A QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF THE PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH PROCESS AND
POSITION LONGEVITY IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Constance L. Howells, B.A., M.A.

Dissertation Prepared for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

December 2011

APPROVED:

Kathleen Whitson, Major Professor
Ronald Newsom, Minor Professor
John Anthony, Committee Member
Jan Holden, Chair of the Department of Counseling and Higher Education
James D. Meernik, Acting Dean of the Toulouse Graduate School

A great deal of time, money, and effort can be expended on hiring community college presidents without any assurance that they will remain in their new positions a substantial amount of time. Building on decades of literature reporting the continuing decrease of presidential longevity, this study examined the methods most successful in selecting presidents with relatively greater longevity and what relationship exists between the type of presidential search used and the length of tenure. An original 18-question survey was e-mailed to 904 community college and two-year institution presidents to capture information about both current and previous presidencies. Participants returned 224 valid responses for a response rate of 24.8%. Results of a generalized linear model (GLM) yielded a statistically significant result showing a positive relationship between the variable Q7STDT1 (type of presidential searches in current position) and length of tenure of selected candidates ($F = 3.41, p = .006$). No significant relationship was found between the selection process used in the immediately previous presidential positions and selected candidates’ longevity in those positions. Information from this study can be used to decide what types of selection process should be used and to indicate further topics of inquiry in this area.
Copyright 2011

by

Constance L. Howells
TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .......................................................................................................................... vi
LIST OF FIGURES ....................................................................................................................... vii

Chapters
I. INTRODUCTION ..................................................................................................................... 1
   Statement of Problem .................................................................................................................. 8
   Purpose of the Study .................................................................................................................... 9
   Research Questions ................................................................................................................... 10
   Significance of the Study ........................................................................................................... 11
   Delimitations of the Study ........................................................................................................ 12
   Limitations of the Study ........................................................................................................... 14
   Assumptions of the Study .......................................................................................................... 15
   Definition of Terms .................................................................................................................. 15
   Summary .................................................................................................................................. 18

II. LITERATURE REVIEW ............................................................................................................. 20
   Importance of Presidential Longevity in Higher Education ................................................... 21
   Research on Selection Methods ............................................................................................... 23
   Literature and Research on Hiring from Outside the Institution ........................................... 24
   Literature and Research on National Searches with Professional Search Firms ................. 26
   National Searches without Search Firms ................................................................................ 26
   Presidential Searches in the Age of Technology ................................................................... 27
Literature on Internal Searches ................................................................. 28
Literature Concerning No Formal Search Process .................................... 29
Other Important Issues in Presidential Searches .................................... 29

III. METHODOLOGY .................................................................................. 31
Research Questions .................................................................................. 31
Survey Methodology Related to Research Questions ............................... 32
Selection of Subjects ................................................................................ 33
Design of Survey ....................................................................................... 34
Data Collection .......................................................................................... 34
Data Analysis ............................................................................................. 35

IV. RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH .......................................................... 37
Response Coding ....................................................................................... 38
Participant Data ......................................................................................... 39
Tenure Results for Respondents’ Current Positions ................................. 42
Relationship Between Presidents’ Current Tenure and Selection Process .... 44
Tenure Results for Respondents’ Immediately Previous Positions ............ 46
Relationship Between Presidents’ Immediately Previous Tenure and Selection Process Where Previous Position was a Presidency .................. 47

V. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ....................................................... 49
Shortcomings of the Study ......................................................................... 52
Recommendations for Further Study ......................................................... 53

APPENDIX A. INFORMED CONSENT ...................................................... 56
APPENDIX B. HIGHER EDUCATION PRESIDENTIAL LONGEVITY QUESTIONNAIRE
........................................................................................................................................... 58
APPENDIX C. INVITATIONAL E-MAIL WITH SURVEY LINK ......................................................... 63
APPENDIX D. FOLLOW-UP INVITATIONAL E-MAIL WITH SURVEY LINK ................................. 63
REFERENCES .......................................................................................................................... 65
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Padilla’s Statistics on Average Total Tenure by Carnegie Class and Average Completed Tenure by Carnegie Class ................................................................. 3

Table 2. AACC Competencies with Developmental Experiences ........................................ 23

Table 3. Summary of Central Findings by Delabbio and Palmer (2009) .......................... 25

Table 4. Question 7 as Converted to Variables Q7STDT2 and Q7STDT3 .................... 39

Table 5. Gender of Presidents in Current Positions ....................................................... 40

Table 6. Gender of Presidents with Previous Presidencies ............................................. 40

Table 7. Races of Current Presidents Responding ......................................................... 41

Table 8. Races of Respondents with Previous Presidencies ........................................... 41

Table 9. Comparison of All Community College Presidents and Survey Cohort ............ 42

Table 10. Selection Processes for Current Presidents (Variable Q9SLCTPR) ............... 43

Table 11. Frequencies For Question 7 Variables Q7STDT2 & Q7STDT3 ................. 44

Table 12. The GLM Procedure For Dependent Variable (Q7STDT1) Number of Years in
        Current Presidency ........................................................................................................ 45

Table 13. Number of Years in Immediately Previous Position Where Previous Position
        was President (Variable Q14NOYR) ........................................................................ 47

Table 14. Previous Selection Process of Those Responding with Previous Presidencies
        ..................................................................................................................................... 48

Table 15. Mean Length of Presidential Tenure by Search Process .............................. 51
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Mean longevity findings for each grouping of presidential tenure, where 1 = 1-5 years, 2 = 6-10 years, 3 = 11-15 years, 3 = 16-20 years, 4 = 21-25 years, 5 = 26-30 years, 6 = 31-35 years, 7 = 36-30 years............................................. 50
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The importance and problems of retaining college presidents has been the focus of consideration for decades. Over 40 years ago, Clark Kerr (1970) attributed high rates of presidential turnover in higher education to everything from financial woes to deteriorating relations with college students. Proving that the issue of presidential longevity is universal as well as persistent, Heinke (2007), in a recent study of leadership turnover in German universities, found not only that presidential tenure in Germany was decreasing but also that frequent turnover had a negative impact on effective leadership and staff morale. Community colleges, often with more tenuous resources and an increasingly complex environment, are even more exposed to the vagrancies of leadership change.

Most of the studies on presidential departure, however, start with the president already in place. These studies concentrate on identifying variables that shorten a president’s tenure rather than identifying strategies that will secure executive leadership and better address the issues that exist and those that will become problems, sometimes over night (Dowdall, 2004). Unfortunately, many of the problems identified, such as changing economic environments (Kerr, 1970), are difficult or impossible to change in just a few years. A circular interaction is created in which presidents need time in office to solve an institution’s problems but too often those very problems reduce the president’s willingness or ability to stay for the needed length of time. Only the hiring of executives appropriately equipped to deal with a plethora of problems and the tenacity and desire to ride out the ups and downs of leading a multifaceted institution
can increase the possibility of stable and successful leadership. Hiring the optimal individual starts with the presidential search process and that process is the focus of this study.

In “The Impact of Presidential Migration – Raising Questions about Presidential Tenure in Higher Education”, Korschgen, Fuller, and Gardner (2001) interviewed 20 former and current college presidents to ask the question “Why is longevity (in college presidents) important?” Korschgen et al.’s four major conclusions were:

1. Long-term presidents are best equipped to help change a campus culture.
2. Long-term presidents are generally more adept at handling institutional difficulties and making better decisions.
3. Long-term presidents have time to build an effective leadership team and to develop strong relationship with alumni, legislators, donors, and community leaders.
4. Long-term presidents recognize that being effective means evolving and changing with the job.

Korschgen et al. went further and cited instances of what happens when the tenure of a college president is too short. Among situations cited were internal bickering due to presidential changes that don't have a chance to be resolved, unfulfilled dreams for both the institution and employees, dismantling of what has gone before, encouraging short-term thinking (planning) in the college, and the draining of the energy of faculty and administration.

Institutions of higher education have long known that keeping senior administrators is as difficult as finding qualified and satisfactory administrators in the
first place. Research on the length of tenure as well as an increase in the average age of college presidents, while sometimes contradictory, are discouraging. According to Yates and Roach (2000), in 1995 the average length of service of a president/CEO at a public, doctorate-granting institution was only 4.5 years. In a public, two-year institution, the tenure was an average of 7.8 years. More recently, some studies showed slight improvement while others showed a trend in the opposite direction.

