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College Mission Change and Neoliberalism in a Community and Technical College

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Abstract

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MA, Metropolitan State University, 2007

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Administrators of 2-year colleges are working in an environment where they seek to balance the social development of the student and the community's demand for a trained workforce to achieve economic development. This balance has resulted in ambiguity about the mission and purpose of 2-year colleges. The purpose of this case study was to explore a community college's experiences with mission change by exploring the interaction between a neoliberal public policy environment and the traditional social democratic mission of academia. Harvey's conceptualization of neoliberalism was used as the theoretical framework. Data were collected through 15 semi-structured interviews with members of college leadership, faculty members, staff, and members of the college's advisory council. Other data included documentation about policy, mission, and publicly available documents related to the mission change at the institution. These data were deductively coded, and then subjected to content analysis. Key findings indicated that the college initially stalled in the mission change process, and as a result, identified alternative pathways to achieve the goals of career-relevant training the neoliberal environment demanded. In this sense, the perspective of academic capitalism was born from necessity for self-reliance and illustrates the commonality of finding entrepreneurial solutions. The implications for positive social change include recommendations to leaders of 2-year colleges on managing mission change in a way that responds to the needs of the college community while retaining the relevance of students' social development.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to the entrepreneurial 2 year college administrators and faculty members who see the potential for change and are willing to challenge the status quo to improve the higher education system for future students. It is far easier to take the path of least resistance, but through the effort of being different, being uncomfortable with the answer no or it can't be done, and putting at risk one's political capital innovation is possible in public higher education systems. In the end, it is the success of our students in the real world that will tell the tale of our value as educators to develop global citizens and supply critical inputs to an increasingly competitive global economy.

Acknowledgments

This dissertation has been a longer process than I ever imagined and were it not for my family and good friends, I would have given up, been tempted to accept the ABD, and succumbed to academic fatigue. I must acknowledge the scholars and educators at Walden University who guided me through this process. Unfortunately, Dr. Karin Treiber is no longer with us on this earth to see the product of her tutelage, but her spirit is alive within this study. To Dr. Michael Knight, I must say thank you for your support and drive to get the best from me. You are the best example of an academic capitalist I know and that is the highest compliment. I would be remiss if I did not mention Dr. Ron Thomas, the technical college leader who introduced me to 2 year colleges and gave me the opportunity to stretch my experience both as an entrepreneurial administrator and as a scholar and teacher.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Community and technical colleges face challenges and issues that impact the mission of their institutions. They face increased operating costs, rising enrollments, budgeting challenges with decreases in public (local and state) funding, pressures to keep tuition and fees low, thus restricting their ability to operate in a free-market economy, and a growing proprietary college sector with which to compete. Further complicating the organizational environment is the transition of leadership that is anticipated for the period between 2010 and 2020. Researchers predict an unprecedented turnover in 2-year college leaders as a large percentage of senior level community college administrators retire and are replaced (Strom, Sanchez, & Downey-Schilling, 2010).

This level of change across several aspects of higher education suggests that the 2-year colleges, as well as the universities will adapt and change in response to the environment, but the nature of the change and its connection to the various constituencies of the colleges is likely to be unique to each classification of higher education institution. For the community and technical colleges, the change can be better understood through a study of college mission statements and how the decisions are made in connection to the public policy environment. A review of the literature suggests that this phenomenon should be examined through the lens of the institutional mission change process and the extent to which 2-year colleges are moving from a social democratic mission to a capitalistic mission.

The primary social implication of the study was to develop a discourse on who controls 2-year public higher education in the current public policy environment. As public funding decreases, policy makers demand a more capitalist approach to education, and private sources of revenue increase, the historical social democratic approach where the academy controls the curriculum and programming of an institution is proving more difficult to maintain. If the community college increases its focus on supplying labor inputs to the community and less on citizen development, is there an implication for the society of the future?

This study contains five chapters and appendices. The first is an introductory chapter that covers the nature of the study, the history of the 2-year colleges, and the operational context in which they function. The second is a literature review that examines the theoretical context of social democracy and capitalism in the higher education context. The third chapter details the study and how it was conducted. The fourth chapter presents the results of the data collection, and the fifth and final chapter presents the implications of the findings and recommendations for future study. In addition to the chapters, there is an appendix that details the data collection tools utilized and a listing of references.

Background

The social democratic mission of higher education, especially in public colleges and universities, has been historically exemplified with academia and the college institution as a key provider of societal enlightenment. The institutions and their faculty, staff, and leaders have played the role of the guardians and creators of knowledge and in

many ways differentiated themselves from the other governmental or nonprofit organizations supported through public policy (Lynch, 2006). This can be identified in the institutional mission statement, which provides an ideology and purpose for the college, as well as an organizational directive.

United States public policy has also changed, and in the period between 1960 and 2012 it has become increasingly *neoliberal* (Hartwich, 2009). Neoliberal in this context is defined as a political and economic theory that supports the utilization of entrepreneurial practices in a free market environment (Harvey, 2005). In this neoliberal environment, the ideas of capitalism, free markets, and competition have been introduced into the public policy environment and there has been pressure for higher education to respond. This means that while the 2-year colleges may view themselves differently in the public policy environment, the reality is that there exists pressure to operate in a manner similar to other publically-supported organizations or private business.

In my research of the literature, I found that the current situation for community colleges in the United States presents a rare combination of circumstances. In the period from 2000 and 2010, there has been increasing demand for community college programs and services. At the same time, the traditional resources to meet that demand are decreasing from the public sector creating a fundamental strain on the institution and its operations.

Community colleges are a major factor in the higher education landscape and approximately 45% of all college students in the United States in 2009 attend a 2-year college and enrollment is increasing (Tollefson, 2009). During the period between 2000

and 2009, 2-year college enrollment increased by 26.4%, the number of public 2-year college decreased by less than 1%, and there was a 10% increase in the number of private institutions of higher learning in the United States (United States Census Bureau, 2011). This data suggested that the private and proprietary sector colleges entered the market to fill the gap in demand.

In this environment of increasing demand and increasing competition, the traditional funding that supports the public community colleges is decreasing (Tollefson, 2009). An average of 60% of funding to support public community colleges comes from state and local government sources, and traditional funding is diminishing with government budget cuts across the country (Boggs, 2004; Tollefson, 2009). The response has been for the community colleges to accept the financial reality that they must respond in an increasingly capitalist manner to compete in the free market and that neoliberalism will shape the future mission and viability of the institution.

One manner by which these colleges have attempted to be more self-reliant and sustainable has been to move from a traditional social democratic mission to a more capitalist mission and become a comprehensive community and technical college (Milliron & Wilson, 2006). In this process, the college's academic preparatory mission for university transfer increasingly incorporates the acquisition of vocational and technical skills training mission that can be utilized immediately in the economy. The result has been the emergence of the community college with a dual mission that incorporates both development of an enlightened civil society and a skilled labor force.

The dual or comprehensive community college mission is not new; evidence of this has been observed in the movement from the junior colleges to the community colleges, and through the mergers of community colleges and their vocational school counterparts in the United States since the 1950s (Baker III, 1996; Bastedo & Gumport, 2003). What is new to the field of public policy and higher education in the 21st century is that the decision to become comprehensive (a community and technical college) has become increasingly politicized.

The literature provides substantive information on the development of the junior college and the movement to vocational education by the community colleges to meet changing workforce demands, but it did not address the knowledge gap in the how the decision making process has been impacted by neoliberal public policy in the United States and how it pertains to 2-year colleges in different regions of the country. In this public policy environment, the literature review suggested that there exists a gap for further exploration into the new nature of power and influence on the community and technical colleges and the involvement of the internal and external constituents on the future of higher education in a particular community, state, or region (Baker III, 1996; Bastedo & Gumport, 2003).

