-analysis, networking or cohort format, presentations from practitioners, and duration of the program.

In addition to having investigated the impact and competencies of CCGYOs, Forbes (2019) included an interview question asking participants which aspects contributed most to the development of their leadership skills and knowledge. Participants identified three elements that were more impactful than others. These elements included work on a capstone project that had real impact at their institutions, presentations from leaders at the community college, and mentoring. The elements are listed in order beginning with the most potent impact on participants. Forbes elaborated on findings pertaining to the capstone project and its impact on participants:

When the college recognized participants’ leadership ability by institutionalizing the recommended solution to the capstone project, that acknowledgement increased the confidence of the participants. It appears that the validation given by vice chancellors and campus presidents gave the participants the confidence in their work products and in their thought processes. (p. 118)

Forbes also reported on elements common to CCGYO andragogy. Common elements included first-hand exposure to college operations and history, an integration of the AACC leadership competencies, experiential or hands-on learning, the use of self-assessment tools, mentorship, cultural competencies, and exposure to financial and resource management. Forbes also emphasized the potent role of relationship development and interpersonal connections facilitated through networking opportunities, as an underlying element that supported much of the learning and growth of participants of CCGYOs:

A deeper review of the patterns found within the data revealed a single, common thread within the shared lived experience in the GYO leadership development program – the essence of connections. The essence of connections was explored through participants’ connection to: (a) colleagues, college leaders, and the institution, (b) the GYO program and how participants perceived/connected to their development, and (c) participants’ ability to make an impact on others and within the institution. (p. 126)

The duration of the program was also discussed by the participants in Forbes’ (2019) study. Most said the program’s one-year length was too long and interfered with participants’ ability to manage a healthy work-life balance. The author acknowledged the networking and relationship development benefits that come from a cohort spending more time together and over a longer time span, but recommended the length be reduced to seven or eight months.

Farley’s (2019) research on competencies at a rural community college’s leadership institute also yielded themes pertaining to elements of the institute that were

more potent in teaching leadership competencies. The author provided a list of strategies to develop leadership competencies, including offering opportunities to encourage self-awareness of personalities and leadership strengths, confidence building measures, exposure to diverse leadership styles, mentorship, sharing institutional knowledge, understanding leadership pathways, promoting leadership development from within the college, and enculturation of the college. Farley also recommended that future research should examine program length.

Part of Asadov's (2020) research on the impact of a CCGYO included interview questions designed to reveal which elements of the CCGYO curriculum were preferred by participants. Mentorship, hands-on learning, and group exercises were among the elements identified. Coaching and mentoring, in particular, were unanimously mentioned repeatedly as important elements of the CCGYO curriculum. Asadov provided additional elaboration about coaching and mentorship and stated, "Establishing a coaching or mentorship pool of candidates would help manage the succession planning process and allow for individualized growth. Failure to implement either of these practices would most likely result in lack of interest for future training" (p. 110).

DeLozier (2019) also cited the importance of networking and the connections established during CCGYOs, and said, "It appears the time spent together and the opportunity to have exchanges is impactful to the level that participants speak of it as a key component" (p. 147). The author's sixth interview question asked participants which elements of the program structure influenced any improvements in leadership capabilities. Participants mentioned networking, presentations from practitioners, and group projects as some of the most potent to their growth and development as leaders.

Hohensee (2012) indicated that participants of a CCGYO in Louisiana reported the opportunity for networking as one of the most valuable elements. Hohensee said the networking opportunities were facilitated by the cohort format, and the program was held over a nine-month period. According to Hohensee, this combination of the cohort format, duration, and the resulting networking opportunities resulted in one of the most potent elements leading to their leadership growth and development.

Eddy and Garza Mitchell (2017) also found networking to be one of the most important aspects of CCGYOs. The authors argued for a new perspective on community college leadership altogether, suggesting that the traditional reliance on individual hero-like leaders is no longer a realistic expectation. They recommended that community colleges shift this paradigm to something they called networked leadership, a concept involving the leadership development of individuals from across a campus and every level in the hierarchy from custodial staff to senior administrators. According to Eddy and Garza Mitchell,

Networks provide a way to tap into diversity—in thinking, in experience, in worldviews—that allow for a wider consideration of solutions. To develop this cadre of leaders, it is important to first view all campus members as potential leaders, and next to provide them with continued opportunities for personal development. (p. 139)

Hutchins (2023) offered a recommendation that mid-level leaders should utilize leadership development opportunities that incorporate specific elements that were identified as impactful. These included mentorship, cohort models, presentations from practitioners, and networking. One of the major themes of the study was that teaching the

theory behind leadership concepts is not enough, and that participants needed opportunities to apply what is learned in real-life situations.

Johnson (2019) surveyed 105 faculty and mid to upper-level administrators who had completed the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy, a state-level CCGYO. The researcher utilized the AACC (2006) competencies to assess the CCGYO. Mentoring emerged as a more impactful element than others. Johnson also noted that CCGYOs were considered to be one of the best methods for acquiring leadership competencies.

Thomas (2019) offered several recommendations for improvements to the elements of the Western Pennsylvania Community College Leadership Institute. These included adding more hands-on activities and projects, and a continued emphasis on presentations from key professionals like the president. The hands-on activities and projects, the author said, should be devised based on real-world needs of their institution. Networking was noted as one of the most appreciated aspects of the program, along with relationship building opportunities.

Gay and Tobia (2019) launched a CCGYO and operated it for nearly two decades on their campus. They offered advice to others seeking to do the same. Gay and Tobia advocated for a form of the networked leadership concept by recommending programs develop diverse teams within the program. The authors said, “The different styles of thinking provide a language for participants to understand why there can be conflicts based on the way different people think about and approach things. Learning to work with those differences is an important leadership skill” (p. 3). In addition to networking,

Gay and Tobia recommended including a team project, opportunities for introspection through personality tests, and mentorship.

In Tobia and Gay's (2018) book on developing leadership programs, the authors also advocated for presentations from practitioners and a host of other recommendations, including:

- The program is a priority of the institution's president.
- The program is organized with clear goals and expectations.
- Criteria for participation is selective.
- There is a commitment of financial assistance.
- An effective coordinator(s) is/are in place.
- Projects of benefit to the institution are an integral part of the program.
- Presenters on key topics are both internal and external to the institution and have expert credentials.
- Assessment is consistent and ongoing.
- Sustainable contacts with alumni are planned. (p. 83)

While many researchers have identified key elements of CCGYOs, there is a lack of research dedicated to which andragogical tools are best suited to the growth and development of participants in CCGYOs. Anaya (2018) acknowledged this gap and recommended future research focusing on andragogical tools and encouraged others to examine "which learning activity is the most effective in the development of each leadership competency" (p. 150). Several researchers including Hutchins (2023), Johnson (2019), and Smith et al. (2019) also noted the lack of research devoted to determining the best strategies for teaching the competencies. Smith et al. said, "Still, there is no accepted

standard for what should be included in community college leadership curricula or how it should be delivered” (p. 118). Hohensee (2012), who recommended future research on the elements of CCGYOs, said,

Specifically, community college leadership development programs in other states should be evaluated in more detail. Findings related to program formats and components for developing the leadership potential of participants would be useful contributions to the literature and for institutional planning purposes. (p. 79)

Summary

Chapter 2 provided an overview of the literature as it pertains to the crisis in community college leadership in the U.S. and how the 2-year sector has attempted to address the crisis with various leadership development programs. Also discussed in this review were studies that focused on the impact, competencies, and elements of andragogy utilized in CCGYOs. In Chapter 3, the research methods used in the study are explained. The research design, setting, sampling procedures, instrument, data collection procedures, data analysis and synthesis, reliability and trustworthiness, the researcher’s role, and limitations are described in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3

Methods

The purpose of this study was to examine perceptions of KCCLI completers about the extent the program impacted participants' engagement in leadership activities at their institutions, the program's impact on leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and leadership roles, which elements were most or least effective, and which elements should be included or excluded from the program. This chapter describes the methodology used in the current study. It includes the research design, setting, sampling procedures, instrument, data collection procedures, data analysis and synthesis, reliability and trustworthiness, researcher's role, and limitations of the study.