Padilla and Ghosh (1999) found noticeable differences in the tenure of presidents when compared by Carnegie class and the differences also were dependent on whether examining current presidential tenures or the tenures of the immediately previous presidents. Two of Padilla’s tables regarding presidential tenure have been combined to form Table 1.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carnegie Class</th>
<th>Average Total Tenure*</th>
<th>Average Completed Tenure**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate I</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate II</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate I</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate II</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters I</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters II</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research I</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research II</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (weighted)</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. *Average Total Tenure represents the average total tenure of the immediately previous president. **Average Completed Tenure represents the average completed tenure of the current president – up to that point in time.
Padilla’s term of completed used in Table 1 above is deceptive because it actually indicates the average number of years a president has completed up to that point in time and does not represent how much longer some of the presidents represented in the average will continue. However, given that the total average number of years already spent in office is higher than the total average number of years concluded by immediately previous presidents, tenure would seem to be increasing overall. This is contrary to some other studies, some of which are noted below. However, since the participant pool in this the study was drawn from community college presidents, it is important to note that in both of the measures of tenure above, community college presidents’ length of tenure fell below the weighted total average for all types of institutions.

One of the existing studies contradicting this observation, American Council on Education and the TIAA-CREF Institute (2007) stated that in 1995 the average tenure of a college president was 7.3 years, but by 2001 it was only 6.6 years.

While the some of the literature mentioned above and others suggested that the average length of tenure of the college president is creeping downward due to a variety of reasons, overlapping results pointed toward a potential loss of existing presidents through retirement and unfortunately death. Almost all studies showed that college and university presidents’ average age is increasing. A 2007 report by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) using U.S. Department of Education and AACC data showed that only 25% of community college CEOs had served at the same institution for 10 years or more while 32% were 60 years of age or older. Furthermore,
26% of the community college chief officers held tenure in their positions of 2.5 years or less (AACC, 2007).

Even the more optimistic studies have not presented a picture of a truly stable presidency. The average of length of tenure may have been inflated due to the difficulty and expense of ridding an institution of a less than satisfactory executive. Multi-year contracts as well as other contractual obligations along with costly severance clauses and lengthy, as well as all too public, litigation may cause trustees, especially in less affluent institutions, to wait until the end of senior administrators’ contracts. The consequences of not waiting can be seen in examples such as the former president of Wayne County Community College in Detroit, Dr. Reggie Wilson, who won a wrongful dismissal lawsuit against the Wayne County Trustee Board. In speaking of his case, Wilson added that community college presidents are even more apt to be subject to disagreements with boards and local politicians than leaders of other public institutions. Expensive lawsuits now have to be considered when governing boards want to remove presidents (Angelo, 2010; Mission Viejo Dispatch.com, 2010).

Among the choices that have to be made is whether keeping the executive is more detrimental to the welfare of the institution than spending money that could go to more educationally related expenditures such as additional faculty, new programs, or student services. A recent on-line article from the Lexington Harold – Leader was headlined “UK trustees told presidential search could cost up to 200K” (Patton, 2010). That amount does not seem like wild speculation considering that 10 years previously the University of Kentucky had spent almost exactly that amount to hire their currently outgoing president. Such factors have to be considered even though the administrators
may only be marginally competent with leadership styles and may not mesh with institutional needs.

Reluctance to fire less than satisfactory CEOs along with fear of legal consequences adds to the self-perpetuation of the ineffectualness among the highest levels of academic leadership (Birnbaum, 1992; Cotton, 2002; Ludlow, 2010). Legal fears can make it difficult to get insightful information from other institutions regarding potential leaders (Poston, 2010). Even very principled institutions are reluctant to release damaging information about their current CEOs. As a result, some problematic leaders move from institution to institution in relatively short timeframes. Sometimes, though, discretion is made impossible along with the board’s choice in ridding themselves of a president. This happened when Richard Scaldini, President of Myers University (formerly Dyke College) in Cleveland, Ohio, found his picture published in both the newspapers and Internet while he was being handcuffed by a deputy sheriff. The arrest for violation of a judicial gag order was connected to an already simmering struggle over the sale of the foundering business school (Kroll, 2007).

There is a question of how the institution should select the person best fitted for their particular mission and culture in order to maximize the chances of contentedly keeping them for an optimal number of years. At the same time, the potential CEO may be trying to discover a way to find an institution that satisfies his or her expectations and empowers him or her to fulfill its vision. If the numerous seasoned CEOs eligible to retire were actually to leave higher education in the next decade and the rate of turnover in higher education executive offices persists, an unprecedented number of institutions can be expected to search for executive officers.
Even with diligent research before accepting a position, administrators new to an institution may find themselves in a situation completely different than what they had expected or were led to expect. This may be due to completely honest misunderstandings or due to duplicity. Dr. Ronnie Glasscock (2005, personal communication), told University of North Texas higher education administration students about finding a note on the desk during his first day as the college president at a new institution. The note he found informed him that his new college was nearly insolvent; however, he was able to stay as president for over a decade and help shape the school into a growing, financially healthy institution; even after successfully turning around the institution, Glasscock (2005, personal communication) eventually left amid differences with board members. Not all new CEOs are even that lucky or so talented. Often, senior administrators simply find that they have made a horrible mistake (Flynn, 2010). The institution, along with its staff, community, and/or leadership may not be compatible with their personal style of leadership, experience, talents, or view of the mission of the new institution.

Once in this position, administrators have several choices available to them, none of which are completely satisfactory. Among these choices are: (1) changing their own style, stretching their talents, and adjusting to the culture of the new institution; (2) changing the institution which may be a necessity and trying not only to change the employees and board but also to change the community and students (Biggerstaff, 1992; Saviola, 2010); (3) leaving at the first opportunity or simply waiting for the board to make the break for them (Flynn, 2010).
In addition to the actual process of identifying potential candidates, interviewing and vetting and then selecting a president can be expensive, time consuming, and divisive for the institution. The most singular concern, however, is that selection processes that produce poorly qualified, short-termed leaders have negative impacts on the quality and quantity of education through diverting funds that could otherwise go to educational purposes instead through poor leadership decisions affect the institution for years after the CEO has moved on, and through time and institutional energies that delay or derail progress in the institution are put on hold for yet another new president (Blosser, 2006; Perry, 2009).

Statement of Problem

Given the time and expense of hiring a new president as well as the disruption and expense of removing unsatisfactory educational CEOs, optimal ways of finding new leadership need to be identified. The difficulties in initially selecting the appropriate person included:

1. Need for conducting a search, or hiring without a formal search, in a timely fashion
2. Need for creating an atmosphere of fairness and adherence to appropriate guidelines
3. Need for creating institutional “buy in” to the process selected which can later be translated to support for the candidate ultimately selected
4. Need for securing the services of a highly qualified individual
5. Need for hiring a person with the skill sets – both leadership and technical – needed by the hiring institution
6. Need for matching the institutional needs with the needs of the new president

7. Need for honesty on the part of both the hiring institution and the potential president

8. Need for realistic expectations on the part of both institution and new president

9. Need for transparency during the hiring process

10. Need for trust by institution employees in both the hiring process and the individuals involved in the process

11. Communication, communication, communication.

Research was needed to examine the types of presidential searches being used in the hiring process and if one or more of the five types of searches consistently produced a longer lasting president for two-year community colleges.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to identify the most common ways in which institutions identify and hire new chief executives (presidents) and to compare the longevity of the presidents with those hiring practices. Tenures that lasted for less than satisfactory reasons were controlled for by the randomness of the respondents. Although this study’s survey was sent only to community and junior college presidents within the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accreditation region, the sampling was expected to be large enough to insure statistical significance.

While some lengths in tenure have been attributed to factors hindering removal such as expense of severance, legal actions, inertia by boards or other governing
bodies, a study with enough participants and multiple analytical approaches for off-setting cases with successful tenures shortened for reasons not related to non-performance or non-compatibility was needed. By combining the use of an original survey with existing studies and individual interviews, the study identified optimal ways of hiring presidents for specific types of institutions.

Results were correlated by presidential search type: (1) internal search using search committee, (2) internal search with selection by board or other governing body, (3) national search using professional search firm (4) national search using other types of consultants, (5) national search using internal resources, (6) other if identified from survey. Correlations also included institutional type and longevity of the president.

Research Questions

The course of this study was determined, primarily, by the following two research questions:

1. What method(s) of selection, of the six put forward, were most successful in selecting presidents based on longevity? The specific variables examined were:
   a. Method used for selection in current position
   b. Method used for selection in previous position
   c. Number of years completed to present in current position
   d. Number of years total spent in immediately previous position.