Problem Statement

Public colleges have traditionally played the role as *citizen-builder*, achieved through its faculty, who exercise academic freedom without external intrusion. Citizen-building refers to the role that higher education institutions play in the society whereby

the education provided in the college prepares the student to participate fully in the society, which is also referred to by Labaree (1997) as *social democracy.*

However, colleges require funding to operate and in return must meet government and taxpayer mandates. Given the constraints administrators of these colleges must balance between the social development of the individual and the community's demand for a trained workforce to achieve economic development. Understanding how public 2-year colleges balance this process is relevant to the future of public higher education in the 21st century. This is of concern not only to administrators, faculty, policy makers, but also to future college students and their role in the society.

Mission is at the center of a community college's institutional planning and development, it has cross institutional impact on leadership, curriculum and program development, faculty and staffing, facilities, student recruitment and retention, and external relationships with the community (Clowes & Levin, 1989; Lake & Mrozinski, 2011). College leaders must invest their limited financial and human resources to engage in a process with both internal and external constituent groups on its development. Thus, the development of college mission statement has the potential to reveal the struggle between the internal parties over academic capitalism, and illuminate the external business community's influence in public higher education at the 2-year level. Society is impacted by education and it serves as an agent of social change. Thus it is imperative to seek knowledge as to what the community can expect for the future of public higher education, which was why I focused on this as the research problem for the study.

This study is not the first analysis of community college mission and the capitalist movement in the United States. The findings of Dr. Jennifer Burruss (2010) suggested that there remained a gap in the literature and the need to conduct similar research in other parts of the country to determine the nature of the mission change phenomenon. The Burruss study served as the basis for this study with some minor changes to address the Midwestern United States population of interest and the examination of a technical college that changed its mission and status to become comprehensive.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to contribute to the body of literature on the subject of community college mission change by exploring the interaction between a neoliberal public policy environment and the traditional social democratic mission of academia. The examination provides a more in-depth investigation of how the policy environment of the 21st century impacts a community college's mission and direction for the future. The mission change phenomenon in 2-year public colleges represents a segment of academia currently experiencing significant changes, as previously described in the introduction, and is most likely to reveal the impact of the neoliberalism within the limitations of the study.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were an adaptation of those in the Burruss study (2010). The primary research question that guided the research was: what are the mission implications of an increasingly neoliberal (capitalistic) environment in

community and technical colleges? Four subordinate questions were also included in the study:

RQ1: What changes in college mission have been observed that indicate an increased alignment with surrounding business and industry?

RQ2: What is the nature of the relationship between the community and technical college and business and industry?

RQ3: What impact has public policy decisions by your governing bodies (both the state legislature and the state college and university system) had on the mission changes at the college?

RQ4: What impact has public policy decisions had on the internal governance at the college and your relationship with internal constituencies?

Conceptual Framework

According to Harvey (2006), the theory of neoliberalism describes a "theory of political economic practices that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade (p. 146). In the same manner by which this theory of political economy has expanded as institutional reform in national governments it has also permeated public higher education as a reform strategy and as a reaction to the federal, state, and local governmental transformation.

The study focused on this theoretical concept of neoliberalism which suggests that the public policy influences a discourse of economic development that has changed the community college from the historic social democratic mission of the people's college to

a developer of human capital and the learner as an economic entity (Ayers, 2005, Levin, 2000). This manifestation is apparent in community college mission changes in the form of academic capitalism or entrepreneurship (Ayers 2005).

In order to view the neoliberal framework the traditional social democratic context of higher education is well rooted in the literature regarding the influence of public education on society and therefore it must also be examined (Mann 2009). Traditional social democratic context of higher education is based in the work of Mann (2009) and in more recent work scholars such as Labaree (1997) have further defined the social democratic phenomenon present in higher education. This includes the three key pursuits including citizenship training, equal treatment, and equal access, all of which historically have been the defining role of the junior college which is today referred to as the community college (Labaree, 1997).

Neoliberal or business like thinking in the public education environment is often referred to as academic capitalism, which results in the commodification of public education. It has been the public sector response to emulate the behavior of private enterprise in order to meet the challenges of increasing self-sufficiency and accountability (Knoll, 2009; Lovell & Trouth, 2002). Scholars such as Burton C. Clark (1997) examined this phenomenon extensively in the research universities, and yet there remained a gap in the exploration of academic capitalism at the community college level.

The intent of the study was to examine neoliberal public policy change through the eyes of the participants in the college mission change process at a 2-year technical college that became a community and technical college, and how the theoretical

framework of neoliberalism is present in the mission changes of comprehensive 2-year public colleges in the 21st Century.

The Nature of the Study

The selection of the qualitative method was developed from the examination of a variety of available research methods and from examining the research methodologies utilized by scholars in the field of higher education and public policy. The study focused on understanding a phenomenon of mission change in a deeper manner with the goal to bridge the gap in the literature, which supports qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). This was further supported by the prevalence of qualitative research methods utilized by the scholars in the review of the literature.

The rationale for the selection of the case study methodology was two-fold. The first factor in the decision process was the choice to continue the research developed in the Burruss study (2010) and conduct a similar case study in another geographic region of the United States. The second factor was the examination and elimination of alternative interpretive methods in the collection of data including case study, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative research, and phenomenology. The case study method was elevated from the other methods as it is more closely aligned to the nature of the research (public policy) and focused on activities of a heterogeneous group (college-based and community-based individuals) (Creswell, 2013).

Based on the rationale, the study consisted of a qualitative case study of one 2-year college that changed its mission to become comprehensive since 2007. Fifteen in-depth interviews were conducted. Five of the interviews were with members of the

college leadership either currently or at the time of the mission change including the college president, the vice president of academic and student affairs, and three deans. Of these deans two were faculty members during the mission change, one of which was the leader of the faculty union. The third dean interviewed was the dean of students at the time of the mission change and now holds a staff role at the college. Similar interviews were also conducted to provide data on the mission change process from the perspectives of faculty and staff, including two liberal arts faculty and one technical program faculty, as well as one student services staff member at the institution.

External parties were interviewed including two college and university system administrators and one system leadership council member, all who were involved directly or indirectly with the mission change process. Further interviews were conducted with representatives of the business and employer community including the economic development director and K-12 superintendent who served on the college's advisory council, and a member of the college and university system board of trustees who was also a former state legislator.

The interview protocol consisted of semi structured open-ended questions following the qualitative case study paradigm (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2011). In order to address the methodological challenges of construct validity, internal validity, and external validity, I also conducted a review and analysis of internal and public documents to triangulate the data and to mitigate bias as required by the case study research tradition (Creswell, 2013).

Operational Definitions of Key Terms

Academic transfer: The belief that community colleges are an extension of universities achieved through the acceptance of lower level credits toward a baccalaureate degree, which may include dual enrollment of the student at both a community college and a university (Townsend & Wilson, 2006).

Academic capitalism: The process by which higher education interacts with the society as a player in a market economy. It includes viewing the student as a consumer and the institution's leadership, staff and faculty as entrepreneurial agents to advance its pursuits (Slaughter & Rhodes, 2004).

Comprehensive community college: Also known as a community and technical college. Institutions of higher learning where the degree awarded is an associates degree and the curriculum provided includes liberal arts education, technical and vocational education, and continuing education (Baker III, 1996).