Research Design

A qualitative phenomenological research design was used in this study. Lunenburg and Irby (2008) said this method "involves the description of phenomena in our world. In this type of inquiry, the phenomena described are basic information, actions, behaviors, and changes in phenomena" (p. 89) from the perspective of the researcher and research participants. The researcher focused on clarifying phenomena through participants' eyes. Phenomena explored included participants' perceptions about a state-level leadership development program's impact on their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and leadership roles. The researcher also examined which topics and experiences participants perceived should be included or excluded from a state-level community college leadership development program.

Setting

The setting for this study consisted of the 19 community colleges in Kansas. This selection was purposeful because the KCCLI involves representatives from each of the 19 community colleges in Kansas each year. Kansas community colleges collectively serve more than 100,000 students each year with programs focused primarily on career technical education and the successful transfer of students to bachelor's degree programs at universities (Kansas Association of Community College Trustees, n.d.).

Sampling Procedures

The population for this study included community college professionals who participated in a state-level leadership development program in Kansas. According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), purposive sampling involves utilizing a researcher's understanding of and familiarity with the group being studied. The researcher chose participants who had completed the program between 2016 and 2021 to ensure the participants had ample time to utilize what they gained from the program at their respective institutions. Participants were nominated to join a KCCLI cohort by their respective institutions' presidents during the summer prior to each KCCLI. The program begins in the fall and continues throughout the academic year (Kansas Association of Community College Trustees, n.d.). Eleven individuals who had completed the KCCLI participated in the study.

Instrument

An interview protocol was developed based on the literature, research questions, and the researcher's experience with leadership development programs. The researcher developed a semi-structured interview protocol to examine participants' perceptions

about leadership activities they have engaged in at their higher education institution after participation in the KCCLI, the impact of the KCCLI on their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and achievement, and the program's most and least impactful elements on the development of leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and achievement. Interview questions also asked study participants about topics and experiences they perceived should be included or excluded in a state leadership development program. The researcher also utilized probing questions to better understand answers to interview questions and to obtain examples when necessary. According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), "The main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say" (p. 91).

The interview protocol included three factual demographic questions, followed by 15 semi-structured interview questions aligned with the research questions. The demographic questions included the following:

Demographics

IQ1. What is your title?

IQ2. What year did you begin working at your current institution?

IQ3. What year did you complete the KCCLI?

The research questions and respective interview questions included the following:

RQ1

What are the perceptions of completers of the KCCLI about what leadership activities they have engaged in at their higher education institution as a result of their participation in the program?

IQ4. What projects or activities in which you have been engaged at your institution could be attributed to your participation in the state-level community college leadership development program?

RQ2

What are the perceptions of completers of the KCCLI about its impact on their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles in which they have served?

IQ5. In what ways (if any) has the KCCLI impacted your leadership competencies as a community college professional?

IQ6. In what ways (if any) has the KCCLI impacted your behavior as a community college professional?

IQ7. In what ways (if any) has the KCCLI impacted your self-efficacy as a community college professional?

IQ8. In what ways (if any) has the KCCLI impacted leadership roles you have served in as a community college professional?

RQ3

What are the perceptions of completers of the KCCLI about the program's most impactful elements on the development of their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles in which they have served?

IQ9. What elements of the KCCLI were the most impactful on your leadership competencies as a community college professional?

IQ10. What elements of the KCCLI were the most impactful on your behaviors as a community college professional?

IQ11. What elements of the KCCLI program were the most impactful on your self-efficacy as a community college professional?

IQ12. What elements of the KCCLI were the most impactful on leadership roles in which you have served as a community college professional?

RQ4

What are the perceptions of completers of the KCCLI about the program's least impactful elements on the development of their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles in which they have served?

IQ13. What elements of the KCCLI program were the least impactful on your leadership competencies as a community college professional?

IQ14. What elements of KCCLI were the least impactful on your behavior as a community college professional?

IQ15. What elements of the KCCLI were the least impactful on your self-efficacy as a community college professional?

IQ16. What elements of the KCCLI were the least impactful on leadership roles in which you have served as a community college professional?

RQ5

What are the perceptions of completers of the KCCLI about what topics and experiences should be included in a community college leadership development program?

IQ17. Based on your experience, what topics and experiences should be included in a community college leadership development program?

RQ6

What are the perceptions of completers of the KCCLI about what topics and experiences should be excluded from a community college leadership development program?

IQ18. Based on your experience, what topics and experiences should be excluded from a community college leadership development program?

To ensure the validity of the interview protocol and relevance of the interview questions, the researcher provided the research questions and interview questions to two peer reviewers prior to conducting interviews with research participants. The external auditors reviewed the alignment between the interview protocol questions and the research questions. Both auditors were familiar with qualitative research and had conducted qualitative research studies. External auditor one was a faculty member at Oral Roberts University. External auditor two was a retired faculty member who had worked at Fort Hays State University. Both auditors agreed that the interview questions were aligned with the research questions. Neither external auditor had any suggestions for changing the wording of the questions in the interview protocol.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher submitted a request to conduct research for the study to the Baker University Institutional Review Board (IRB) on October 10, 2023. The researcher was granted approval to conduct research from the Baker University IRB committee on October 17, 2023 (see Appendix A). Upon IRB approval, the researcher asked the KCCLI to provide contact information for individuals who had participated in the CCGYO from 2016 through 2021.

In addition to having external auditors review the interview protocol, two pilot interviews were conducted. Two community college professionals who had completed the KCCLI participated in the pilot interviews. Pilot interview participant one was a faculty member at Barton Community College. Pilot interview participant two was a staff member at Cowley Community College. Both pilot interview participants were members of the 2018-2019 KCCLI cohort. The pilot interview participants evaluated the clarity and relevance of the interview questions, interactions with the interviewer, and the overall process of the interview. The only suggestion was to provide definitions of competencies, behavior, self-efficacy, and roles prior to asking questions pertaining to these terms, which the interviewer implemented.

An Invitation to Participate in a Study (see Appendix B) was emailed to 125 potential participants. The Invitation to Participate in a Study provided an overview of the study, the AACCC (2022) Competencies, and interview questions. Potential participants were provided information on how the researcher would assure confidentiality and anonymity, and were informed that participation was voluntary. The Invitation to Participate in a study indicated participants could refrain from answering any of the interview questions and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Potential participants were informed that participation in the study would require no more than 60 minutes of their time. The researcher also indicated that the interview would be recorded and that the researcher would be taking notes during the interview. Potential participants were assured that participation would bring no risk or discomfort, and that no compensation was being offered. The Invitation to Participate in a Study indicated that after the interview was transcribed, each participant would receive a copy of their

interview transcript and would have the opportunity to provide additional context and clarification for responses to interview questions.

Those who elected to participate in the study were contacted individually to arrange an interview time and place. One hour was scheduled for each interview. Precautions were taken to ensure the comfort and safety of interview participants and the researcher by offering the participants the option to meet via Zoom teleconferencing software or face-to-face. All participants chose to participate in an interview via Zoom and returned a signed consent form (see Appendix C) via email prior to the interview.

The researcher heeded the advice of Lunenburg and Irby (2008), who said interviewers should “attend to: (a) careful listening, (b) nonverbal cues, (c) the progress of the conversation, (d) probing when needed, (e) taking notes, and (f) not responding during the interview” (p. 91). During the interviews, the researcher took notes on both verbal and nonverbal responses, including posture and body language, facial expressions, pauses, and tone of voice. The researcher audio recorded interviews to ensure accuracy of the transcripts and to allow the researcher to remain present and engaged during the interview. A pseudonym known only to the researcher (e.g., Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.) was assigned to each recording and transcript and was utilized in the explanation of the results. This measure was taken to ensure the anonymity of participants.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

The researcher followed Creswell and Creswell’s (2018) five steps for qualitative data analysis: organize and prepare the data for analysis, read or look at all the data, code the data, generate a description and themes, and represent the description and themes in the context of the study’s narrative. To implement Creswell and Creswell’s first step,

organize and prepare the data for analysis, the researcher transcribed each interview using the automated live transcription feature of Zoom teleconferencing software, which was used to record the interviews. Then the researcher read each transcript while listening to each recording to correct any errors in the transcripts.