2. What is the relationship between type of presidential search used and the length of tenure in the sample? The specific variables examined were:
a. Relationship between type of presidential search process used for selection in current position and currently completed length of tenure.

b. Relationship between type of presidential search process used for selection in immediately previous position and total length of tenure in that position.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study was related to the importance and difficulty of being able to hire and retain qualified presidents well matched to higher education institutions. Padilla (2006) suggested, that in relationship to presidential changes, too much change can create uncertainty and morale problems while the opposite may bring about a static environment. Many institutions have no choice but to change given the high turnover of presidents. Cohen and March (1986) reported that 50% of small-school presidents expect to move to another position in academic administration while 35% expect another presidency. Cohen and March reported that Kerr (1970) had analyzed 60 years of data for the number of years in office of presidents of universities and found the average president’s tenure had gone from 10.9 in 1899, 9.5 in 1929, 7.7 in 1939, 7.4 in 1959, and 5.9 in 1969. The median dropped from 7 years in 1929 to 2 years in 1959. This implies that the migration of presidents is neither new to the last few decades nor restricted to any one type of higher education institution.

While the scope of this study did not address all needs related to hiring and keeping presidents, the appropriate matching of institutions with an optimal process of hiring a new president was used to facilitate an institution in meeting many of these needs. Knowing which process in which settings have produced presidents that have accrued
more longevity than others served as a proxy for knowing which processes produced
the most appropriate leaders. Being able to better select the hiring process in turn
might save time and money for the institution as well as prevent disruption and
dissatisfaction on the part of both the college and the executive.

Delimitations of the Study

A major limitation of the study could have been that only current presidents would
be surveyed making the longevity component of the study dependent on when they
were hired. Having no end date for employment would make determining the true
relationship between the method of hiring and the longevity of the presidential position
difficult. A president might have less than one year in their current position but
eventually could remain in that position for many years. On the other hand, another
president with less than a year's tenure could last only another year or two. To address
this issue several approaches were combined to ascertain a complete picture:

1. The survey had questions about both current and immediately previous positions.
   Questions about previous positions mirrored questions regarding current
   positions in order to have comparable information. One exception to this was
   that Question 7 asked for the month and year of the starting date of their current
   position while Question 14 asked for the number of years the respondents were
   in their immediately previous positions. Not all current presidents were expected
to have held previous positions as presidents but enough were expected to have
responded to create a smaller subgroup for comparison.

2. Since there was no end date for the presidents’ current positions, the length of
   their time in their positions was measured by calculating the number of years in
their positions between their start date and the date of administration of the survey. The years in presidency were grouped into three different variables:

a. A continuous dependent variable was created using the basic number of years in the president’s current position calculated from their start date to the date of the survey. Years were rounded to whole numbers and those with less than one year were recorded as having zero years in their positions. When compared with the categorical independent variable of selection process, t-tests or ANOVAs were used for analysis as needed and a generalized linear model was used for the relationship between selection processes for current presidents and logevity which was the only relationship that proved significant.

b. A categorical dependent variable was created by grouping the number of years in the current presidential position calculated from the continuous variable into periods of time with the first group representing less than one year and each subsequent group representing 10 years. Using this variable, a Chi Square was planned to be used, if judged necessary.

c. A second categorical dependent variable was created by grouping the number of years in the current presidential position calculated from the continuous variable into periods of time with the first group representing less than one year of service and each subsequent group representing 10 years of service.

3. A subgroup was created for those responding “President” to Question 12 which requested “Title you held in your immediately past position.” For those in that
subgroup, a continuous variable was created based on the responses to Question 14 which inquired about “number of years you held your last position.” Using this variable, a Chi Square was planned to be used if judged necessary.

Limitations of the Study

Prevailing methods of presidential searches at the time of hiring might have actually been an intervening variable. For presidents holding in their present positions for a decade or longer, current hiring techniques involving on-line searches, electronic resumes, etc. may not have been available.

To partially mitigate this limitation, mirror questions regarding the presidents’ immediately previous position were asked including the position title. For those that indicate that they were also previously a president, results of these additional questions were analyzed as a subgroup. The length of tenure could then be analyzed within data groupings (previous tenure by selection process and current tenure by selection process). This process was similar to Padilla’s (1998) concept of total tenure versus completed tenure, but in that premise, the tenure of the current president and that of the immediately previous president were considered. For this study, the tenure of current presidents was considered as them holding their current positions. Information from their immediately previous positions was compared as separate variables if that position was also as a president or equivalent.

One limitation might relate to current and previous laws and other external regulations controlling the hiring practices of the college and universities involved in the study. While the researcher can use statistical controls for some institutional differences which might influence the freedom institutions have in their hiring practices,
such as between private and public institutions, state or regional variables were not examined in the study. Further, race, ethnicity, gender, and educational attainment as either dependent or independent variables were not studied. The survey did ask for some of this information but only to confirm that the respondents were a good representation of the target population which was the population of community college presidents.

Assumptions of the Study
The following were the assumptions employed in the study:
1. The types of searches mentioned in the survey, while possibly not exhaustive, covered the major types of presidential searches currently used in higher education.
2. The institutional types used in the survey, while possibly not exhaustive, covered the primary types of two-year institutions surveyed.
3. All of the participants surveyed served as a president or in an equivalent position.
4. All of the participants served in a two-year community college or other two-year only institution.

Definition of Terms
President, CEO (chief educational officer), or senior executive – According to Martin and Samuels (2004) the label of CEO has begun to be used interchangably with that of college or university president. For purposes of this study administrators with the designation of chancellor, provost, or even dean may be used if the person is the preeminent (excluding boards and governmental officials where applicable) chief officer
of a separate and independent higher educational unit. In general, this would include being separately accredited by a regional accrediting agency and/or having separate budgets and accounting.

Internal search – A presidential search limited to candidates who are already part of and employed by that organization.

Longevity (tenure) of college president – The length of time in which the individual has served as the continuous, permanent (not interim), and preeminent leader of the same unique institution. Longevity, for purposes of this study, was considered as no longer accruing when an individual leaves the employment of the institution and returns after a break in service nor did it accrue when the individual moves from one institution within a system to another, distinct institution, within the same system.

Search committee – The committee selected to choose the initial candidates and finalists; the committee “now typically involves a rather large and formal search committee with wide trustee, faculty, staff, student, and alumni representation” (Martin & Samuels, 2004, p. 52). However, as recently as 2006, Marchese and Fiori Lawrence advised in The Search Committee Handbook that researchers recommend committees should have “no fewer than five members but no more than nine” (p. 12). Marchese and Fiori Lawrence recommended that committee members be people who command respect and are committed to the process and should further reflect the “interest of the various constituencies…that warrants committee membership” (p. 13). Besides faculty, administrators, and board members, search committee members often include students, support staff, retirees, and community figures (Marchese & Fiori Lawrence, 2006).
**Search firm (also search consultants)** – Experienced, outside individuals who council, assist, and advise institutions in their efforts to hire new senior executives (or others, such as faculty) for a fee obtained either from the new hire or from the hiring institution. Martin and Samuels (2004) cited the advantages of using a search firm as the following:

a. By smoothing the search process and by helping the institution to see itself clearly and prepare for the leadership transition, the search firm can assist the presidential candidates in gaining a clear perspective of the institution, defining the role of the candidates’ spouses, or understanding the expectations of the college’s board.

b. By having more resources and experience in recruiting candidates, professional search firms can be especially helpful in recruiting special populations.

c. Search firms have the ability to screen out undesirable candidates.

The following were among the disadvantages of search firms mentioned by Martin and Samuels:

a. Poor grasp of institutional character and needs

b. Loss of institutional control of the process

c. “Recycled” or preferred candidates and less candidates from different types of institutions or outside higher education

d. Recruitment of predictable candidates.
Summary

The justification for this study rested upon the importance of hiring a president who can remain with an institution long enough to have a chance to engender stability, to implement worthy stratagems, and to lead the institution to greater accomplishments than it could have achieved under the leadership of someone else. The study explored avenues, through the hiring process, to avoid the potentially negative impact that hiring the wrong person for a presidential position can have on an educational institution and the education that institution strives to deliver. To do so, a survey instrument was used to correlate the relationship between presidential longevity and the type of presidential search used.