Continuing education: Also referred to as contract training or customized training. Adult focused noncredit education that is delivered for the purpose of workforce training or based upon other societal needs identified by the constituencies served by the institution (Baker III, 1996).

Democratic equality: The manner by which citizens can be productive in a market economy without resorting to the selfishness that could jeopardize the developing American democracy (Larabee, 1997).

Entrepreneurship: A characteristic of a social system whereby the institution or entity takes risks to engage in innovative or enterprising activities (Clark, 1998).

Neoliberalism: A political and economic theory that supports the utilization of entrepreneurial practices in a free market environment (Harvey, 2005). When applied in a policy context, education is a marketable commodity that is available to those citizens who need it and are able to afford it, that focuses on consumer centered individual choice with little or no government intervention (Lynch, 2006).

Social democratic theory: The political theory that uses the democratic process to move the society from capitalism to that of socialism. Within the educational context it is achieved through three pursuits including citizenship training, equal treatment, and equal access (Labaree, 1997; Mann, 2009).

State college and university system: An alignment of public colleges and universities into a unified governance and funding structure that involves some level of State control over the institutional members (Tollefson, 2009).

Assumptions

The participants from the subject institution of this case study understood the definition of mission, as well as their institution's previous and current mission statements. In order to address this assumption, the participants were provided with the definition of mission accepted for this study, and copies of the subject institution's previous and current mission statements.

The participants had enough information and clear memory of the events being described. In order to address this assumption, the participants were asked to attest to their participation in the mission change process prior to their selection for participation in the study by receiving a copy of the questionnaire. In one case a recruited participant

declined to be interviewed stating that her recollections and participation were insufficient to be helpful in the study.

The participants were honest in their statements and gave evidence of the mission change process that will yield valid data. In order to address this assumption, the participants were asked if their participation was of their own free will and assured that the answers they provide will be confidential.

The subject institution will grant full access to all records and individuals as requested and not withhold any information so as to bias the study to a predetermined conclusion. This assumption will be addressed by obtaining the necessary permissions from the senior administrator of the subject institution and from the college system office, which will include specific notation of the release of records for the purpose of the study.

The subject institution did change its mission to become a comprehensive community and technical college. I confirmed with the colleges and university system office that the subject institution chosen for the study officially changed its mission and was recognized as a community and technical college in 2007.

The information gathered was the perspective of the participant and not the researcher. The study design addressed this assumption through the utilization of audio recordings of each interview.

The findings of the research process yielded sufficient data to produce answers to the research questions. In order to address this assumption, a qualitative research design was utilized that incorporated a large enough population of participants interviewed to

develop this case study and that methods were in place to determine the validity of the information collected.

Limitations, Scope, and Delimitations of the Study

The scope of the study was a single 2-year college that became a comprehensive community and technical college through a process of mission change. Limitations of the study include the sample because there are a limited number of community and technical colleges that have changed mission in the geographic location selected for the study, the Midwestern United States, specifically the state of Minnesota.

For this study, the delimitations included the participants, who were volunteer participants. As volunteers, I found that two faculty members I contacted declined to be interviewed based on the limited time available they had available for interviews and chose not to participate, citing their work or course schedules. Through the use of technology, participants were able to participate regardless of their distance from the location of the interviews; both phone interviews as well as face to face interviews were conducted as mutually agreed upon by the interview subject and the researcher. These delimitations were considered and addressed through a series of protocols to increase the quality of the data collected that was grounded in the use of the Burruss (2010) research study.

Significance of the Study

The study is significant to 2-year colleges, college systems, and legislative bodies for several reasons. First, the study expands the research developed by Burruss (2010) and others (Ayers, 2011; Cech, 2010; Dingfelder, 2007; Kleinman, 2010) and provides

further knowledge as to the scope of the mission change happening at community colleges across the United States. Next, the addition of the Midwest region to this body of knowledge confirmed the spread of this trend toward academic capitalism in comprehensive community colleges throughout the United States. Third, the study has the potential to guide college administrators and policy leaders in the reinvention of the comprehensive community college through mission change to successfully navigate the complex set of circumstances facing these institutions today (Abelman & Dalessandro, 2008; Boggs, 2004).

The positive social change implications of this study are significant because of the role mission plays in strategic planning at community colleges. Tomorrow's citizens and members of the workforce will to a large extent be educated, trained, and shaped through higher education, much of it anticipated to be delivered in a 2-year college environment (Boggs, 2004; Tollefson, 2009). Understanding the how mission change occurs and whose voices are heard in the process speaks to who these public institutions view as the customer and how they will address the future "needs of the middle class and the engines of the economy" (Levin, 2000, p. 20).

Summary

Chapter 1 contains an introduction and overview of the study. Community colleges in the United States have addressed their resource challenges by undergoing a process of mission change and transition to comprehensive community colleges, called community and technical colleges. The purpose of the study was to examine the mission change process and the involvement of their constituents to identify characteristics of that

mission change in a neoliberal society. Because mission is the driver of institutional direction and focus, the objective of the study was to determine if the subject institution had become more capitalistic given their challenges in the neoliberal public policy environment.

In chapter 1, I utilized a qualitative case study methodology for data collection, which was inspired by a previous study on community college mission by Burruss (2010). Chapter 2 includes a review of the literature on the historical development of the community colleges in the United States as reflected in mission statement changes. In addition, the theoretical concepts are further described as they relate to the 2-year colleges in a neoliberal public policy environment. In Chapter 3, I describe the methodology in detail and the rationale for the selection of a case study, including justifications for the preferred research method. Chapter 4 is focused on the analysis of the data collected through the research and discovery process and the coding of that data, and Chapter 5 concludes the study with discussion of the findings and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The traditional model of higher education has been the academic institution as the guardian of knowledge, where freedom of thought and the overall benefit to the society at large outweigh the individual needs of any single constituency (Lynch, 2006). Since the late 1970s the public sector in the United States that provides significant resources for these colleges and universities has increasingly engaged in neoliberal economic policies. The resulting problem is more pressure for higher education to focus on their economic role in the society as opposed to enriching the society (Suspitsyna, 2012, p. 50).

In the current literature public higher education is operating in a global marketplace, with increasing profit seeking competition, in an economy where allocated public funding is being reduced (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2010). Given these unique circumstances, public sector higher education institutions are increasingly facing the problem of how to balance their traditional social democratic mission with the demand to operate in a more capitalistic manner. In order to compete for limited public resources, these institutions must redefine themselves and adapt to survive. The reflection of this change can be observed in the college mission statement.

Community college missions are different from the mission statements of the universities that serve a selective audience and often contain a component of advancing research. The community colleges, by contrast, serve about 45% of all college students in the United States (Boggs, 2004; Tollefson, 2009). With these marked differences the examination of the phenomenon of mission change in publicly funded community

colleges offers contribution to the literature that will complete the examination of academic capitalism and the impact of neoliberalism in public higher education.

The phenomenon of capitalizing or commodification is not new in the public sector. Harvey (2005) identified examples in the privatization of public services, social welfare, higher education, and military action in the United States in the period beginning in 1970. Harvey suggested that in the 2-year college environment, mission change has been operationalized from junior and community colleges with a social democratic mission to community and technical colleges with a combined mission including academic capitalism. The emergence of academic capitalism brings into question who is the customer of these higher learning institutions and for what purpose (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004).