Once all of the transcript drafts were finalized, the appropriate transcript was sent via email to each participant. Participants were asked to review their transcript for errors, omissions, or additions. Creswell and Creswell (2018) called this process member checking. Participants did not report finding any errors or omissions, and did not provide any additions. Once all transcripts were returned to the researcher, notations about body language or tone of voice were made in the margin of each transcript. To implement Creswell and Creswell's second step of data analysis, the researcher read each transcript several times observing consistencies and differences in responses.

Creswell and Creswell's (2018) third step of data analysis, coding, was completed using MAXqda qualitative data analysis software. MAXqda provides numerous tools (e.g., assigning categories to pieces of text, searching for recurring words or phrases, etc.) to researchers to accelerate and enhance the coding process. Once all the data were coded, the researcher applied Creswell and Creswell's (2018) fourth step of qualitative data analysis, generate a description of themes. Connections and relationships among the codes were reviewed to identify themes. The researcher then developed a phrase or statement to represent each theme. In accordance with Creswell and Creswell's (2018) step five of qualitative data analysis, the researcher reflected upon each theme to derive its meaning in a broader context.

The researcher provided the transcripts and identified themes to the same external auditors who examined the interview protocol alignment with the research questions prior to conducting interviews. The reviewers confirmed the accuracy of the data analysis and identified themes. The interview recordings and transcripts were digitally stored in a password-protected Google Drive folder only accessible by the researcher. All data were deleted five years after data analysis was completed.

Reliability and Trustworthiness

Creswell and Creswell (2018) said validity can also be described in other terms, like trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility (p. 200). They recommended using multiple validity strategies for qualitative research to “enhance the researcher’s ability to assess the accuracy of findings as well as convince readers of that accuracy” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 200). The researcher chose to employ three of the eight strategies provided by Creswell and Creswell (2018), including member checking, utilizing external auditors, and clarifying bias. Member checking refers to when the researcher returns interview transcripts to participants to gauge whether the participants agree the interview transcripts are accurate. The same two external auditors who reviewed the interview protocol for alignment with the research questions also reviewed the interview transcripts and theme identification. The researcher also provided the findings to the interviewees. To minimize bias, the researcher regularly considered the potential impact of his participation in the KCCLI and his professional experiences on identification and interpretation of the findings.

In addition to the Creswell and Creswell (2018) strategies for increasing reliability and trustworthiness, the researcher utilized several provided by Shenton (2004)

to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. These methods were compartmentalized into three categories. Shenton's (2004) categories are credibility, or how congruent the findings are with reality transferability, which indicates the extent to which findings can be applied to other situations; dependability, which indicates the extent to which findings would be the same if the study were repeated under the same conditions with the same participants; and confirmability, or the extent to which the study was conducted objectively. Some strategies were redundant with Creswell and Creswell's (2018) recommendations. In those cases, such strategies are not mentioned a second time in this section. The researcher was familiar with the KCCLI through personal participation, a component Shenton (2004) said enhances credibility. Reassuring study participants that involvement was voluntary and anonymous, and encouraging them to be frank with their responses ensured honesty in the responses to interview questions. While Shenton (2004) said transferability and dependability cannot be guaranteed in a qualitative phenomenological study to the same extent as a quantitative study, the researcher took steps to provide a clear description of the phenomenon under investigation.

Researcher's Role

The role of the researcher in qualitative studies "as the primary data collection instrument necessitates the identification of personal values, assumptions and biases at the outset of the study" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 205). The researcher was employed at Barton Community College, which is a rural comprehensive community college in Great Bend, Kansas. The researcher was a participant in the 2018-2019 KCCLI cohort. The researcher's familiarity with the program informed the process of writing

specific research questions and interview questions. The researcher also completed a study of another leadership development program to fulfill the thesis requirement for a Master of Science degree in Communication. The former study included an examination of the impact of a community centric leadership development program (Steinert, 2016). This experience informed the development of the current study. The researcher strove to maintain integrity, self-awareness, and intentionality throughout the research process to minimize any detrimental influence of bias on the study.

Limitations

According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), limitations are factors beyond the control of the researcher that may impact the interpretation of findings or accuracy of the results). Creswell and Creswell (2018) offered a general guide to possible limitations based on the data collection type. Using this resource as a guide, the researcher identified the following as limitations of the study:

1. The interviews were conducted outside of the context of the program, and interviewees may have had difficulty recalling experiences that were included in the KCCLI leadership development program.
2. Not all interviewees may have been able to accurately articulate their experiences.
3. The presence of audio recording equipment may have been disruptive and influenced responses.
4. The study included responses from 11 KCCLI participants whose responses may not reflect the views of all KCCLI participants.

5. Study respondents were asked only about their participation in the KCCLI.

Participant views and experiences may not be representative of individuals who have participated in other leadership development programs.

Summary

This chapter explained the researcher's process for applying a qualitative phenomenological research design utilizing interviews to explore the perceptions of participants of the KCCLI leadership development program. Six research questions guided the study. An interview protocol that consisted of factual demographic questions and semi-structured interview questions was used in the study. This chapter described the methodology of the study including the research design, setting, sampling procedures, instrument, data collection procedures, data analysis and synthesis, reliability and trustworthiness, researchers' role, and limitations of the study. Chapter 4 explains the results of the study.

Chapter 4

Results

This study examined the perceptions of completers of the KCCLI, a state-level community college leadership development program, about its impact on personal development and growth as well as the usefulness of components of the program. The first purpose of the study was to examine KCCLI completers' perceptions about leadership activities they have engaged in because of participation in the leadership development program. The second purpose of the study was to investigate KCCLI completers' perceptions about the impact the leadership development program had on their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles. The third purpose of the study was to assess KCCLI completers' perceptions about elements of the program that were the most impactful on development of leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles. The fourth purpose of the study was to identify KCCLI completers' perceptions about program elements that were least impactful on development of their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles. The fifth purpose of the study was to explore KCCLI completers' perceptions about program elements that should be included in future leadership development curricula. The sixth purpose of the study was to research KCCLI completers' perceptions about which elements of the program should be excluded in future leadership development curricula. Chapter 4 includes a summary of descriptive and demographic characteristics of study participants, and the results of the data analysis of interviews conducted with 11 KCCLI graduates from the classes of 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020, and 2021.

Descriptive and Demographic Background of Study Participants

To understand the background of the participants, three descriptive and demographic questions were asked. Of the 11 participants, two had been at their current institution for 5 years or less, three had been at their institution for 6-10 years, one had been at their institution for 11-15 years, one had been at their institution for 16-20 years, and four had been at their institution for more than 20 years. Two participants were members of the inaugural class, which concluded in 2016. Classes II and V were each represented by two participants. Three participants from class III and VI were interviewed.

Four hierarchies of positions were reported by participants. Two were presidents, five were vice-presidents, one was a dean, and three held a title of director or executive director. Three of the vice presidents were the administrators in charge of academic affairs. The other two vice presidents served as chief financial officers for their institutions and led administrative services or finance and operations. The participant in the role of dean was responsible for instruction and assessment. The three participants in the role of director managed public relations and marketing, adult education, or student support services departments.