In Defense of American Higher Education cites James Fisher speaking to the Association of Governing Boards in 1984 and asserting that the very future of colleges and universities rests “on the bold, decisive leadership of college and university presidents nationwide” (Altbach, Gumport, & Johnstone, 2001, p. 235). Others go further and contend that colleges not only need visionary leadership but also stable leadership. Julianne Basinger quoted long-time Bard College president, Leon Botstein, who said, “Instability of leadership has been a bane for education. It’s like being a serial husband” (Basinger, 2002, p. A28). As discussed in the introduction of this chapter, stability in a presidential office can bring a number of benefits to the institution, and among them are greater opportunity for institutionalization of cultural changes, familiarity with key people in the institution, time to build their own leadership teams, and a chance to evolve for both the president and the institution (Koschgen, Fuller, & Gardner, 2001). On the other hand, selecting the wrong person as president can lead to expensive, legally challenging, and acrimonious negotiations for the college when it is
time to sever the relationship (Weary, 2006). The process of hiring a new president can cost several hundred thousand dollars (Padilla, 2006), be divisive (Encarnacao, 2010), take a year or more while sapping the energy and time of the campus, and still produce a less than satisfactory new president.
A great deal of literature has been written about altering the culture of institutions (Barber, 1992; Biggerstaff, 1992; Clark, 1992; Nelson, 1992), but even the most optimistic of these authors noted that successful transformations of institutional cultures can take years, if not decades, and require the approval of boards and community members and the active cooperation of students and college employees (Tagle, 1992). Given the short tenures of modern college leaders, this transformation may not be possible in the time available unless there is already a culture in place that lends itself to the vision of the leader or, at the very least, to rapid change. This makes getting the selection process right a major priority. However, McLaughlin and Riesman (1991) pointed out that higher education leaders still have a lot to learn regarding how to go about selecting a president.

Selecting key executives is not just a priority with higher education but with business and industry as well. Benston and Kesner (1985) emphasized the importance of executive succession. However, at about the same time, Birnbaum, Bensimon, and Neumann (1989) suggested that if a president did a good job during tenure, the institution would not suffer as much when the president departed. Boeker (1992) wrote about succession and executive departure in business. Boeker studied 67 organizations over 22 years and found that the more powerful a leader was the less likely the leader was to be dismissed when the organization suffered losses or downturns. Boeker found that more powerful leaders were more likely to “displace” blame for poor performance onto senior executives who were likely to be dismissed. Kesner
and Sebora (1998), in reviewing literature on executive succession, indicated that as more literature on CEO succession was being produced, the results were mixed and the lines of inquiry had become confused. Kesner and Sebora (1998) looked at the selection process in corporate boardrooms and found that in order for a process to be considered rational, the process needed to have aspiration, judgment, and justification. Kesner and Sebora found that the order of these qualities in a selection process was determined by three factors: (a) the current performance of the organization, (b) the availability of qualified candidates (internal or external), and (c) the standardization (compatibility) of the CEO’s office within the organization at the time of the succession decision.

Importance of Presidential Longevity in Higher Education

There is a general assumption that having a long lived presidency is good for an educational institution (Padilla, 2006). Organizational stability is one virtue cited again and again for longevity in higher education presidents. The ability of the institution to concentrate on important things such as education and relationship building rather funneling all its efforts into selecting a CEO – yet again – is another. Is this assumption actually based on observation and research or whether it is more wishful and wistful thinking? Korschgen et al. (2001) cited earlier research to buttress their findings that innovative institutions had presidents with a longevity average of 13 years, or approximately twice as long as the general national longevity average. By 2008, Trachtenberg reported in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* that the average presidential lifespan in office had only increased to only up to 8.5 years. Yet Korschgen et al. found that among other benefits, long-term presidents had the time to change and
improve campus cultures and that by gaining knowledge about individuals on campus and through identifying with the institution long-term presidents were better able to make good decisions for their institutions and see those institutions through difficult times.

Long tenures give the presidents an opportunity to redefine themselves and their roles in ways that are better align with the unique set of constituencies present in their institution. Strong presidents change institutional culture, but good presidents also adapt to meet the challenges of the institution. Such changes take time. Korschgen et al. (2001) emphasized that presidential longevity allows these executives to correctly identify existing key players in their institutions, to develop new leaders, and to forge bonds with critical personnel. Often leaders depend on short term first impressions of the formal and informal organizational structures as well as the inhabitants of those structures and later discover that they have placed their trust in undeserving individuals. Korschgen et al. concluded that the presidential search and screening process is crucial to engendering presidential longevity and saw the search process as important to the candidate as to the institution.

The criticality of being able to develop certain leadership competencies was validated by Hassan, Dellow, and Jackson (2010) in the *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*. Hassan et al. identified three developmental experiences for each of the American Association of Community College (AACC) competencies, and not surprisingly, most of these experiences require time to acquire, develop, and mature. The AACC Developmental Experiences with Leadership Competencies are summarized in the Table 2. Aside from longevity many of these “developmental
experiences” might well argue for both the wisdom of hiring presidents internally and of requiring advanced degrees, or the equivalent, of all presidential candidates. In addition to longevity, many of these developmental experiences might well be used to argue both for the wisdom of hiring presidents internally and of requiring advanced degrees, or the equivalent, of all presidential candidates.

Table 2

AACC Competencies with Developmental Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPETENCY</th>
<th>DEVELOPMENTAL EXPERIENCE 1</th>
<th>DEVELOPMENTAL EXPERIENCE 2</th>
<th>DEVELOPMENTAL EXPERIENCE 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Progressive Job Responsibilities</td>
<td>Challenging Job Assignments</td>
<td>Graduate Degree Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Competency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Management</td>
<td>Progressive Job Responsibilities</td>
<td>Challenging Job Assignments</td>
<td>Networking with Colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Challenging Job Assignments</td>
<td>Hardships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Progressive Job Responsibilities</td>
<td>Challenging Job Assignments</td>
<td>Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Advocacy</td>
<td>Networking with Colleagues</td>
<td>Progressive Job Responsibilities</td>
<td>Sponsored Workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>Mentors/Coaches</td>
<td>Graduate Programs</td>
<td>Progressive Job Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Adapted from Hassan et al. (2010).

Research on Selection Methods

Schmidt (2008) in “Colleges Have Blind Spots in Presidential Searches” suggested that there is a gap in the literature about higher education presidential searches. Schmidt specifically cited the lack of research into the differences in performance between candidates with previous educational experiences and those from outside academia, inquiry into the types and amounts of compensation needed for attracting good applicants, and investigation for understanding what allows them to be
successful in the job. Benefits other than high salaries were said to support success
and longevity. Among these benefits might be long and/or mandatory vacations,
sabbaticals, paid counseling, and other perks that might help ease the presidential
journey in high stress positions.

Literature and Research on Hiring from Outside the Institution

While recruiting and hiring college presidents from the ranks of higher education
has been the traditional norm, Delabbio and Palmer (2009) reported in “A 360 View of
Non-Traditional University Presidents” that leaders are now selected increasingly from
outside of educational circles. Delabbio and Palmer cited, as causes for this, the need
for a leader to be able to “forge partnerships, improve and maintain relationships within
and outside the college, and develop a vision for the institution as well as [have] . . .
financial planning [and] communication skills, political savvy, and adaptability” (Delabbio
& Palmer, 2009, “Introduction,” para. 3). Delabbio and Palmer contended that all these
skills are not apt to be found in any one candidate coming from inside academia and
conducted qualitative research using a survey of four non-traditional presidents and 12
other people working in close proximity to those four presidents. Delabbio and Palmer
broke these people into three groups and developed major themes for each of the
groups. Their central findings are summarized in Table 3.
Table 3

Summary of Central Findings by Delabbio and Palmer (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Traditional President Themes</th>
<th>Chief Academic Offer Themes</th>
<th>Governing Board Member Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Prior connection with institution and/or mission existed</td>
<td>- Must understand culture, but coming from outside can be an advantage</td>
<td>- Passion and vision are essential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Previous non-university experiences valuable</td>
<td>- Previous non-university experiences valuable</td>
<td>- Previous non-university experiences valuable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Developed strong leadership teams and relationships</td>
<td>- Need to delegate academic matters to other who know the institution well</td>
<td>- Must develop a strong team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Faced obstacles, but none insurmountable and often more perceived than real</td>
<td>- Non-traditional presidents must prove themselves</td>
<td>- Obstacles are not insurmountable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Successfully acclimated to a deliberative, decision making process</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Non-traditional presidents offer different perspectives, but must learn patience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Common 360° Themes/Conclusions

(1) Prior Affiliation with Institution is Important Asset for Non-traditional Presidents

(2) Previous Non-University Leadership Experiences of Great Value to the Institution

(3) Obstacle of “Not Being Academic” Can be Overcome, in Part by Creating a Strong Team

It might be of significant note that one of Delabbio and Palmer’s (2009) primary conclusions was that while previous experience in higher education was not necessary,
some previous relationship with the institution, as well as collaborative team building once in place, was important.