This literature review includes new research recently released in dissertations that is not yet published in peer reviewed journals. As a result, there is evidence that the existing literature on collegiate mission change focuses on the universities, and the gap is to examine this phenomenon in the 2-year colleges. Following the search strategy, this chapter provides a brief historical review of the development of the 2-year colleges in the United States as well as the theoretical constructs of social democracy and academic capitalism. In addition, it includes a description of the neoliberal policy environment in which higher education is operating and an exploration of higher education mission. It concludes with a review of case study methodology in the literature.

Literature Search Strategies

The search strategy employed for this study of the literature included books, dissertations, documents from the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System, and peer reviewed journals. The terms used to this literature search included: academic capitalism; community college mission; entrepreneurship; higher education public policy; history of community colleges; junior college development; neoliberalism; resource dependency; social democracy; and technical education development. In addition, a literature review was also conducted on qualitative research designs utilizing case studies. To accomplish his, a search was conducted for the terms qualitative case study, case study design, and case study research methodology.

The results of the search included a substantial body of information and were narrowed to a review of more than 100 articles and dissertations for utilization in this proposal. The primary resource for this information included the following databases: Walden University Thoreau Discovery Service, Google Scholar, EBSCO, and Questia. The documents related to state college systems were identified through the records of their system office, office of the chancellor, and their office of legislative auditor. The dissertation review was conducted utilizing ProQuest Dissertations and Theses (PQDT) for English language dissertations published between 2007 and 2013.

Historical Role of 2-Year Colleges in Higher Education

In order to understand the conceptual framework and its application in the 2-year college environment the literature review included an examination of the development of community and technical colleges and how they differ from the 4-year universities.

Higher education in the United States is stratified, and scholars have compared and contrasted the mission of the community college with the university and each institution's role in the academic and social development of the citizenry (Levin, 2000; Milliron & Wilson, 2004; Suspitsyna, 2012). However, there is also a need to make similar comparisons within the 2-year colleges that examines the mission and role of the traditional community college as compared to that of the comprehensive community and technical college. Increasingly, the lines between the two have blurred where each institution takes on a dual role in the community, including both the university transfer and the workforce training missions (Townsend & Wilson, 2006).

In 1970, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching developed a classification system of institutions of higher learning in order to facilitate research and policy analysis (McCormick & Zhao, 2005). The system provided information about the differences in undergraduate awards, but did not make any distinctions between the associate degrees designed for university transfer and those that are employment skill focused. Updates were made by the Carnegie Foundation in 2010 to include special focuses for institutions; however only baccalaureate granting institutions were given these further classifications (Carnegie Foundation, 2012). The distinction for 2-year

colleges is limited to the examination of the academic awards of an institution and the institutional mission in determining the true nature of the institution and its focus.

The associate of arts (AA) degree has been the vehicle for a diverse population of individuals to access upward social mobility through higher education (Bragg, 2001). Students with academic, social, and financial challenges have been able to prepare for a university program of study by attending a community college prior to admission and enrollment in a 4-year institution. Community college studies promote scholarly thinking and acquisition of academic discipline that will aid in the focus on a particular area of study that is pursued at the university level upon transfer (Baker III, 1996). The course of study is focused on general education subjects including liberal arts and sciences.

The associate of science (AS) and applied science (AAS), college diplomas, and certificates that are offered through 2-year community colleges and technical colleges provide the student employment skills in combination with limited general education. These employment focused academic awards provide terminal degrees that in a short time frame provide the community and its employers with skilled labor as well as an academic pathway for the student to transfer to university and obtain additional education (Levin, 2000).

In order to understand the concept of mission in community and technical colleges in 2012, it is helpful to examine the history of these institutions, how they compare to their university counterparts, and the role they have played in the academic community and society. Historically, the universities have been at the center of both scholarly education for upward social mobility and the generation of new knowledge

through research. The 2-year colleges, referred to as junior colleges, community colleges, technical colleges, and community and technical colleges, have been positioned to prepare students for transfer to the university or to prepare incumbent workers for placement in the workforce (Baker, 1996). This role is disputed by a community of scholars including Edmund Gleazer (1980), who suggest that 2-year colleges, as a whole, play a critical role in the development of the community in which it operates and thus its mission focuses on community as the product and facilitates a process of lifelong learning (Bogart, 1994, p. 62).

As early as the 1900s, the 2-year colleges served a dual mission that contained the transfer mission to university and the option of terminal education for employment (Dowd, 2003). In the 1920s and 1930s emphasis was placed on the 2-year college mission of preparing American youth for completion of a liberal arts education at the university level. During this period colleges began to be referred to as the junior colleges. By the late 1940s and in the post World War II era the emphasis changed again and the community college became a full player in the fabric of the communities in which it operated and an asset in economic development.

The term junior college was largely dropped in favor of the term community college. These institutions were seen as an open door to a higher education, as well as a source for a lifetime of learning for the student before a university education, after a university education, or as an alternative to university education (Vaughan, 2006). This role within the community took on five key roles according to President Truman's Commission on Higher Education (1947, p. 3) which included: education adapted to the

community's needs, service to a youth population and older students, life preparation both social and economic, preparation for extended collegiate study, and finally to administer a comprehensive adult education program. The broader community focus of the community college became evident in the mission development and revision at the institutional level.

Conceptual Constructs

Two conceptual constructs were examined in connection to 2-year college mission: social democracy and academic capitalism.

Social Democratic Construct

Democratic equality is grounded in education as a public good (Mann, 2009). Providing education to the masses has been present since the mid-19th century and in higher education it is the 2-year colleges that are charged with the open access mission to help educate the citizenry regardless of their social station, economic means or academic ability (Mann, 2009). Education, from this social democratic point of view, prepares its citizens to take part in a republican society, especially the youth of the population.

The democratization of the community college is rooted in the American democratic philosophy. Democratic equality is defined as the preparation of citizens to be contributing members of a free and democratic nation (Colby, 2007). The United States has, since its inception, placed value on a free state and in the mid-19th century the establishment of common education built upon this principle (Webster, 1790).

In addition to the commitment to teach the principles of democratic equality, the institutions themselves demonstrated their commitment through the provision of equal

and open access to education. The universities, as institutions of research and specialized education, were not the optimal platform to make this a reality. This role was passed down to the 2-year junior colleges to prepare a percentage of the university student population that required developmental education or low cost tuition an alternative point of entry into a university program of study.

Because of this stratification of purpose, junior college missions focused on general education over academic specialization, with the thought that students, who transferred to a higher level of study at a university, would have time and the access to more scholarly opportunities in their subsequent years of higher education. This mission was accepted as the traditional view of the role of 2-year colleges in higher education (Baker III, 1996).

Academic Capitalism Construct

Slaughter and Rhodes (2009) defined academic capitalism is an extension of capitalist theory that "sees groups of actors in universities and colleges--faculty, students, administrators, and managerial professionals-- as using a variety of state resources to intersect the new economy" (p. 20). This entrepreneurial movement was largely examined in the context of 4-year institutions because of the connection between the university's research mission and the commercialization of that research (Clark, 1997).

The 2-year colleges manifested capitalist behavior first as a byproduct of their relationship with the university system when American society demanded that the 2-year colleges provide social mobility through their open access mission (Labaree, 1997). Social mobility focused on individual student achievement as opposed to the larger

community or economy (Labaree, 1997). Because higher education provided the vehicle for an individual to raise their status in the society, it was seen as private good (Hirschman, 1970). This acquisition of education then distinguished the individual from his or her peers in society with the student as a consumer of the product of higher education.