The next sections provide descriptions of the major themes that emerged from the analysis of responses to the interview questions. Six major themes were identified: leadership activities KCCLI participants have engaged in at their higher education institution as a result of their participation in the program; the KCCLI's impact on participants' leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles in which they have served; most impactful elements related to development of leadership competencies,

behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles in which they have served; least impactful elements related to development of leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles in which they have served; topics and experiences KCCLI participants believe should be included in a community college leadership development program; and topics and experiences KCCLI participants believe should be excluded from a community college leadership development program. Paraphrased accounts and direct quotes are included to illustrate the interview respondents' perceptions about their experience with the KCCLI.

Leadership Activities KCCLI Participants Have Engaged in at Their Higher Education Institution as a Result of Their Participation in the Program

To gain perspective as to what extent the KCCLI motivated participants to take action at their institutions, participants were asked to identify any activities which they have engaged in as a direct result of their participation in the program. Seven out of 11 respondents reported that they had moved up in the leadership hierarchy at their institution because of participation in the KCCLI. Participants reported one or more of the following conditions that led to a new position: increased confidence and competence led the participant to seek an opportunity for advancement, participation in KCCLI was viewed as a qualification for advancement by others on campus, or increased involvement on campus increased awareness of a participant by administrators. Participant 1 attributed their current role as president partly to participation in the KCCLI. Participant 2 shared a similar account about their current role as a vice-president and stated, "It [participation in the KCCLI] gave me the basis and additional knowledge to be able to move into the VPA [Vice-President of Academics] role I'm in now."

Participant 9 recalled a phone call from the president asking them to lead the strategic planning process, which was prior to their promotion to a vice-president position,

I remember asking our President, ‘Why me?’ You know, when he asked me about that, I really hadn't had any experience at all with strategic planning beyond my own department. And he said, ‘We've invested in you. The institution has invested in you.’ And one of the examples he gave was the KCCLI.

Although not a sub-theme, five participants mentioned the capstone project as the primary activity they would attribute to their participation in the KCCLI. In some cases, the impact was far-reaching and significant. For example, Participant 9 said their project was to implement a new shorter format for classes at their institution that would allow students to complete two levels of the subject in one semester. The Kansas Board of Regents later utilized the results of this project in a way that affected all the other community colleges in the state. Participant 1 shared a similar account. They said the Kansas Board of Regents utilized information from their project of studying graduation rates when crafting performance agreements, which affects all the community colleges in Kansas.

The KCCLI's Impact on Participants' Leadership Competencies, Behaviors, Self-efficacy, and Roles in Which They Have Served

All participants were asked to identify the ways in which participation in the KCCLI impacted their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles in which they have served. Four subthemes emerged. First, all participants indicated the extent to which they gained a deeper knowledge and understanding about one or more of the AACC competencies. Second, participants described a broadened awareness of their

institutions, the functions of various departments, and higher education in general. Third, participants reported increases in their confidence to take on more responsibility as higher education professionals. Lastly, participants said they believed the KCCLI enhanced their communication competence. Participant responses illustrating these sub-themes are included in the following subsections.

Increased knowledge and understanding of the AACC (2022) competencies.

This section includes specific references to the eight AACC (2022) competencies. All participants identified at least one competency about which they gained additional knowledge and understanding after participation in the KCCLI. While the participants varied in which competencies they felt were impacted, the interviewees collectively indicated increased knowledge and understanding was gained for all eight AACC (2022) competencies. Among the most frequently identified competencies were governance, partnerships and collaboration, and communication.

Seven of the 11 participants described governance as one of the AACC (2022) competencies they learned the most about after participating in the KCCLI. Participant 11 said they would count governance as one of the top three of eight competencies they learned the most about in the KCCLI. Participant 8 said they wouldn't have been aware of the governance challenges facing Kansas community colleges if they had not participated in the KCCLI,

It [the KCCLI] gives you knowledge of how we are all one and why some things we want to unite on as community colleges and come together, and some things you want to separate out. So I think that the overall structure of how the colleges are connected, but then, also how we are independent and individualized. I had no

idea. And I would say without the KCCLI, I would still not have any of that knowledge because of the type of work that I do. It's not a part of my everyday job.

Six of the 11 participants said the AACC (2022) competency of communication was also emphasized in the KCCLI. Participants 3 and 6 both elaborated and said their experience at the KCCLI helped them know their own communication styles more intimately and how to alter communication behavior depending on the personality and communication styles of others. Participant 4 indicated they had a reduced reluctance to speak with peers at their institution. Six of the 11 participants also indicated the AACC (2022) competency of partnerships and collaboration was among the most emphasized by the KCCLI.

Participant 6, for example, indicated new opportunities for working with other institutions on expanded programming was discussed in-depth because of connections made through the KCCLI. Participant 7 said the participation and collaboration competency was one of the most frequently practiced during KCCLI sessions through group work and round-table discussions.

Broadened awareness. Ten of the 11 participants described a broadening of their professional awareness in three ways. First, participants described an awareness of where they could seek help or advice on particular challenges or issues. Participant 1 said learning about the backgrounds of others during the KCCLI experience expanded their capacity to serve their institution because they were able to reach out for help when they knew a certain situation could be best addressed by a qualified colleague. Participant 1 elaborated, "It's the old Ghost Busters song - who you gonna call? If you have a problem, by knowing these people, you know I'm calling this person for this. I'm calling this

person for that.” Second, participants also described generally how they had developed a “broader” perspective or “higher level view” of their institution or higher education in Kansas, and the interrelationship of the 19 community colleges in the state. Participant 11 stated, “I would say I was being given the bird’s-eye view of institutional components throughout the year. This really gave me an opportunity to think more largely and more broadly about the college itself.” Participant 9 stated,

I was empowered and I was refreshed as a professional. I was thinking about big picture things instead of being stuck in the minutia of just the daily job. That had a huge impact on my confidence and my own view of myself as a leader.

Third, study participants described a deeper understanding of other departments within their own institution. Participant 2 stated,

[The KCCLI] encouraged me to seek information from those other silos if you will. I focus on academics, but it gave me some of the tools and some of the background to be knowledgeable enough with a base foundation to ask questions and dig into things like finance or student services as they directly relate to academics.

Participant 4 said in addition to deepening their understanding of the role of other departments, they also became more familiar and comfortable with the culture and nuances of higher education,

The KCCLI provided me a good lens, like you know if you go to any of our community college institutions across the state you're going to find, like, maybe one institution has a stellar financial aid department. And so you could go into that financial aid department, and you would really understand how it's supposed

to work and what best practices are. I think it was just really good for me to see how people in other departments run their departments, how they operate, how they problem solve, and what that looks like in real life and in real time at multiple institutions, because it was all completely foreign to me. I mean, it really was like culture shock. And I've heard many people say that, like they come from the private sector and that that there's this sense that this is a whole other world with its own vocabulary and practices and standards, and I don't speak this language, you know? So it really helped me in that respect.

Confidence to perform better or take on more responsibility. Nine of the 11 study participants described an impact on their confidence in a way that led them to take on more responsibility or perform better in their current role. Participant 3 moved to a position higher in the hierarchy at their institution. They cited their experience at the KCCLI as having impacted their self-efficacy, which led to them to apply for the position. They said the KCCLI helped them in terms of their self-worth and belief in their talents. Participant 8 also attributed a new position and taking on more responsibility to enhanced self-efficacy from their KCCLI experience. They stated,

I think it definitely gave me more confidence and support to move up and to move forward. I think they do a really great job of acknowledging their belief in your leadership skills and already acknowledging that you can, I mean, as Miss America as it sounds, that you can do whatever you want to do, so just go do it.

Participant 5 said their experience in the KCCLI is one of the catalysts that influenced them to become a Higher Learning Commission Peer Reviewer, among other new responsibilities. They elaborated,

I just completed my third accreditation visit. I serve on the Assessment Committee. I'm serving on the at-risk committee. I'm serving on the Higher Learning Commission Steering Committee. I served on a strategic planning committee made up of four of us. So it gave me some continued incentive for thinking through what else can I do for my institution, making me a more valuable employee.