Literature and Research on National Searches with Professional Search Firms

Renick (2002) in *Black Issues in Higher Education* asserted that regardless of the type of search conducted, the less attention paid to providing structured transition then the less the chances of producing a successful new presidency. Dowdal (2006) in “When Colleges Should, and Should Not, Use Executive Search” likened using an executive search firm to buying an insurance policy. Executive search firms can be expensive but hiring the wrong executive can also have serious and expensive repercussions. Dowdal contended that using a search firm can signal quality and cultivate prominent candidates who have been linked with the institution in the past as well as candidates who have not been actively searching for new positions. Unfortunately, outside executive search committees can discourage internal candidates (Dowdal, 2006). The professional search firm can also help in deciding the composition and selection of search committees and the timetable for selection. These firms are useful in delineating the charge, spouses’ roles, and candidates’ expectations as well as insuring a diverse candidate pool and participating in preliminary screening.

National Searches Without Search Firms

A rare form of national search involves national, and sometimes extensive, searches without the assistance of professional search firms. This search type is primarily found in large institutions or systems with extensive human resource departments. The Dallas County Community College District in Texas represents a large institution with an extensive human resource department and is currently
conducting in 2011 two national presidential searches for separate campuses in their seven campus district.

Presidential Searches in the Age of Technology

Jenifer Jacobson pointed out in 2001 another trend that has added accessibility to presidential searches is that schools are going online with their presidential searches. Some schools, mainly large universities, have created websites to both instruct potential candidates on the qualifications and requirements for the position but also advise potential candidates about how to apply for the position. The ultimate aim of these websites is to inform more easily interested parties how searches are progressing. This feature may especially appeal to public institutions striving to provide proof of transparency in their executive selection processes. At least one institution has even created a website to solicit input from the public that is interactive even to the point of soliciting nominations for the position. This type of action moves the selection process beyond transparency into public participation in the actual selection process.

Jacobson wrote about presidential searches again in 2002 and addressed faculty members on search committees. While the importance of faculty participation in the process may be seen as a given by some, Jacobson reported that many trustees may see faculty members as part of one of many special interest groups that need to be guarded against during the selection process. Jacobson quoted officers of the American Association of University Professors as saying that faculty participation in presidential searches have often become as tokens on committees, at best. Faculty on the other hand, argue that there is none better than those among their rank to know what is needed in an executive leader for their particular institutions of higher education.
Faculty are one of the constituencies who have to work with new administrators and often are most directly affected by the decisions and changes put into effect by the new leadership. In following this reasoning, it could be surmised that in being able to select the best fit for their institutions, faculty members can help insure the success and longevity of new presidents. Crutcher (2004), President of Wheaton College, opined on faculty relationships during a meeting at the Mellon Foundation as having found faculty on his search committee to have been very important in that their involvement gave him access to information about the institution that he subsequently found useful.

Literature on Internal Searches

Schmidt (2009) reported on survey results released by the American Council of Education in “Survey of Chief Academic Officers Raises Concerns about Diversity and Longevity.” Schmidt stated that the survey showed that the longevity of “Chief Academic Officers” were not only of short duration but that only one fifth of the academic officers eventually move up to the position of college or university president. Schmidt contended that this has serious consequences for both diversity and longevity of higher education presidents. Among other things, Schmidt asserted that the lack of minorities being moved up from lower positions internally to presidential positions leads to the recycling of minority candidates with previous presidential experience and causes a near zero sum gain in minority presidents.

It is not unusual to use search committees for presidential selection even when conducting internal searches. While internal searches are unusual for larger institutions, institutions worried about the appearance of impartiality and fairness will often use search committees during the internal presidential search process. When
using committees for internal searches, the Board of Trustees and other leaders must be committed to actually using the search committee’s recommendations or risk appearing arbitrary and deceitful.

**Literature Concerning No Formal Search Process**

Sometimes the Board of Trustees or other governmental or quasi-governmental entities install presidents, chancellors, or other CEOs without using formal processes. Jacobson (2002) reported on the University of Auburn’s Board of Trustees simply elevating William F. Walker from “interim president” to permanent president with a guaranteed tenure of at least 3 years without any faculty participation at all during the decision process. Auburn’s faculty retaliated with a formal censure and claimed that the move by the Board was contrary to the philosophy of shared governance that has become so widely expected on American campuses.

**Other Important Issues in Presidential Searches**

The issue of secrecy in presidential searches was addressed by Arnone (2004) who found that even with so-called “sunshine laws” in place to require open public meetings and records, colleges often are able to evade those laws. As of 2004, 22 states had exempted public colleges and other institutions from their own sunshine laws. The effect, argued Arnone, is to allow public colleges and universities to follow their natural inclination toward secrecy, which is often born out of a belief that scrutiny will scare off the best potential candidates. Arnone seemed to find this likelihood to be especially true for female and minority presidential candidates.

While the literature discussed in this chapter gives differing findings on whether presidential longevity is growing or getting shorter, most literature points toward
shortening tenures over the past century along with more presidents that are nearing retirement age. The impending exodus of college presidents will make it all the more important to find optimal processes to select replacements for these presidents.

The literature referenced in this chapter, points to the importance of long presidential tenures for facilitating institutional stability, orderly innovation, growth and change, and constituent buy-in. The literature previously mentioned also underscores changing types of presidential search processes as well as growing expenses and expanding demands for presidential searches to produce an executive officer that is going to remain with the institution for a longer number of years. This study attempts to ascertain which of the selection processes is most successful in producing greater longevity in community college presidents.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study sought to find if there is a significant correlation between the type of search process, of hiring presidents of higher education institutions and the length of the presidential tenure. As previously stated this comparison was based on the premises that most often longevity in presidential office adds to the stability, innovation, and success of the higher education institution. In order to examine this postulation, two major research questions were addressed.

Research Questions

The methods of this study were determined, primarily, by the following two research questions:

1. What method(s) of selection, of the seven put forward, were most successful in selecting presidents based on longevity? The specific variables examined were:
   a. Method used for selection in current position
   b. Method used for selection in previous position
   c. Number of years completed to present in current position
   d. Number of years total spent in immediately previous position.

2. What is the relationship between type of presidential search used and the length of tenure in the sample? The specific variables examined were:
   a. Relationship between type of presidential search process used for selection in current position and currently completed length of tenure.
b. Relationship between type of presidential search process used for selection in immediately previous position and total length of tenure in that position.

Survey Methodology Related to Research Questions

Data addressing Research Question 1 -- the length of tenure for presidents in the sample and process used for selection -- were self-reported by the presidents responding to Question 7: “starting date in your current position at your present institution (mm/yy).” The researcher calculated the length of tenure from the starting date given by the respondents. Data on the length of the immediately previous position of the president were self-reported by the respondents in Question 14. No calculation was required for this question.

Research Question 2 data were self-reported by the presidents responding to survey Questions 7 and 11 to determine which participants represented the college presidents in the sample. The responses for Research Question 1 and Research Question 2 were compared using a simple correlation to ascertain the relationship between types of presidential searches used and longevity of tenure in the presidential position. Higher order statistical analysis was used as deemed necessary from the analysis of the initial results.

As stated in the first chapter, statistical data were obtained through the creation and distribution of a questionnaire sent to presidents and other higher education chief operating officers to show the relationship between the type of selection process used in presidential searches and presidential longevity. The literature contained in Chapter II included the apparently decreasing length of tenure for chief executive officers in higher
The study attempted to verify that assertion and to link the decreasing length of tenure to the methods used to locate and hire new presidents.

The literature in Chapter II also provided a foundation for the definitions for both the types of executive searches and longevity of tenure for presidents hired from these searches. In addition, Chapter II discussed some of the advantages and disadvantages of the various types of searches as found in higher education literature. Although those advantages and disadvantages were not used as a basis for the findings in the analysis of the data, these were incorporated into the interpretation and discussion of the implications of the findings. The remainder of Chapter III contains the following details:

1. The selection of the subjects included in the research
2. The design of the survey instrument
3. Data collection procedures
4. Data analysis.

Selection of Subjects

Potential respondents were identified through the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). Individuals employed at community colleges and identified as having a title of president or chancellor of the institution or holding other titles that were clearly identified as CEO were selected for participating in the survey. Attention was paid to any systematic selection biases that might have been evident. Although not directly factored into the data analysis, variables that were checked for bias included gender and race/ethnicity. Biases in these categories and others were determined by statistical comparisons to nationally normed demographics for each
variable. To the extent possible, any selection bias was statistically corrected in the data analysis. All biases and subsequent adjustments were documented. Even though the survey link was e-mailed to higher education executives identified in the AACC list as associated with community colleges (Appendix A, C, and D), the survey instrument asked for institutional type of both present and previous institutions. This redundancy was used to verify the institutional type. Those who were not working at community colleges or who were not working at a community college in their immediately previous position were excluded from the data analysis.