This movement toward social mobility in 2-year colleges increasingly capitalized higher education as a commodity and placed pressure on the institutional mission to meet the needs of a variety of constituent demands (Labaree, 2010). The new vocationalism perspective is indicative of this movement. Employers, government officials, and dislocated and incumbent workers pressured the 2-year colleges to produce students who could be inputs to a more competitive global economy (Levin, 2000). The impact of this mission shift to commodification of education had the potential for institutions to be less concerned about the students' overall quality and depth of knowledge and increasingly focused on the credential achieved by the student and its acceptance by the employer (Labaree, 2006).

This transactional exchange of education as a commodity also impacted the investment in higher education at a 2-year colleges in both monetary and intellectual resource allocations. As institutions acted in a more business like manner and employment, trained students became the currency of 2-year higher education, their investors, including taxpayers, government bodies, employers, donors, and the student body pressed for increased efficiency to maximize output at the lowest possible cost (Knoll, 2009, Lovell & Trouth, 2002).

However, this was not the first time the academic capitalism concept of efficiency in the form of balancing benefits and costs was applied to education. In the early 20th century the concept of social efficiency utilized scientific methodology to determine the curricula needed by students based upon their value as workers in the society. John Franklin Bobbitt (1918) conceptualized that there existed too much information to be taught to any given student and in order to eliminate waste, curricula should be separated by a student's need in the employment sector and their capacity to learn it (p. 48).

Separating education into smaller units allowed an institution to separate those who were not deemed either capable or worthy of academic subjects from those who would be tracked into an associated sequence of highly reinforced skill trainings that could be effectively measured through objective testing (Shepard, 2000, p. 4). The curriculum developed linked the skills and the jobs associated with them and the predicted social roles of the individuals being taught. This brought the employer community into 2-year higher education as a consumer where employers demanded specific skills be taught in order to supply the economy with labor inputs that would produce higher productivity and profitability.

Evidence of this pressure for efficiency and commodification on the education landscape can be seen in the federal policies of the United States government including the Race to the Top Fund as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (United States Department of Education, 2012). This initiative created significant financial incentive ($4.35 billion) to employ concepts of increased efficiency within state

education systems and created competition between states to establish standards, measure student learning, and generate outcomes that directly link to future job creation.

In the Midwest, this has been evidenced in the academic programs offerings, the delivery format of curriculum, and the speed with which students can complete their academic award requirements in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System (MnSCU). A 2007 policy mandate of the Minnesota Legislature required that all transferrable Associate degrees (AS and AA) degrees in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System (2008) be reduced to or consist of no more than 60 credits and Bachelors degrees limited to 120 credits as of 2012. This is a part of a national trend among state legislatures to create equity among the public colleges in the transfer from 2-year to 4-year programs, to reduce the expense to students for degree awards, and to accelerate delivery of skilled labor to the state's economy (Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System, 2010).

The Minnesota decision provided little consideration for the impact the elimination of curriculum within fields of study and instead focused on the demands of employers offering a waiver only in the instance where industry or professional standards require additional credits or a thorough program analysis is conducted and submitted for review by the college system office (Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System, 2010). The potential result was the transformation to "an educational system that is willing to reward students for formal compliance with modest performance requirements rather than for demonstrating operational mastery of skills" (Labaree, 2006, p.56). The decision also served to diminish the power of the faculty to determine the curriculum and

increase the role of administration and the college system as the voice of the employer and the economy.

Neoliberal Policy Environment

The efficiency and business operations of the academic capitalism context have significant linkages to the neoliberal policy environment. This has been evidenced by the resource allocation of public funds to higher education, including those public institutions that are supported through taxpayer dollars (Ayers, 2005). In a neoliberal society, government seeks to be more market driven and to privatize public services, including higher education, which is a natural byproduct of this environment (Harvey, 2005).

Faced with decreasing funding resources for public higher education, the 2-year colleges are pressed to operate within the academic capitalism construct and be efficient in all areas. There is incentive to find ways in which to operate in a more entrepreneurial manner like their university counterparts and generate new sources of revenue (Clark, 1998; Lynch, 2006). This can be seen in the relationships 2-year colleges foster with the larger community.

Colleges partner with the private business sector in the establishment and operation of non credit continuing education and customized training departments as part of the employment readiness mission. They have also developed innovative public private partnerships to share operations and resources such as buildings and technology equipment in the development of vocational career academies with K-12 education providers (Detgen & Alfeld, 2011).

Role of Mission

Based on the literature, mission statements provide a central framework to examine the theoretical concepts of social democracy and academic capitalism because a mission statement defines an organization on a scope that is larger than any individual within it. The purpose is to differentiate that organization from its competitors and "it specifies the fundamental reason why an organization exists" (Pearce & David, 1987, p. 109). It is a short, efficient manner to communication the organization's desire to satisfy the needs of its customers or constituents, its value in the society or marketplace, and declares the organization's outlook (Pearce & David, 1987).

When an organization begins a strategic planning initiative, it is the mission statement that serves as its foundation (Bart et al, 2001 as cited by Bart & Bontis, 2003, p. 362). Given the important role of mission statement development, an examination of the organizational mission will reveal the intention and direction of the organization. The individuals responsible for the governance of and leadership in an organization rely upon the quality, comprehension and acceptance of the mission statement in order to direct the activities under its control. It is for this reason that multiple constituencies of an institution are involved in the creation and adoption of an organizational mission statement.

In higher education, mission statements articulate a shared purpose and in some manner legitimize the organization in the eyes of one's peers (Morphew & Hartley, 2006, p. 456). The college mission statement plays an *instructional* role in identifying those activities critical to success; a *motivational* role to the members of the organization to

perform those activities; and a *communication* role to share the organizational history and culture to internal and external stakeholders (Morphew, 2006). Morphew and Hartley (2006) also suggested that the verbiage chosen for an institution's mission statement signifies the college's constituency and role in terms of the societal construct.

Support for the Case Study Method

With mission as the central framework of the exploration of how 2-year colleges are operating in the neoliberal policy environment, the methodology to gather the data for the study needed to be reflective of the type of social research problem that has been defined in the problem statement (Creswell, 2013). Prior to the decision on methodology, I conducted an exploration of a replication of the Burruss case study (2010) and I interviewed Burruss (November, 2012). This revealed a number of challenges to the study she conducted that could be alleviated in a Minnesota case study if the data collection approach was changed. Various interpretive methods in the collection of data were examined in the literature, including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods.

VanderStoep and Johnson (2009) stated that qualitative research "knowledge is constructed through communication and interaction" and this changes the perspective of the researcher and emphasizes examination of the larger social construct of reality (p. 166). As such, the use of the qualitative method is more effective in describing the social problem than determining a cause and effect relationship, as is done in quantitative research methods (Willig, 2008).

Researchers use the qualitative method in a wide variety of fields including administration, education, health, community services, and management (Merriam,

2009). In order to examine a phenomenon, such as mission change, with multiple

constructions and interpretations of reality, an interpretive qualitative approach allows the

researcher to understand the experience of the individuals involved through their

perspective in a manner, which cannot be achieved through the collection of quantitative

data. This suggests that in the context of higher education, the examination of the

institutional constructs and the qualitative approach had the potential to reveal patterns

within the constructs and how they are represented in the subject institution through

initial coded findings and then translated into themes (Creswell, 2003).

A quantitative approach to the study provided the opportunity to generalize the

population on the basis of statistical claims because of the nature of the data collection

through surveys (Yin, 2012). Quantitative data collection offered the ability to answer the

question asked through a numerical approach but runs the risk of losing some of the

"richness of the meaning" (Babbie, 2012, p. 25). In the case of this research study, the

quantitative method could identify the process of mission, but would not provide the

open-ended narrative voice of the participants to answer the research question as

proposed.