Participant 7 said the KCCLI helped them build confidence so that they are able to step out of a familiar environment and support people in other ways and to try to make the community and the state a better place to live. Participant 9 said they have chaired committees and participated in several initiatives on campus when help was needed to make progress. They attributed the increased involvement to the confidence and skill gained from the KCCLI, which also led to a promotion to a vice-president role. They said, "It all originated there at the KCCLI. Lots of opportunities have opened up in roles, chairs of committees, leading the strategic planning process, and ultimately my job that I have now."

Participant 11 also had a list of several new responsibilities they attributed to their participation in the KCCLI. They said they have chaired more committees, like the instructional council, curriculum committee, and assessment committee. They said they also participated in the HLC assessment academy and success academy. They said, "I think the KCCLI not only again gave me some confidence to pick that up, but also supported my credibility for those areas of responsibility."

Communication competence. Seven of the 11 participants mentioned or described an improvement in their communication competence, in particular their

willingness and ability to communicate with people from a wider variety of professional backgrounds. Participant 11 gave credit to the KCCLI for improving their communication competence by showing them that some of their introverted communication tendencies, like listening and empathy, are valuable leadership behaviors. They stated, “So I would attribute that confidence in my ability to lead as an introvert to some of the discussions we had at the KCCLI.” Participant 3 said they felt more comfortable speaking with those higher in the institutional hierarchy and developed an understanding of how to interact with the college’s elected board. Participant 6 indicated the KCCLI experience helped them listen more intentionally and to know when someone needs a solution, and when someone simply needs to vent. Participant 4 said, “I think it has emboldened me to kind of put my money where my mouth is, or to lead in areas that I know are unpopular or will not be received with a lot of enthusiasm.”

Most Impactful Elements of the KCCLI on the Development of Leadership Competencies, Behaviors, Self-Efficacy, and Roles in Which They Have Served

All participants were asked to identify the elements of the KCCLI program they perceived to be most impactful on their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles in which they have served. Three elements emerged as sub-themes: presentations from practitioners, networking, and introspective activities. Participant responses illustrating these sub-themes are included in the following subsections.

Presentations from practitioners. Panels and individuals invited to speak to the cohort and spend time answering questions comprise this sub-theme, which was identified as one of the most impactful elements of KCCLI by nine of the 11 participants. Participant 11 recalled a specific speaker who delivered a presentation on security and

Title IX issues, which they said gave them an opportunity to think more broadly about the college, and they described a session on funding sources as particularly informative.

Participant 6 also recalled a specific guest speaker who presented on human resources policies and best practices, which they described as impactful to their behavior as a supervisor, particularly when dealing with difficult employees. They stated,

We always think about how difficult it is to let somebody go or to terminate employment. But what I walked away with from this speaker was that if you hold everyone to the same level of accountability, have proper documentation, and work through your process (verbal warning, written counseling, program improvement plans), if an individual can't meet those expectations, they will oftentimes resign versus the supervisor and human resources needing to terminate employment.

The topics and expertise of the panels or speakers varied among the participants in terms of which ones were mentioned, from community college employees to legislators and lobbyists. Participant 7 said this diversity of information and experts is what made this element impactful. They said,

We got to hear other people's perspectives as a cohort member listening to presidents or chief academic officers or chief financial officers. Sometimes one would speak to us as well about their responsibilities and the importance of them working together to making things work. It was all very important.

Participant 8 shared a similar sentiment but said some of the most valuable sessions included presidents and board of trustees chairpersons describing how the relationship between the board and president works. They also said a segment called

‘sage on the stage’ in which a president is invited to speak following an evening meal, held value for them. They added,

Hearing from the college presidents is great. They all would tell their personal story about how they became a college president, what their mission is, and what their goals are. And I think just hearing all the different backgrounds and the different takes on what a college president is was fascinating to me.

Networking. Eight of the 11 participants identified networking as one of the most impactful elements of the KCCLI. Participant 4 said exposure to other participants and their stories helped them feel more comfortable in their role. This participant stated,

I think it was a confidence builder to meet and talk to other people. It was a confidence builder to hear people describe their progress and their journeys through whatever kind of educational path they had followed that gave me confidence to just persist in kind of making my role my own. And so I think the KCCLI did give me that validation and that sense of ‘yeah, you belong here, you're capable of doing this’.

Participant 8 shared a similar sentiment,

So hearing, ‘I was a coordinator, and now I'm a director,’ or ‘I was a professor, and now I'm a dean,’ or hearing and seeing people and then making that connection of what's different from them to me? There is no difference.

Participant 9 also indicated that networking improved self-efficacy by learning from others and relating to the professional challenges they have in common. They elaborated, “To see that other people are struggling with the same things that you're struggling with and learning from each other how you overcome those things, and that it's

not going to be like this forever.” They said in addition to empathizing about similar struggles, effective solutions were also offered or discovered. They added, “They share ‘Here’s what I did, maybe give that a shot’. Or, you can adapt whatever they have done to meet your own needs.”

Several participants who identified networking as an impactful element also described the utility of having connections across the state in different capacities they could call on for advice. For example, Participant 1 said if they had a question about curriculum, they knew exactly who to call thanks to connections made at the KCCLI. They also said some of the best networking opportunities were outside the classroom when participants could be less formal and more candid.

Introspective activities. Introspective activities included personality tests, assessment of personal strengths, and crafting personal mission and vision statements and leadership philosophies. Participant 4 completed the KCCLI in 2020 and said they still refer to their personal mission and vision statements. Participant 8 said the Clifton StrengthsFinder, which identifies one’s top five out of 34 possible strengths as one of the most impactful elements on their leadership behavior. They described their current team as strengths-based, and projects and tasks are assigned based on team member strengths. They stated, “That provided so much insight and self-awareness, and also how to leverage those strengths. Learning about that and then looking at how to implement that as a leader has helped to shape our team.” Participant 3 said crafting a personal mission and vision were the most impactful activities in the KCCLI. They noted that after sharing the statements with their team that some feedback indicated they were falling short on a few of their ideals, which gave them an opportunity to work on these areas.

Least Impactful Elements of the KCCLI on the Development of Leadership Competencies, Behaviors, Self-Efficacy, and Roles in Which They Have Served

All 11 participants were asked to identify which elements of the KCCLI were least impactful to their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles in which they have served. In terms of elements considered to be least impactful, no sub-themes emerged. However, all 11 indicated the question was challenging and responded in one of four ways. Participants either offered no comment or asked to skip the question; indicated the reason they noted an element as least impactful was related to their preferences, learning styles, or life situation; indicated that everything had some degree of value; or a combination of these statements. For example, Participant 9 said they read through the interview questions prior to the interview and were unable to develop a strong answer, but described the two-day format of the sessions as least impactful. They said this had more to do with their desire to return home to their two young children than any lack of value or impact. They also said that in hindsight she saw the importance of giving cohort members time to spend interacting informally during dinner in the evening. Participant 1 described the readings as the least impactful, but also said that they had value and selecting that element as least impactful had more to do with their self-description as a non-reader. Four participants, whose classes were interrupted by COVID-19 in some way mentioned content delivery via Zoom when asked about the least impactful elements of the KCCLI, which was the most frequently mentioned response to the question. It should be mentioned that Zoom was only used as a delivery format during the COVID-19 precautions related to not meeting in person.

Topics and Experiences KCCLI Participants Believe Should Be Included in a Community College Leadership Development Program

All participants were asked to identify which topics and experiences should be included in a community college leadership development program. Two sub-themes emerged from the data analysis: communication and governance. Participant responses illustrating these sub-themes are included in the following subsections.

Communication. Six of the 11 participants described various aspects of communication while answering the question on what should be included in a CCGYO, though they spoke from different perspectives. Two suggested an element on conflict resolution should be included. Two suggested the subject of navigating politics of higher education should be emphasized. The remaining two participants suggested communication as a skill should be more emphasized, and that more opportunities to practice communication should be included.