Design of Survey

The survey (Appendix B) was designed by the researcher and based on the needs and theme of the research questions included in the dissertation. Besides using survey questions directly related to the research questions, demographic questions were asked as well as questions that might facilitate further lines of research in the future on the types of presidential searches and the longevity of those holding presidential positions. The survey included both multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank questions but survey information produced nominal data except for years in a position and tenure ranges.

Data Collection

The electronic form of the survey featured the questions that appear in Appendix B. The survey was delivered via SurveyMonkey through e-mails to the presidents selected to be surveyed (Appendices C and D). Survey Suite is a secure web-site sponsored by the University of South Carolina. The online mode of surveying aided in
the efficient collection of results and facilitated data management and statistical analysis.

The researcher monitored the number of responses and re-sent surveys when the initial response is not robust enough to insure statistical significance. Baruch and Holtom (2008) reported that after examining 400,000 individual response rates found in 17 journals from the year 2000 to 2005, the average response rate was 52.7%. The American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR, 2008) reported that with Internet surveys of specifically named persons, there are parallels between the discussion of U.S. postal mail surveys and Internet surveys. However, the AAPOR reported that the response rates for all types of surveys have been decreasing due to increasing resistance by potential participants. Therefore, based on a conservative anticipated 40% response rate with 1,000 e-mail links mailed, this study was expected to return 400 valid responses.

All surveys were held confidential according to IRB rules and only the researcher had access to specific identifiers (see Appendix A for informed consent information). Original responses were deleted after all responses were tabulated and coded. Data were downloaded from Survey Suite into a Microsoft Access database and uploaded to SAS 9.2 for Windows for complete statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis reflected the fact that this was a mixed methods study combining quantitative data. Responses to each of the questions in the online questionnaire were coded numerically to facilitate the compilation of results and statistical analysis. Simple correlations were used for the initial analysis of the independent variables of
(Q9SLCTPR) the selection process used for current presidencies, and (Q16SLCT2) the selection process used for previous presidential positions as compared with the longevity of the current presidential position (Q7STDT1, Q7STDT2, Q7STDT3) or the number of years in the previous presidential position (Q14NOYR) along with other lower order statistics deemed appropriate at the time. Use of a General Linear Model (GLM) was introduced when the initial analysis showed one comparison, selection process (Q9SLCTPR) with longevity (Q7STDT1), to be statistically significant.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

Research was conducted addressing the two research questions specified in Chapter 3 and shown below:

1. What method(s) of selection, of the seven put forward, were most successful in selecting presidents based on longevity? The specific variables examined were:
   a. Method used for selection in current position
   b. Method used for selection in previous position
   c. Number of years completed to present in current position
   d. Number of years total spent in immediately previous position.

2. What is the relationship between type of presidential search used and the length of tenure in the sample? The specific variables examined were:
   a. Relationship between type of presidential search process used for selection in current position and currently completed length of tenure.
   b. Relationship between type of presidential search process used for selection in immediately previous position and total length of tenure in that position.

In order to carry out this research an 18 question survey was created using SurveyMonkey. A test of the invitational e-mail and survey link was sent on April 21, 2011, and it was determined that the survey link was working properly and the survey could be easily completed. An invitational e-mail with a link to the survey and explanation of the background and survey instrument was sent on May 3, 2011 to 904
community college presidents. Following the first e-mail invitation, there were 147 surveys completed. A second e-mail inviting the presidents to participate in the survey, if they had not done so previously, was sent on June 22, 2011. This follow-up e-mail garnered an additional 117 responses. Of the combined 264 responses, nine were determined to be invalid because the respondents’ positions were not comparable to the position of president or senior executive of the college. Thirty-one completed surveys were determined to be completed by respondents who previously completed the survey, and 224 were determined to be valid, complete surveys.

Response Coding

The SAS statistical analysis software application was used to perform the variable coding, frequencies, and analysis procedures. Coding for analysis of the survey was done by converting most questions’ responses to numerically coded responses for analysis. Questions 6 and 15 dealing with current and immediately previous state of employment were converted to United States Postal State Codes for uniformity and ease of analysis. Gender and Race questions were coded using Texas State and IPEDS reporting race codes as defined prior to 2010 with Hispanic = 3 and Other = 6. The responses to Question 7, “Starting date in your current position at your present institution (mm/yy),” were converted into discrete, whole years and then into three different variables using groupings of different year spans for the second two variables (Table 4). Those respondents with less than one year of tenure were assigned the value of 0 years, except in calculating mean years of longevity where a value of 0.5 was assigned. The variable labeled Q7STDT1 was grouped by actual years of tenure. The variable labeled Q7STDT2 was categorized by one group of
individuals serving less than 1 year and then by intervals defined by increments of 5 years. The variable labeled Q7STDT3 was grouped by those respondents with less than 1 year of tenure and then by intervals defined by increments of 10 years.

Table 4

Question 7 as Converted to Variables Q7STDT2 and Q7STDT3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure Range</th>
<th>Variable 07STDT2 Coding</th>
<th>Tenure Range</th>
<th>Variable 07STDT3 Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LESS THAN 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>LESS THAN 1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 - 10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11 - 20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21 - 30</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 - 20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31 - 40</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 - 30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 35</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 - 40</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant Data

In order to show that the survey respondents were representative of all American community college presidents, survey respondents’ key demographics were compared with all community college presidents in the United States. Respondents were asked questions regarding demographics and their current and previous employment in higher education. The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC, 2011) reported 72% of all current community college CEOs to be male and 28% of current community college presidents to be female. For the total number of presidents responding to the survey, 68.92% were male, and 29.28% of the respondents were female (Table 5). Of
the 64 presidents who were also presidents at their previous institutions, 78.13% were male, and 20.31% were female (Table 6).

Table 5

Gender of Presidents in Current Positions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cumulative n</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>70.18</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>70.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>29.82</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6

Gender of Presidents with Previous Presidencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cumulative n</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>79.37</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>79.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20.63</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 153 current male presidents responding, 32.68% (n = 50) had been presidents in their previous positions. However, of the 65 current female presidents responding, only 20% (n = 13) had been presidents in their immediately previous positions. Additionally, 87.61% (191) of the current presidents responding to the survey reported themselves as non-Hispanic White. Of current the presidents responding, 5.96% (n = 13) were Black/African-American and 3.21% (n = 7) were Hispanic (Table 7). Of the respondents who were also presidents in their previous positions, 84.13% (n = 53) were non-Hispanic White, 6.35% (n = 4) were Black/African-American, and 6.35% (n = 4) were Hispanic.
Of the 191 non-Hispanic White respondents who were currently presidents, 27.75% \((n = 53)\) had been presidents when they were selected for their current presidency (Table 8). Of the 13 Black/African-American presidents, 30.77% \((n = 4)\) had been presidents previously and of the four Hispanic current presidents, 57.14% \((n = 4)\) had been presidents in their previous positions.

Table 7

*Races of Current Presidents Responding*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>(n)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cumulative (n)</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic White</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>87.61</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>87.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American - Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>93.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>96.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>98.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>99.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-Responses = 6

Table 8

*Races of Respondents with Previous Presidencies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>(n)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cumulative (n)</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic White</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>84.13</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>84.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American - Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.35</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>90.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.35</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>96.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-Responses = 2

Survey respondents were currently serving at institutions in 44 different states with the largest number of respondents representing California \((n = 25)\), North Carolina
(n = 24), Texas (n = 18), New York (n = 12) and Washington (n = 10). These presidents had previously also served in 44 different states but had not necessarily served institutions in the same state. The respondents’ previous institutions were located most often in California (n = 19), North Carolina (n = 19), Texas (n = 15), and Michigan (n = 11). Based on the AACC’s 2011 statistics on length of tenure of community college presidents, the survey responses were skewed slightly toward presidents with low longevity in their current positions. Table 9 shows the comparison of all presidents and the survey cohort.

Table 9
Comparison of All Community College Presidents and Survey Cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years</th>
<th>All Community College Presidents</th>
<th>Survey Responding Presidents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4 years</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9 years</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19 years</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29 years</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30+ years</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0.45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tenure Results for Respondents’ Current Positions

Analysis of the survey was separated into two approaches. The first approach involved an analysis of the first stage utilizing Question 1 through Question 10 with Question 1 and Question 2 serving as demographic information for both stages of the survey. This approach enabled the analysis to be concentrated on the respondents’ current positions as president or the organizational equivalent. Because the major
dependent variable in this study involved length of tenure and tenure for those currently holding CEO positions were not yet terminal, the length in the position was divided by 5 years each and by 10 years to create two variables. Thus, the independent variable of the selection process used was compared to each length of time of tenure (Table 10). In this way, one might be able to say, “For those presidents who have remained in their positions between 5 and 10 years, the selection process most often used was . . . .”