A mixed method approach was examined as it employs both qualitative and

quantitative analyses or can be the use of multiple interpretive methods (Wolf, 2010).

Within mixed methodology, five strategies were evaluated for this study (Greene,

Caracelli, & Graham, 1989) including: complementarity, which clarifies and illustrates

results obtained using one methodology from another; development, which results when

one method employed suggests implementation of an additional method in the research

process; expansion, which examines specific features or details that can increase the breadth of the study; initiation, that brings forth new research questions that result from a method used; and triangulation, which tests consistency through the use of different instruments of data collection. Of the five strategies, one approach, *triangulation* was implemented on an as needed basis to validate the information gathered from the study participants with other data sources including the review of archival documents and interview data collected through other institutional and college system interviews consisting of open-ended questions.

The mission driven mandate in higher education encourages broad based reinvention of public systems and structures that impact a variety of constituencies (Altbach, Gumport, & Berdahl, 2011). Researchers in this area recognize that as new models for higher education emerge, challenges have arisen in the capacity of an institution to change their mission and how its leadership and decision making structures adapt (Hanna, 2000). As a result of this methodological review, the qualitative method remained appropriate for the study, however a modification of the Burruss (2010) study design was warranted to mitigate issues that could diminish the value of the study.

The primary challenge found in this type of research for the study was the interpretation of qualitative responses, as compared to statistical (quantitative) data. The concern was that there would not be a sufficient amount of data or the level of specificity to validate the findings or themes. Furthermore, there was also challenge of mitigating bias through a systematic approach that could addresses the methodological challenges of "construct validity, internal validity, and external validity" (Yin, 2011, p. 6).

Upon examination of the literature and the Burruss study (2010), I determined it was important to conduct data collection from the various consistencies to obtain interviews from diverse participants. In addition, the use of triangulation provided the volume and quality of information needed to substantiate study validity in this study. Burruss (2010) implemented triangulation through the use of three sources of data collection including interviews, focus groups, and document review. In this study, I used two sources of data collection, interviews and document review as the methodological approach.

Summary

The literature describes a movement in the 2-year colleges from the mission of democratic equality to an increasingly market driven academic capitalism reflected in the transition to comprehensive community and technical colleges. Recent studies of mission change phenomena in these colleges suggest that there is still much to be learned by examining the mission change process in different geographic areas of the nation to more fully describe the phenomenon and to apply the research in the leadership and governance of 2-year colleges. Based upon the knowledge gained through the literature review, this study was able to build upon the study conducted by Burruss (2010) and offers a new contribution to the literature in this area of study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

This chapter provides the methodological framework and details for the study. Included in the chapter are the areas of inquiry, including the following: support for the methodology employed, the research design, the theoretical constructs, research questions posed, the study population, the instrumentation, data collection methodology, data analysis and presentation, study-related design issues, Institutional Review Board (IRB) considerations, and the study timeline.

The study was designed to specifically examine changes in the institutional mission of a public community and technical college from the social democratic context of student development as a citizen of the society to a capitalist context that centers on satisfaction of the market economy in a neoliberal society. The study was modeled in part on a study conducted by Burruss (2010). Burruss focused on a single community college located in rural North Carolina that was a member of a 58 college state system. The Burrus study (2010) concluded the need to study mission evolution in community college missions did exist and suggested that the literature on the subject could be furthered with similar research at other community colleges, including those in other geographic areas of the United States. This study expanded the examination to a comprehensive 2-year college in the Midwestern United States, more specifically in Minnesota.

Research Design and Rationale

The research questions for the study were an adaptation of those in the Burruss study (2010). The primary research question that guided the research is the following:

what are the mission implications of an increasingly neoliberal (capitalistic) environment in community and technical colleges? Four subordinate questions were also included in the study:

1. What changes in college mission have been observed that indicate an increased alignment with surrounding business and industry?

2. What is the nature of the relationship between the community and technical college and business and industry?

3. What impact has public policy decisions by your governing bodies (both the state legislature and the state college and university system) had on the mission changes at the college?

4. What impact has public policy decisions had on the internal governance at the college and your relationship with internal constituencies?

Because mission change is a phenomenological process, it could be more fully explored through the collection of descriptive data on the phenomenon. The case study approach facilitated the collection of data on how the phenomenon is impacted by the context of the study. According to Yin (2011), case studies are distinctive in social research because they provide "an empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon, set within a real world context- especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p.4). The rationale for the case study method was further substantiated because the research on mission change is a description of a segment of a larger strategic movement within the institution that, as Yin (2011) asserted, could not be easily dissected from the organizational context.

One concern arose in the selection of the methodology, the propensity for descriptive case studies to become a "lengthy narrative that follows no predictable structure" (Yin, 2011, p. 15). Failure to follow the scientific method in this type of a case study could result in a large volume of personal opinions and an unstructured collection of recollections of events and relationships. The use of inductive reasoning can develop conclusions about the process, and builds on an existing theory to fill the gap in the literature (Barratt et al., 2011). The research design began with a theoretical framework derived from the literature review that guided my analysis of the data collected through fieldwork and document review.

Design of Study

The data for this study was collected through face to face and telephone interviews with college and college system administrators that participated in the mission change process, and faculty and community partners including businesses. Interview responses were gathered over the period of 2 months. Following the data collection process, the responses of the subjects were coded based on the categories and the themes that emerged from the research questions.

In order to triangulate the results from the interviews, a document review was conducted including items such as previous versions of institutional mission statements, Higher Learning Commission self study reports, college catalogs, and other internal documents over the period from 1995 to 2012.

Minnesota is the Midwestern state of interest in this study and it has a state system made up of 31 institutions that was established on July 1, 1995 through a 1991

legislative mandate that brought together three higher education associations that had operated separately in the state (Minnesota Law, 1991) one for the state universities except for the University of Minnesota, one for the community colleges, and a third for the technical and vocational colleges. Twenty-four of the institutional members of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System (MnSCU) are community colleges, technical colleges, and community and technical colleges (MnSCU, 2013). These institutions serve both rural and urban areas. The college system is governed by a board of trustees politically appointed by the state's governor (Sperling, 2007).

The population of the study was a 2-year MnSCU member college that changed its mission to become comprehensive in the time period between 2008 and 2012. The additional requirements for the subject institution were comprehensive status as defined by the awarding of Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and Associate of Applied Science degrees, as well as Diplomas and Certificates, under their academic accreditation and state authorization. The subject institution also had to offer non-credit training and continuing education.

The study population was strongly influenced by the Burruss (2010) study and the need to conduct similar research in a different part of the United States. A purposeful sampling methodology was used to determine the one institution in which to conduct the case study (Creswell, 2012), as there are only two MnSCU colleges that are both a 2-year comprehensive community and technical college and changed their mission during the period between 2008 and 2012. Colleges with mission change before this period were eliminated, as there was concern that the potential population of individuals involved in

the mission change process would be too limited to obtain the diversity of narratives

needed for a valid case study.

The subject institution for the case study is identified based upon discussion with

and the approval of both the MnSCU System and Alexandra Technical and Community

College. The MnSCU System and the subject college's administration were willing to

allow access to their staff, faculty, and advisory members and provided access to archival

documents related to this college mission change and any other data that was requested

during the data collection period.