Governance. Six of the 11 participants indicated that aspects of governance should continue to be emphasized for future KCCLI cohorts. Participant 10 said elements of governance pertaining to all levels should be addressed, including local, state, and federal. Most of the other participants primarily referred to governance at the state level with their answers. Participant 7 said many of the challenges facing community colleges come from the state level and suggested an emphasis be placed on governance from a state level perspective.

Topics and Experiences KCCLI Participants Believe Should Be Excluded from a Community College Leadership Development Program

When asked to identify which topics and experiences should be excluded from a community college leadership development program, all participants indicated they would either not exclude anything from the program, or suggested tweaks in terms of emphasis based on their personal preferences. For example, Participant 4 and Participant 8 both indicated the emphasis on encouraging participants to earn a doctorate and climb the institution hierarchy made them feel out of place. Participant 4 said,

There were a lot of people who were my peers in the program, who were very, very ambitious and aspirational, and very open about saying ‘This is my goal - to be a community college president,’ and that's just not where I am. And so there were times where I just felt a little bit like this is not my track, you know? But really, I mean that's such a very personal take on it that that I don't think it takes away from the program’s value. It's just that I happened to be in a cohort of people who are all very president-minded.

Summary

The results of the data analysis based upon responses to interview questions about the KCCLI from 11 participants were presented in Chapter 4. Interview questions focused on KCCLI completers’ perceptions about the program’s impact on leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles, as well as the value and effectiveness of various andragogical elements of the program. Chapter 5 provides interpretations and recommendations that include a study summary, findings related to the literature, and conclusions.

Chapter 5

Interpretation and Recommendations

This chapter includes the interpretation of results of the study and recommendations for action and future research, organized into three sections. The first section includes a study summary. The second section presents findings related to the literature. The final section comprises conclusions and recommendations for action and future research based on the findings and interpretations of the current study.

Study Summary

This section provides an overview of the problem investigated in the current study and a review of the purpose statement. The methodology used in the study is briefly explained. Lastly, major findings are discussed.

Overview of the problem. The two-year community college sector of higher education in the United States has faced significant vacancies in upper administration in the last decade (Artis & Bartel, 2021; Asadov, 2020; DeLozier, 2019; Farley, 2019; Gay & Tobia, 2019; Guse, 2021; Hutchins, 2023; Johnson, 2019; Martin 2021; Smith et al., 2019; Thomas, 2019). Leadership development programs were developed in part to prepare the next generation of community college leaders to face the increasing complexity and dynamic challenges of higher education administration (Bresso, 2012; Focht, 2010; Forbes, 2019; Reille & Kezar, 2010; Soares et al.; 2017; Thomas, 2019). These programs were designed as a succession planning tool to prepare employees for upper administration roles and to develop employees at all employment levels (DeLozier, 2019).

Researchers have begun to examine the elements that make these programs effective (Asadov, 2020; DeLozier, 2019; Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2017; Farley, 2019; Forbes, 2019; Gay & Tobia, 2019; Hohensee, 2012; Hutchins, 2023; Johson, 2019; Thomas, 2019). However, the research dedicated to determining which elements or formats of andragogy are most effective for delivering the CCGYO curriculum and developing the chosen competencies is limited. Multiple researchers have acknowledged the importance of identifying andragogical elements most suitable for CCGYOs, and several called for a focus in this area when providing recommendations for future research (Anaya, 2018; Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2017; Farley, 2019; Forbes, 2019; Smith et al., 2019). According to Forbes (2019):

Understanding the effectiveness of the program components in developing leadership skills needed for executive level positions may be of value. The data could yield best practices for GYO leadership development programs and inform a process for ongoing program evaluation – thereby possibly cultivating more skilled and knowledgeable leaders into the talent pipeline. (pp. 124-125)

There is a need for more depth and breadth of knowledge regarding the impact leadership development programs have on individuals' acquisition of leadership competencies, behavior, self-efficacy, and leadership roles, regardless of career ambitions. In addition, more research is needed to determine which elements, like duration, frequency of meeting times, readings, and activities of leadership development programs are most effective. Research dedicated to filling this gap in the literature could serve to inform states and institutions, and perhaps even graduate schools in higher

education leadership, in their endeavors to create leadership development programs to address the leadership crisis facing the community college sector.

Purpose statement and research questions. Six purposes aligned with six research questions guided this study. The first purpose of the study was to examine KCCLI completers' perceptions about leadership activities in which they have engaged as a result of participation in the leadership development program. The second purpose of the study was to investigate KCCLI completers' perceptions about the impact the leadership development program had on their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles. The third purpose of the study was to assess KCCLI completers' perceptions about elements of the program that were the most impactful on development of leadership competency, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles. The fourth purpose of the study was to identify KCCLI completers' perceptions about program elements that were least impactful on development of their leadership competency, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles. The fifth purpose of the study was to explore KCCLI completers' perceptions about program elements that should be included in future leadership development curricula. The sixth purpose of the study was to research KCCLI completers' perceptions about which elements of the program should be excluded in future leadership development curricula.

Review of the methodology. A qualitative phenomenological research design was used in the current study. Upon receipt of approval to conduct the study by the Institutional Research Board at Baker University and the facilitators of the KCCLI, the researcher contacted 92 graduates of the program by email. Eleven community college professionals agreed to participate in the study. An interview protocol that included

demographic questions as well as semi-structured interview questions aligned with the research questions was developed for use in the study. The semi-structured interview questions focused on KCCLI graduates' perceptions about what professional activities or projects they participated in as a result of the program, and the impact the leadership development program had on their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles. The questions also focused on which elements of the KCCLI were most and least impactful, and which experiences or topics should be included or excluded from a community college leadership development program. Two external reviewers examined the interview protocol for alignment with the research questions. In addition, two individuals who had been participants in class IV of the KCCLI during 2018-2019 participated in mock interviews to evaluate the clarity and relevance of the interview questions, interactions with the interviewer, and the overall process of the interview. The only suggestion was to provide definitions of competencies, behavior, self-efficacy, and roles prior to asking questions pertaining to these terms, which the interviewer implemented.

Interviews were conducted in November of 2023 via Zoom sessions lasting 60 minutes or less. Interviews were recorded using Zoom teleconferencing software, which also generated transcripts. An anonymous code (e.g., Participant 1, participant 2, etc) was applied to each audio recording and transcript to preserve confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher followed Creswell and Creswell's (2018) five steps for qualitative data analysis: organize and prepare the data for analysis, read or look at all the data, code the data, generate a description and themes, and represent the description and themes in the context of the study's narrative.

Once all of the transcript drafts were finalized, the appropriate transcript was sent via email to each participant. Participants were asked to review their transcript for errors, omissions, or additions. Creswell and Creswell (2018) called this process member checking. Reliability and trustworthiness were insured by providing the transcripts and identified themes to the same external auditors who examined the interview protocol alignment with the research questions prior to the implementation of the study. The reviewers confirmed the accuracy of the data analysis and identified themes.

Major findings. Six themes were identified after the data analysis: Leadership activities KCCLI participants have engaged in at their higher education institution as a result of their participation in the program, the KCCLI's impact on participants' leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles in which they have served; most impactful elements related to development of leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles in which they have served; least impactful elements related to development of leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles in which they have served; topics and experiences KCCLI participants believe should be included in a community college leadership development program; and topics and experiences KCCLI participants believe should be excluded from a community college leadership development program.

All KCCLI participants identified activities and projects they have engaged in as a direct result of their participation in the program. Seven of the 11 participants indicated the KCCLI had a positive impact on their career advancement and attributed a promotion to their participation in the program. Five of the 11 participants described the capstone

project they completed as part of the KCCLI and the impact it had on themselves and their institutions, and in two cases, all 19 community colleges in Kansas.

KCCLI participants described four ways the program impacted their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles. First, the participants reported that they learned the most about three of the eight AACC (2022) competencies: governance, partnerships and collaboration, and communication. Second, participants described the extent to which participation in the program broadened their awareness in terms of resourcefulness, a higher-level perspective of their institutions and higher education, and a deeper understanding of the function of various departments at community colleges. Third, participants shared ways in which they had gained more confidence to perform better in their current roles or to take on more responsibility. Lastly, participants described the ways in which the KCCLI impacted their communication competence in the context of their work as community college professionals.