The responses to other questions such as institution type, gender, and race were treated only as possible intervening variables during the analysis.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection Process for Current President</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal search using search committee</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal search with selection by board</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National search using professional search firm</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>38.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National search using other types of consultants</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National search using internal resources</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>29.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One possible flaw to this approach was that the tenure of the current, on-going, presidencies were by definition not terminal. Some of these presidencies could go on for years or decades beyond their current length of tenure while many could end much sooner. Proof of these possibilities was shown in the fact that although the presidents in this study reported an average of 28.8 years of experience in any position in higher education, 108, or 48.2%, of them reported having less than 1 year of tenure as a president at their current institutions (Table 11). Even if it were possible that newer
presidents might have been more eager to respond to the survey, it buttressed the need to also examine respondents who had held completed presidencies to form a true picture.

Table 11

Frequencies For Question 7 Variables Q7STDT2 & Q7STDT3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure Range in Years</th>
<th>n in Group</th>
<th>% in Group</th>
<th>Tenure Range in Years</th>
<th>n in Group</th>
<th>% in Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 1</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>48.21</td>
<td>&lt; 1 – 10</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>75.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 5</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>18.30</td>
<td>11 – 20</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>21.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8.48</td>
<td>21 – 30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 15</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>31 – 40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 20*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.93</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 – 25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 – 30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 – 35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 – 40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relationship Between Current Tenure and Selection Process

In the Tenure Grouping 3 (Q7STDT3), the less than 1 through 10 years, contained the largest cohort ($n = 164$). Of this cohort, the highest percentage (44.51%) had been selected using the internal search process via a professional search firm. The national search using internal resources process had been used for selecting a significant number of Grouping 3 presidents (25.0%). Controlling for institutional type did not make a significant difference in the relationship between longevity and the selection process used for current positions.
The national searches using internal resources was the selection process used for selecting 41.6% of the presidents with 11 years through 20 years of tenure. The internal search using a professional search firm represented 22.92% of Group 2. The search process of internal search with selection by board or other governing body was used for selecting 16.67% of this group of presidents. This represented the second largest group with 48, or 21.82%, of all respondents. The relationship was statistically significant only when using the continuous dependent variable of Number of Years in Presidency (Q7STDT1; Table 12).

Table 12

The GLM Procedure For Dependent Variable (Q7STDT1) Number of Years in Current Presidency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>848.315</td>
<td>169.663</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>10,657.044</td>
<td>49.799</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>11,505.360</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.074</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coeff. Var.</td>
<td>132.807</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.057</td>
<td>5.314</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Root MSE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.314</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Type I SS</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selection Process</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>848.315</td>
<td>169.663</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Type III SS</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selection Process</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>848.315</td>
<td>169.663</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tenure Results for Respondents' Immediately Previous Positions

The second approach to the analysis involved examining the results to Question 11 through Question 17 which were concentrated on the immediately previous positions held by the individuals. This approach was deemed desirable since the true length of tenure in those positions could be determined. For the second approach to this study, only the 64 survey respondents who indicated that they had also held the position of president in their previous positions were included in the analysis. Of those only 61 listed the selection process used in their immediately previous presidency. Where controlling for those who were previously presidents, the mean number of years in their previous presidency was 6.5 years with a median of 5 years. The approximate mean for all survey respondents in their current positions (assigning a longevity value of 0.5 years for those with less than one year in their presidency) was 5.5 years while the median was only 2 years for all current positions. See Table 13 for these results.
### Table 13

**Number of Years in Immediately Previous Position Where Previous Position was President (Variable Q14NOYR)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years</th>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cumulative $n$</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.06</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.63</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>37.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.63</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>53.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.94</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>64.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.38</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>73.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.81</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>81.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>85.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>90.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>92.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>93.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>95.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>98.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Relationship Between Presidents’ Immediately Previous Tenure and Selection Process Where Previous Position was a Presidency**

Controlling for job title, the number of survey respondents with an immediately previous position of president was 64. The variable for presidential selection process
(Q16SLCT2) where previous title was president (Q12PRVT) was not statistically significant. The frequencies for presidential selection process of those who were previously presidents are shown in Table 14.

Table 14

*Previous Selection Process of Those Responding with Previous Presidencies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Selection Process (Q16SLCT2)</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal search using search committee</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal search with selection by board</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National search using professional search firm</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>36.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National search using other types of consultants</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National search using internal resources</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-responses = 3
CHAPTER V

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Research Question 1: What method(s) of selection, of the seven put forward, were most successful in selecting presidents based on longevity?

While only the relationship between the number of years the current presidents had been employed in their current positions proved to be statistically significant \( F = 3.41, p = 0.0055 \), there were other noteworthy findings including some suggesting other avenues of research. Of the 224 valid surveys, 48.31% of the respondents had less than 1 year of tenure in their current positions, 75% had fewer than 10 years of tenure. While the American Association of Community College’s (AACC) membership showed 47% of their president members have 4 or fewer years in their current offices, 64.7% of the current presidents responding to this study’s survey reported having 0 to 4 years in their current presidency. The difference between the current study and the AACC’s numbers which is 17.7% has suggested that the newer presidents were more likely to respond to the survey; otherwise, the study sample would have more accurately represented in the AACC membership percentages.

However, the finding warrants further inquiry into the possibility that changes in presidencies since the most recent AACC data were published had eliminated presidencies with longer tenure and replaced those with newer presidents. The survey system received a dozen messages indicating that targeted presidents were no longer at the specified institution. The mean longevity of each group is represented in Figure 1. Groupings of 10 year intervals provided a similar pattern of mean longevity.
Figure 1. Mean longevity findings for each grouping of presidential tenure, where 1 = 1-5 years, 2 = 6 - 10 years, 3 = 11 - 15 years, 3 = 16 - 20 years, 4 = 21 - 25 years, 5 = 26 - 30 years, 6 = 31 - 35 years, 7 = 36 - 30 years.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between type of presidential search used and the length of tenure in the sample?

The relationship between the presidential longevity of respondents’ immediately previous positions where the previous positions were as president was not statistically significant. However, a comparison on the percentages of the types of presidential selection processes used in the selection of the respondents’ current presidencies and their immediately previous presidencies showed both similarities and changes. The use of internal searches using search committees has dropped from 6.84% of all searches reported in the survey for previous presidencies to 0.91% for currently held presidencies. National searches using professional search firms remained the largest group (Current Presidency = 38.64%; Previous Presidency = 36.07%). National searches using internal resources was still the second largest search process used
(Current Presidencies = 29.09%; Previous Presidencies = 31.15%) but demonstrated a decrease in use based on the survey responses.

Overall, of the selection processes used for previous presidential positions, 75.42% of the respondents were selected by some type of national search. For currently held presidencies, 74.01% of the respondents were selected through one of the national search processes. Inversely, for those respondents with a previous presidency before their current position, 16.68% were hired for the previous presidency through some type of internal search, while 18.18% of the current president respondents had been selected through internal searches. When disaggregated, the numbers showed that internal selection by search committee fell -5.93% for this sample, while use of the internal search with selection by a board rose +7.43% for this sample.

Table 15
Mean Length of Presidential Tenure by Search Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Search Used</th>
<th>Current Presidency Mean years</th>
<th>Previous Presidency Mean years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal search using search committee</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal search using selection by board</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National search using professional search firm</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National search using other types of consultants</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National search using internal resources</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# missing = 2 1

The difference between the mean length of presidential tenure by search processes in the current presidency and previous presidency shows a marked difference. Presidents selected using national searches using other (than professional search firms) types of consultants showed the longest mean tenure for current
presidencies (10.4 years) but national searches using internal resources (8.1 years) and internal searches using search committees (7.5 years) had the highest mean years for immediately previous presidencies. The fact that national search firms using a professional search firm was the most often process used for current presidential searches (36.07% of the time) shows that the most often used process and the processes producing the highest longevity are not the same.

While the respondents’ previous presidential positions did not show any significant difference in selection processes, it is possible that bias in the sampling did occur. Previous presidents with greater longevity may have retired, and making only medium and short term former positions available to be added to the survey sampling. The cohort of current presidential respondents appears biased in that 64 of the presidents replying that they had served in previous presidencies could have served for many years in a previous presidency and only recently (i.e., within less than 1 year) moved to their current positions.

Shortcomings of the Study

Since the survey was voluntary, it was subject to participant self selection bias. The circumstances, demographics, and even personalities might differ significantly between those presidents willing to participate and those who were not. Many of the respondents reported less than 1 year of service in their current presidencies. The majority of the respondents were non-Hispanic White males. While this study attempted to show a close approximation to the demographics of the population of community college presidents’ demographics, gaps were found between the sample and the
population. Therefore, these findings are not necessarily generalizable to the entire population of community college presidents.