Sampling Design

The individual participants in the study were selected purposely and identified as

knowledgeable about their area of expertise or influence with regard to the institution

(e.g., academic affairs, college administration, customized training, philanthropy) as

recommended by Rubin and Rubin (2005) and Dr. Jennifer Burruss (2010). Institutional

constituencies recommended by the Burruss study (2010) included the administration

(both current and those historically linked to the institution), faculty, and nonteaching

staff that participated in the mission change process. These participants were offered

confidentiality similar to that of the subject institution. One faculty member requested to

be identified through a pseudonym and is referred to as Alexandria Instructor in the study

data collection.

Individuals external to the institution who were interviewed included business

representatives and K-12 education administrators from the college's service delivery

area that served as advisory committee members. In addition, a retired MnSCU

administrator, and a former leadership council member were selected and interviewed along with a current staff member and a member of the MnSCU Board of Trustees. These specific categories were used because of their connection to the governance, strategic planning, and program of study development processes at the institution in relationship to the mission.

The methodology for purposeful sample acquisition was convenience sampling. Phone conversations were conducted with the institutional administration and union leadership in the authorization process for the study that resulted in the recommendation of faculty, staff and advisory group members solicited for participation that had direct knowledge of the institutional programming, strategic planning and mission development related to the study. One challenge in this was that many of the faculty members and union leaders during the mission change are today senior administrators at the college and one administrator has semi-retired to a staff position at the college following the mission change. In these cases the interview subject was providing data to the study from multiple perspectives, which was not anticipated in the study's proposal.

Data Collection

Data collection was accomplished through a process that included 15 individual interviews, conducted face to face or via phone conference through a questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions, and a review of documents. The data collection methodology was determined after a review of the methodology that was employed in the Burruss study (2010) to gather narrative data from the subject institution and the study participants. In a telephone interview with Burruss in November 3, 2012, she expressed

the concern that in her research study it was very difficult to assemble the number of participants from each category of participants to achieve a sufficient amount of data to analyze. An exploration of this method to gather data in the context of the MnSCU system also suggested that it could be difficult to assemble a sufficient number of the institutional faculty members and staff at a mutually agreed upon time. The use of an open-ended questionnaire and individual conversations mitigated this challenge and did produce a level of data that could be analyzed as proposed in the study methodology.

The questionnaire design consisted of open-ended questions from the Burruss study (2010) that allowed participants to elaborate as desired, similar to what would be done in a focus group. The questionnaire included an introduction and orientation to the research, an overview of the topic, a statement of confidentiality, and a series of questions (Breen, 2006). The online questionnaire was the same for all the individual interviews and is included in Appendix A.

Individual Interviews

Current and former administrators at Alexandria Technical and Community College (ATCC) and representatives of the MnSCU system office were found to have the highest level of information related to the research questions, as they were the primary participants in the mission change process and its resulting implementation at the institutional level. A total of 12 interviews completed with this internal group. They included the ATCC college president, now retired; the college vice president, who was a director at the time of the mission change; and three college deans, including one dean who was a faculty member and union leader at the time of the mission change and one

former dean who is now a staff member. Interviews were also conducted with three

faculty members from both technical and liberal arts disciplines, and one staff member in

an academic advising position. Three interviews were conducted with the MnSCU system

office personnel including the current academic affairs director, a retired senior staff

member, and a former technical college president and member of the MnSCU leadership

council.

Three other individuals external to the college were interviewed that represented

the community, employers, the government of the local community and the state. One

was a former state legislator and member of the MnSCU Board of Trustees, and two

ATCC college advisory board members including a former public school superintendent

and the director of the area economic development corporation.

Due in part to the amount of political behavior and impact of the labor

environment in higher education in Minnesota, individual interviews were conducted to

result in more data, however, it was also necessary that the data be tested for reliability

(Podsakoff, Blume, Whiting, & Podsakoff, 2009). The data was tested through

triangulation between the data collected across the sample of interviews and with archival

documents that clarified the relationship between the union and administration during the

period of mission revision.

In a similar manner to that established for the Burruss study (2010), the interview

data was collected using an interview protocol (Creswell, 2012, p.165) and an interview

script to ensure consistent and reliable data collection and to reduce researcher bias. The

data collection included scheduled 1 hour sessions (either in person or via telephone conference) at a mutually agreed upon location and time.

I sent the selected participants the interview questions in advance via email. I collected the data through audio recordings of the individual interviews as well as written notes I took during the interviews. I used a digital audio recorder for face to face interviews and for interviews that took place over the telephone I employed the record conference call feature of an online conference call application that produced a MP3 download. In addition to the data collection questions asked of each interviewee, I asked the individual for recommended additional participants in the faculty, staff, or business categories. I recorded these names in my interview note taking with contact data such as email addresses or phone numbers and then I discussed them with the ATCC president and vice president for potential interviews. Interviewees were offered a nominal appreciation gift for their time in the amount of a $10 gift card for a local coffee shop or restaurant that was distributed at the end of each interview or sent by United States Postal Service for phone interviews.

Following each interview, I employed a process of interviewee transcript review. This process included the distribution of the transcript to the participant for verification, additional comment, and potential corrections along with an email of thanks for their participation. The utilization of interviewee transcript review allowed for higher quality transcripts, correcting any mistakes and clarifying key concepts, which reduced the time, required for me to expand on certain themes (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Review of Documents

After the interviews were completed, I utilized document review to triangulate the information gathered. I triangulated the data as described by Denzin (2012) by employing data from a variety of sources. The data collected in this manner had the opportunity to contrast what seemed self-evident in the interviews and what differences arose when compared with official interpretations of the same thing (Olsen, 2004, p. 4).

The documents for review in this study included the institution's current and previous mission statements, the ATCC application for mission change, college communication, minutes of system office board of trustees and Minnesota college faculty union meetings, state and federal legislation, and strategic plans from the MnSCU. In order to gather document data in a thorough and unbiased manner, I used a common summary form (see Appendix F). The purpose of this form was to note the type of document, the purpose of the document in relationship to the research questions, a summary of the content highlighting any pertinent information about the document, and references to other related documents or contact persons.

Design Issues

I enlisted the assistance of a peer review team consisting of my committee members and a retired community college president from the Minnesota State Colleges and University System to examine the instruments (forms) developed and provide feedback prior to their use. This process also included a thorough a review of similar forms created by scholarly researchers such as Creswell (2012) with a follow up form review with the committee members.

I anticipated an issue in the ability to obtain sufficient data collection in the timeframe allowed, as targeted participants may be difficult to schedule for a one hour interview during the college semester. I successfully mitigated this problem through the use of an online scheduling application known as doodle.com to identify viable timeslots from a range of dates and times. As a result, I did not find any challenges in obtaining the 15 interviews and accommodate the schedules of the study participants.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, "the researcher is the main instrument for data collection, analysis, and interpretation" (Merriam, 2009, p. 15) and I recognized this potential for bias and specifically addressed it in the methodology to demonstrate that personal interest did not bias the research (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 63), as I am an employee of two of the MnSCU institutions, but not ATCC. I accomplished this by conducting a critical reflection as suggested by Guba and Lincoln (2005) that utilized the lens by which the data were viewed and the level of acceptance of diverse perspectives and viewpoints.

The critical self-analysis suggested that the greatest area for bias originated from my limited scope of employment in higher education, as I have only worked for MnSCU colleges and universities, the subject state higher education system for the study. In order to mitigate this bias, I conducted a thorough literature review to bring forth other perspectives and utilized the expertise of other academic leaders. The experts I utilized included: Dr. Jennifer Burruss, the author of the study that is being replicated, a retired senior vice chancellor of academic affairs for MnSCU, and the members of my

dissertation committee. The information gathered through this process served to guide the design of the question and the data collection protocol that was used to conduct the study.