KCCLI participants also described three andragogical elements they perceived to be most impactful on their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles. First, presentations from practitioners were identified as impactful by nine of the 11 participants. Participants identified specific presentations, panels, or guest speakers that impacted them the most, but the general diversity of topics was also highlighted as beneficial. Second, networking was identified as impactful by eight of the 11 participants. Networking was described as having several outcomes, including enhanced comfort and confidence in study participants' roles at their institutions, and the utility of an expanded network of professionals who could be called upon for advice and discussions on

important issues. Several study participants described informal networking opportunities that occurred during social time during and after the more structured sessions.

While all 11 participants were asked to identify which elements of the KCCLI were least impactful to their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles in which they have served, all 11 participants indicated the question was challenging. While no single element of the KCCLI was stated by study participants as least impactful, individuals provided idiosyncratic or personal reasons for describing a least impactful element. For example, Participant 7 said all the curriculum was important, but explained that if they had to rank the elements relationship development and networking related activities would come before the technical competencies and sessions focused on providing information. They said this is because they had many years of experience leading community colleges and the information provided by panels and guest speakers was not necessarily new to them but still important to the program for most of the other participants.

KCCLI participants identified two topics or experiences they believe should be included in a CCGYO: communication and governance. Participants described how opportunities to practice communication elements should be provided or which types of communication, like conflict management, should be covered. Participants were more unified in their perceptions that the focus of governance should be on the state legislature since it has an impact on all community colleges in the state. KCCLI participants indicated that none of the current topics and experiences comprising KCCLI should be excluded, but indicated in several instances that some of the topics and experiences did not fit their interests or learning styles.

Findings Related to the Literature

The trend of community college presidents and other upper administrators retiring has been well-documented in the literature for the last two decades, and many CCGYOs have been started in part to address the looming lack of leadership (AACC, 2018b; Anaya, 2018; Artis & Bartel, 2021; Asadov, 2020; Davis, 2018; DeLozier, 2019; Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2017; Farley, 2019; Forbes, 2019; Forthun & Freeman, 2017; Gay & Tobia, 2019; Gray, 2016; Guse, 2021; Hohensee, 2012; Hutchins, 2023; Johnson, 2019; Kelley, 2017; Martin 2021; Porter, 2017; Robinette, 2017; Smith et al., 2019; Thomas, 2019). Seven of the 11 participants in the current study indicated participation in the KCCLI positively impacted their career advancement, which may indicate CCGYO's have the potential to alleviate the leadership crisis to some extent. The seven participants who reported a positive impact of KCCLI on their career advancement included one president, four vice presidents, one dean, and one director.

In most cases CCGYOs have been found effective in developing the AACC (2006, 2013, 2018, 2022) competencies among participants (Asadov, 2020; Farley, 2019; Robison, 2014; Thomas, 2019). Participants in the current study indicated they acquired an increased knowledge about the AACC (2022) competencies. Increased knowledge and understanding about governance, partnerships and collaboration, and communication, were described by a majority of the study participants.

Thomas (2019) described six impacts a CCGYO had on participants: relationship building, networking, conflict resolution, shared governance, customer service, and collaboration. DeLozier (2019) reported five major themes describing the impact of a CCGYO. The themes were improved understanding of the college and what others do,

expanded networks, improved communication skills, better work relationships, and stronger preparation for professional opportunities. Farley (2019) listed 10 ways a CCGYO impacted participants, which included networking skills and communication among peers across campus, enhanced empathy for those in leadership positions, enhanced awareness of their leadership style and strengths, better problem-solving skills, increased capacity to collaborate with others, stronger holistic understanding of the college and how it operates, new relationships formed with other participants, more active role in leadership on campus, decisions to pursue more formal education and career advancement, gained knowledge of strategic planning, goal setting, and resource management. Participants in the current study described impacts consistent with those discussed in the literature. For example, participants described a broadened awareness of governance at both the level of their institution and at the state level. Several participants reported an increase in confidence to perform better or take on more responsibility, like chairing committees or applying for administrative positions. Networking opportunities and the resultant enhanced networks across the system of institutions in Kansas were also reported by participants.

The review of the literature revealed six elements of CCGYOs most frequently mentioned as impactful to their personal leadership growth. These six elements in order from most frequently mentioned to least used are hands-on learning and/or capstone projects, mentorship, opportunities for introspection/self-analysis, networking or cohort format, presentations from practitioners, and duration of the program (Forbes, 2019; Farley, 2019; Asadov, 2020; DeLozier, 2019; Hohensee, 2012; Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2017; Hutchins, 2023; Johnson, 2019; Thomas, 2019; Gay & Tobia, 2019; Tobia & Gay,

2018). While the six elements were not all discovered as themes in the current study, all of the six elements listed above were mentioned at least once during the interviews. The elements identified in the current study as most impactful to their leadership competencies, behavior, self-efficacy, and roles were presentations from practitioners, networking, and introspective activities.

There are many advantages to a state-level leadership development program described in the literature, including the opportunity to learn from and interact with professionals at other community colleges in the state, and focusing on learning about the state legislature as one of the most potent influences on all colleges in a state (Artis & Bartel, 2021; Reille and Kezar, 2010). Participants in the current study indicated governance is an element that should be included in a CCGYO. The majority of respondents in this study suggested the governance focus in the KCCLI should primarily be on the state legislature. Many participants in the current study also referenced the benefit of awareness of state-level issues and having developed connections across the system of community colleges with whom to discuss the issues.

Several researchers have sought to discover the competencies, topics, and experiences current community college leaders believe should be the focus for leadership development programs. Anaya (2018) interviewed 13 community college presidents to identify the competencies they found important to future community college leaders and determined to what degree those competencies were aligned with those provided by the AACC. According to Anaya, alignment was strong in most cases, but there were some gaps between the skills needed versus those identified by the AACC. Anaya recommended the need to develop communication skills, relationship building and

collaboration skills, and listening skills, and that future community college leaders should be honest, gain an understanding of fundraising and finances, develop political savvy, learn to take calculated risks, commit to student success, and understand the importance of an institution's mission, vision, and goals. Participants in the current study indicated several of the skills and competencies Anaya identified should be included as part of a CCGYO's curriculum, especially an awareness and understanding of governance, communication, and collaboration. For example, the six participants who advocated for more communication opportunities identified specific needs consistent with the gaps found by Anaya, including conflict management and political savvy.

Conclusions

This study examined KCCLI completers' perceptions about what professional projects and activities they engaged in at their respective institutions as a direct result of the program, and the impact the leadership development program had on their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles. The study also focused on which andragogical elements were most and least impactful, and which experiences or topics should be included or excluded from a community college leadership development program. Eleven respondents answered the interview questions for this study. This section includes implications for action, recommendations for future research, and concluding remarks.

Implications for action. Participants' responses to the interview questions revealed the perceived impact of the KCCLI on the activities and projects in which they have been involved, their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles, and which elements were most and least impactful. Participants also identified which

experiences or topics should be included or excluded from CCGYOs. Five actions are recommended based on the results of the current study. First, the results of the current study should be reviewed by KCCLI facilitators and the Kansas Association of Community College Trustees (KACCT) to determine which changes, if any, should be made to the KCCLI curriculum. A second action is to share the results with administrators at each of the 19 community colleges in Kansas. Third, the results should be shared with the AACC and the American Association of Community College Trustees. The fourth action is to recommend to the KCCLI facilitators to consider incorporating more explicitly the AACC competencies into the curriculum and developing a pre-test and post-test to measure learning outcomes as they pertain to each competency. The fifth action is to recommend to the KCCLI that simple follow-up surveys be sent to participants at regular intervals to gather any updates on career advancement among participants and the impact graduates have had on their institutions.