Recommendations for Further Study

The number of respondents who reported holding presidency positions immediately before their current positions was 64 out of 224. A larger survey sample could produce statistically significant results. In order to increase the sample size, it might be beneficial to survey presidents who have already retired. This method could lead to increased time and expense for research unless a database similar to the AACC’s database could be generated for locating retired presidents. This recommendation to include previous presidents with longer tenure was discussed earlier. A similar study could be done with the existing pool of presidents by broadening the study to include respondents’ previous positions including those other than president. The thrust of such a study would be a comparison of which positions most often lead to the presidency as well as which previous positions lead to the longest presidencies.

While this study has examined race and gender as a demographic factor and mirrors current demographics of the population of community college presidents, race and gender need to be examined as independent variables. A disadvantage to such a study would be the fact that actual presidencies are skewed toward White males and getting a large enough sampling of those representing other ethnic groups and women would be difficult. The survey for this study included state specific data to be used to examine regional differences and those differences influence on presidential longevity. One possible study could include studying presidents of community colleges in the
United States by region as determined through the regional accrediting agencies. An intervening variable might be related to the differing restrictions imposed by these agencies on the selection of presidents or on their required qualifications.

This study collected data on institutional type, however, as with gender and race, the responses collected showed a bias toward two-year community colleges. This is probably due to the method of acquiring contact information for the survey as well as the fact that there are more two-year institutions that classify themselves as community colleges than any other classification. The two-year community colleges could be subdivided into several more specific categories in future studies.

A comparison of longevity and pay could be performed in future studies. However, pay plus benefits would probably need to be used to produce a true picture. While most community colleges, being public entities, have to publish their presidents’ salaries, getting a true picture of the additional perks and benefits offered to community college presidents may be more difficult to acquire.

A future study could easily be broadened to encompass presidents of four-year institutions in addition to those of community colleges. However, studying presidents of four-year institutions would offer some difficulties with both the organizational complexities and administrative hierarchies found in them. An additional possibility could be to examine crossover situations for those who have been presidents of both two-year and four-year institutions. An examination of longevity could be used examine whether or not such crossover situations produce the same presidential longevity as for those who have only ever served as presidents in one type of institution.
This study did not address “quality” and only looked at longevity. The findings suggested longevity is a desirable trait in a presidency but did not specifically prove that longevity translates into leading a better, more successful institution. Further, the results did not show that longevity leads to a better, more successful, president. A qualitative study could be done comparing the longevity of the presidencies to the successful changes and improvements made but even the interpretation of these adjectives would be subjective. Information indicated whether the respondents’ current presidencies had been awarded from within the same institution, a different institution in the same state, or not from an institution of higher education at all. In a future study, these variables could be correlated with longevity.

Some of the additional areas of inquiry related to presidential searches and/or presidential longevity have been listed above. However, there remains a question of what combination of variables might best predict a long lived presidency. Probably the most telling variable would be one of the most difficult to quantify and compare to longevity: institutional culture. And with the institutional culture variable, the search processes used to select the presidents destined to persist in their positions come into the picture. Further, are some search processes more likely to lend themselves more aptly to certain types of institutional cultures? In addition, what interceding variables such as transparency versus secrecy affect search processes? These are questions that will need to be explored in future studies.
APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT
Informed Consent Notice For Online Surveys

The purpose of this research study is to examine the relationship between presidential search processes and presidential longevity. You are being asked to complete a survey that will take about 10 minutes. Although this study is not expected to be of any direct benefit to you, we hope to learn more about the processes in selecting community college presidents. Answering the questions in the survey involves no foreseeable risks. Participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time without penalty. By completing the survey you are giving consent to participate and confirming that you are at least 18 years old. Your answers will remain confidential and will be protected by confidentiality. Results of the survey will be reported only on a group basis.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Constance L. Howells, at chowells@dcccd.edu. This research study has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board (IRB). The UNT IRB can be contacted at (940) 565-3940 with any questions regarding the rights of research subjects. You may print this notice for your records.
APPENDIX B

HIGHER EDUCATION PRESIDENTIAL LONGEVITY QUESTIONNAIRE
1. Current Institution_________________________________________________________
2. Current Title____________________________________________________________
3. Total number of years’ experience in higher education in any position____________
4. Gender
   a. Male
   b. Female
5. Race Ethnicity
   a. American Indian – Non-Hispanic
   b. Asian
   c. Black/African-American – Non-Hispanic
   d. Hispanic
   e. White/Caucasian-Non-Hispanic
   f. Other (please specify)____________________________________________________
6. State in which current institution is located_________________________________
7. Starting date in your current position at your present institution__________(mm/yy)
8. Is the institution where you are currently employed
   a. Private – non-religiously affiliated – four years or more
   b. Private – religiously affiliated - four years or more
   c. State College or University – four years or more
   d. Community College – two year
   e. Public Technical College – two year Proprietary Institution
   f. Not working in higher education
   g. Other (Please specify)____________________________________________________
9. Type of selection process used in your selection for your current position
   a. Internal search using search committee
   b. Internal search with selection by board or other governing body
   c. National search using profession search firm
   d. National search using other types of consultants
   e. National search using internal resources
   f. Other (Please specify)____________________________________________________
10. When you were selected for your current position, were you
    a. Working at the same institution
    b. Working at another institution but within the same system
    c. Working at another institution outside the state
    d. Working at another institution within the same state
11. Institution where employed immediately before to your current position__________
12. Title you held immediately before your current position______________________
13. State in which you were employed in your last position_______________________
14. Number of years you held your last position (please round out to years or half years)_______
15. Institutional Type of last position
    a. Private – non-religiously affiliated – four years or more
b. Private – religiously affiliated - four years or more
c. State College or University – four years or more
d. Community College – two year
e. Public Technical College – two year
f. Proprietary Institution
g. Not working in higher education
h. Other (Please specify)____________________________________________

16. Type of selection process used in your selection for your last position
   a. Internal search using search committee
   b. Internal search with selection by board or other governing body
   c. National search using profession search firm
d. National search using other types of consultants
e. National search using internal resources
f. Other (Please specify)____________________________________________

17. When you were selected for your last position were you
   a. Working at the same institution
   b. Working at another institution but within the same system
c. Working at another institution within the same state
d. Working at another institution outside the state
e. White/Caucasian – Non-Hispanic
   f. Other__________________________

18. Other comments or information
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

Created by: Constance L. Howells
Selecting Lasting Leadership 01/06/11
APPENDIX C

INVITATIONAL E-MAIL WITH SURVEY LINK
Dear College President:

Because of the increasing importance of recruiting and retaining skilled college presidents, I have chosen to conduct my dissertation research on the relationship between presidential hiring methods and presidential tenure. My name is Constance Howells and I am a doctoral candidate at The University of North Texas as well as Dean of Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness at Eastfield College.

You could greatly assist my research by responding to a short survey at the link below. If you chose to participate, I estimate that it will take approximately 10 minutes. All responses will be confidential and used only in aggregated form for the actual dissertation or in related publications.

The secure survey link is located at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CDFG725

If you have questions or would like to follow-up on my research you can use the contact information below. Thank you so much for your time and assistance!

Constance L. Howells
Dean, Institutional Effectiveness, Planning and Research
Eastfield College
chowells@dcccd.edu
972-860-8325
APPENDIX D

FOLLOW-UP INVITATIONAL E-MAIL WITH SURVEY LINK
Thanks to all of you that have already participated in my dissertation survey about your experiences with the presidential search process. In order, to optimize the number of participants, I am resending the message below with a link to the survey. If you are one of the approximately 150 people who have already responded, the survey software will prevent you from completing the survey again. If you haven’t already responded, I would be very appreciative if you did so.

Because of the increasing importance of recruiting and retaining skilled college presidents, I have chosen to conduct my dissertation research on the relationship between presidential hiring methods and presidential tenure. My name is Constance Howells and I am a doctoral candidate at The University of North Texas as well as Dean of Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness at Eastfield College.

You could greatly assist my research by responding to a short survey at the link below. If you chose to participate, I estimate that it will take approximately 10 minutes. All responses will be confidential and used only in aggregated form for the actual dissertation or in related publications.

The secure survey link is located at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CDFG725. If you have questions or would like to follow-up on my research you can use the contact information below. Thank you so much for your time and assistance!

Constance L. Howells
Dean, Institutional Effectiveness, Planning and Research
Eastfield College
chowells@dcccd.edu
972-860-8325
REFERENCES


Angelo, J. M. (2010). There have been a flurry of lawsuits filed by ex-presidents. University Business. Retrieved from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_moLSH/is_1_9/ai_n15988697