Recommendations for future research. This qualitative study focused on the perceptions of KCCLI completers about what activities they participated in as a result of the program, and the impact the leadership development program had on their leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and roles. The study also focused on which andragogical elements were most and least impactful, and which experiences or topics should be included or excluded from a community college leadership development program. Eight suggestions for future research include the following:

1. The current study asked participants to identify which elements of a CCGYO were most impactful on their competencies, self-efficacy, behaviors, and roles. Future research could narrow this focus to the AACC

competencies to identify which competencies are best developed by which elements of a CCGYO. For example, communication might be best developed through networking or ice-breaker activities. Governance might be best developed through panels of trustees or by interviewing the president and board chair at the participants' institution. These connections could be useful to facilitators when planning a CCGYO curriculum.

2. The current study used a qualitative research design to identify which elements of the KCCLI were most impactful on the leadership development of participants. Future research using a qualitative research design could be more intentional and specific in identifying how impactful each andragogical element was by developing interview questions focused on each element. For example, a question could ask participants about what they learned from panel presentations.
3. Future research could investigate which andragogical elements were most effective at developing each AACC competency.
4. Only 11 participants who completed one leadership development program, the KCCLI, were included in the current study. Future researchers could interview additional KCCLI completers.
5. This study used a qualitative research design. Future research could use a quantitative research design using a survey or analysis of archival data related to program outcome assessments to assess the outcomes of CCGYOs.

6. The participants for the current study were employees of community colleges in Kansas who self-reported through responses to open-ended questions. Future research could focus on perceptions of supervisors, subordinates, and colleagues regarding any observed changes in participants after participation in the program.
7. Future research could focus on a CCGYO's impact on career advancement, education attainment, and succession planning by investigating the career paths of participants in the years following completion.
8. The current study was conducted with participants from one state-level CCGYO, the KCCLI. Future studies could incorporate participants from CCGYOs in multiple states.

Concluding remarks. Numerous scholars including Farley (2019), Forbes, (2019), Martin, (2021), and Robison (2014) determined CCGYOs effectively develop leadership competencies among community college leaders. The body of research dedicated to discovering the most impactful andragogical elements of CCGYOs is growing. CCGYOs contribute to filling the gap in community college administrator vacancies in several ways. CCGYOs have a positive impact on participants, and by extension their colleges and systems of colleges, regardless of whether individuals advance to titled leadership roles in their careers. The idea of 'leading from where you are' was mentioned by several participants, which is in line with the Kansas Leadership Center's philosophy on leadership as an activity, not a position. This is especially important given some participants may not desire career advancement to a titled

leadership role for a variety of reasons. CCGYO facilitators should ensure that the pursuit of a doctorate and a higher position is not perceived as an expectation broadly applied to every participant, and that participants understand the focus is on the development of leadership competencies.

One potential roadblock to community colleges supporting state-level CCGYOs is cost, which is ironic given part of the curriculum of many CCGYO's is financial competence. Presidents should view a CCGYO as an investment in individuals and in the institution. Researchers noted in the literature review advocated for a networked-leadership approach to leading community colleges, which requires competent leaders at every level of an institution working together across silos. This approach is facilitated by developing individual employees through CCGYOs (Eddy and Garza Mitchell, 2017).

State or system-level CCGYOs represent a sweet spot for leadership development. Institutions in the same state or system likely face several similar problems, even if the collection of colleges is eclectic and diverse as it is in Kansas. Unity is still a worthy pursuit when working with state legislators. Competencies can be tailored to the system based on these unique challenges and can be combined with, or based on, the competencies identified by the AACC. A state-level program also exposes individuals from each institution to state legislators and the legislative process and helps CCGYO participants develop an understanding of how the state impacts community colleges.

Community colleges are unified by their shared altruistic mission of accessible and affordable education for everyone. As several participants from the current study indicated, one of the core messages repeated by the KCCLI facilitators is one of unity among community colleges to address common problems through shared resources and

networked leadership. A state-level CCGYO, through the connections and competencies developed, can serve as a potent catalyst toward achieving this worthwhile mission, together.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Baker University IRB Approval



Baker University Institutional Review Board

October 17, 2023

Dear Brandon Steinert and Tes Mehring,

The Baker University IRB has reviewed your project application and approved this project under Expedited Status Review. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

Please be aware of the following:

1. Any significant change in the research protocol as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
2. Notify the IRB about any new investigators not named in original application.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents of the research activity.
4. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.
5. If the results of the research are used to prepare papers for publication or oral presentation at professional conferences, manuscripts or abstracts are requested for IRB as part of the project record.
6. If this project is not completed within a year, you must renew IRB approval.

If you have any questions, please contact me at skimball@bakeru.edu or 785.594.4563.

Sincerely,

Scott Kimball, PhD
Chair, Baker University IRB

Baker University IRB Committee
Jiji Osiobe, PhD
Tim Buzzell, PhD
Susan Rogers, PhD

Appendix B: Invitation to Participate in a Study

Invitation to Participate in a Study

Dear XXXXX,

I would like to invite you to participate in a qualitative study I am conducting for my dissertation. I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Baker University. My dissertation is titled: *Participant Perceptions About the Kansas Community College Leadership Institute Curriculum*. If you agree, your participation will involve a one-on-one interview that will take place at a mutually agreed upon time via Zoom or a mutually agreed upon location and should last no longer than 60 minutes. Your interview will be recorded and the transcript of your responses to the questions will be coded with an anonymous number to preserve your anonymity (e.g., Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.) Your identity will not be revealed at any time.

- The interview includes 18 interview questions.
- Three are demographic questions (background questions about your teaching experience) and 15 questions are about your perceptions of the Kansas Community College Leadership Institute (KCCLI). I have attached the interview questions and the 2022 KCCLI competencies so that you will have an opportunity to review them.
- Participation in the interview is strictly voluntary. There are no risks associated with participation in this study. There is no compensation or other benefits associated with participation.

If you decide to participate you may withdraw from the study at any time or decide not to answer any question you are not comfortable answering. Once the interview is completed, I will email you a transcript of your responses to review for additions, omissions, and accuracy. If you would be willing to participate in an interview, please contact me at the e-mail address provided below. I will then contact you to set up a mutually agreeable time for an interview via Zoom or at a mutually agreed upon location. If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact me using my contact information provided below.

Thank you for your consideration in helping me to complete my doctoral dissertation.
Sincerely,

Brandon Steinert
Baker Doctoral Student
2219 Polk St.
Great Bend, KS 67530
620.617.4163
BrandonJSteinert@stu.bakeru.edu

Dissertation Advisor: Dr. Tes Mehring tmehring@bakeru.edu

Appendix C: Consent Agreement

Consent Agreement

Purpose of the research:

The purpose of this study was to examine perceptions of completers of the KCCLI on the program's impact on leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and leadership roles, which elements were most or least effective, and to what extent the program impacted participants' engagement in leadership activities at their institutions.

What you will do in this research: You will be asked 3 descriptive and demographic questions and 15 questions that focus on your perceptions about the KCCLI's impact on your leadership competencies, behaviors, self-efficacy, and leadership roles, which elements you believe were most or least effective, and to what extent the program impacted your engagement in leadership activities at their institutions.

Time Required: The interviews will take no more than 60 minutes to complete.

Risks: No risks are anticipated. At any time, if you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you may skip the question.

Benefits: You will not receive any compensation or benefits from participating in this research.

Anonymity: Your responses to the questions will be kept confidential and non-identifiable by using a code (e.g. Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.) that will be assigned to your written transcript.

Participation or withdrawal: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time from the study. You may withdraw by informing the researcher that you no longer wish to participate.

Contact: Brandon J. Steinert (620) 556-0153, or BrandonJSteinert@stu.bakeru.edu

Agreement:

I agree to participate in this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time. My signature below indicates agreement to participate in the study. I have been informed that the researcher will be recording the interview and that he will be taking notes throughout the interview.

Signature of Participant

Date

Printed Name of participant