Ethical Considerations

No data for this study was collected until my committee and the Walden University Institutional Research Board (IRB) approved the study. This was achieved in March of 2014 in the form of a conditional IRB approval. Institutional and college system permissions were obtained and on October 14, 2014 I received final approval from the Walden University IRB to initiate the collection of data.

In order to provide fully informed consent to participants, I provided potential participants in the study with an email that contained a written description of the study and obtained their written approval via email before scheduling the data collection interview. A copy of this consent form is attached in Appendix B. At any time during the process, a participant's request to be removed from the study was honored and their information and data redacted from the data collected. This did not occur, however one prospective participant reviewed the questionnaire and then verbally spoke with me to request to be removed from the study because she did not feel that she had sufficient knowledge of the internal discussions to provide substantial value to the study. I honored her request and removed her from the interview participant roster. Two other potential interview subjects were contacted but did not return my email and did not respond to the phone call follow up and they were dropped from the interview roster.

Confidentiality is a primary concern in the ethical collection of data for a case study. Confidentiality agreements were utilized for the transcriptionist that was in contact

with data for the study. A copy of this signed agreement is included in Appendix G. One

study participant requested her identity to remain confidential and the other 14

participants were willing to have their names identified to maintain ownership of their

own voice (Creswell, 2009). However, to maintain the confidentiality of this individual I

determined that in the presentation of the data I would use pseudonyms for all

interviewees. A pseudonym system of assigning a leter to each individual along with their

role at the institution was employed. An example of this is Faculty A and Faculty B. To

further protect the participant's confidential information, the copy of audio recordings

and other documents will be kept in a secure location in my office on a password

protected computer for a period of 5 years following the published date of this study.

Informed consent extends beyond the individual participant or the institution

because the subject institution is a member of a state college and universities system.

Thus, I made a request to the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System

(MnSCU) through the system director of planning who elevated it to the senior vice

chancellor of academic affairs and I obtained a email confirmation of the System's

cooperation to conduct the research. The email request for cooperation is attached in

Appendix C. Following system level authorization, I spoke directly with the president at

ATCC to obtain his institutional authorization through their own internal IRB process and

a copy of the email request is attached in Appendix D.

Data Analysis

The first phase of the data analysis methodology was to code the data received.

The coding method is based upon Yin's five techniques for analysis (2011). Elaboration

building technique was utilized because of the nature of the data being collected through the interviews. The analysis consisted of reviewing the collection of responses to the open-ended questions, "the theoretical positions are revised, and the evidence is examined once again from a new perspective" (Yin, 2009, p. 143).

Operationally, the notes from each individual session and the audio recordings were archived and transferred to the transcriptionist for transfer from audio to text. Any new research concerns and theoretical constructs that became evident were developed and the data was reviewed further analysis as new concerns or constructs were identified. The next step was to conduct utilize a process of conversational analysis where repeating words or patterns were identified and recorded. This was achieved through the use of the NVivo 10 coding software.

Coding of the data was completed through NVivo 10 to identify and mark the respective patterns and themes from the audio recordings, my interview notes, and the interview transcripts. The secondary data collected was coded through a broad brush methodology to identify patterns and word frequencies in the document review form which is found in Appendix H. Any additional descriptive statistics collected through document review were also included as appropriate.

Data analysis is one of the three major stages of the qualitative research process in which internal and external validity was questioned (Onwuegbuzie & Leach, 2007). Establishing validity in the data analysis is imperfect in that it will not produce absolute validity or trustworthiness in qualitative research. However, the processes employed in this study did assist the researcher in "ruling in or ruling out rival interpretations of data"

and at presentation of the data help the research community to evaluate the legitimacy of the study and its conclusions (p. 239).

In this study, the case study approach warranted the collection of considerable amounts of data collected through individual interviews. To increase the validity of the results gathered, I employed a process of member checking to give the informant an opportunity to provide feedback on their own voice in the research.

Member checking was accomplished at data collection and upon analysis of the data. During the process of collecting the data, the member checking was of verbal and communication between participant and researcher. In the process of conducting the individual interviews, I probed and confirmed informant responses throughout the course of the interview session. In this manner, the informant was able to correct me or clarify statements made to improve the quality of the data. Following the transcription of the interview each participant received a copy of their transcript for review, corrections, and clarifications. This was accomplished through email correspondence and verbal conversations by telephone.

Triangulation is another technique I employed in order to reduce the occurrence of systemic bias in the research. I conducted data triangulation by a review of documents "using multiple sources to study the research problem" (Onwuegbuzie, 2007, p. 240) that pertain to the information gathered through the interviews and focus groups. This technique assisted in the validation of the gathered information and suggested inconsistencies that warranted further investigation. As part of each interview I asked the participant if they had knowledge of or possession of archival documents or other written

materials or audio recordings that could be of assistance in understanding the mission change process at Alexandria Technical and Community College.

In a number of the interviews the participant either identified a specific document and assisted me in the location of it on the Internet or had possession of the document and allowed me to copy the document for research purposes. Because the mission change process in a state college is an endeavor that must endure public scrutiny and legislative oversight, many of the documents reviewed were available easily through public records and were openly available for my research.

Summary

Chapter 3 outlined the qualitative case study research methodology that was employed for this study of mission change in community colleges. The decision was based on a review of the literature and the recommendations for further study from the author of a North Carolina study of community college mission change (Burruss, 2010). The study design successfully yielded sufficient data and the richness of narrative that is elemental to phenomenological research (Yin, 2011). More detailed information about the data collection and the corresponding results are included in Chapter 4: Research Findings.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

Introduction

The focus of Chapter 4 is to analyze the data collected as part of the qualitative case study the mission change process at Alexandria Technical and Community College, which resulted in the 2010 Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System and Higher Learning Commission approval of the institution for comprehensive community college status. The chapter includes the findings from the data collected through a series of interviews with individuals involved in the mission change process and a review of documents related to the mission change application and approval that was conducted using the NVivo10 qualitative data analysis software application by QSR, International. The purpose of the study was to conduct a case study of the mission change process at the subject 2-year college that resulted in the institution becoming a comprehensive community and technical college and add to the literature how the process was impacted by the fiscal and policy environment at the time of mission change.

The primary research question that guided the research was: what are the mission implications of an increasingly neoliberal (capitalistic) environment in community and technical colleges? Four subordinate questions were also included in the study:

1. What changes in college mission have been observed that indicate an increased alignment with surrounding business and industry?

2. What is the nature of the relationship between the community and technical college and business and industry?

3. What impact has public policy decisions by your governing bodies (both the state legislature and the state college and university system) had on the mission changes at the college?

4. What impact has public policy decisions had on the internal governance at the college and your relationship with internal constituencies?

The first part of this chapter includes the context for the study and the coding methodology employed. The next part of the chapter will outline the key for the research question and details the findings for the four secondary research questions. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Context of the Study

On March 17, 2014, I received a conditional IRB approval to obtain consent to conduct research at a college institution that was a member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System (MnSCU). The selected subject institution was Alexandria Technical and Community College (ATCC). Permissions were obtained and on October 14, 2014 I received final approval from the Walden University Institutional Research Board to collect data for the qualitative case study. The approval number for this research study is 03-17-14-0137432.

Invitation emails were sent to 18 potential interview participants, which were drawn from recommendations from the ATCC president and the program director of planning at MnSCU. Fifteen potential participants agreed to be interviewed, including one interview subject who requested anonymity. College employees made up 9 of the 15

interviewees, however in the period from the mission change in 2010 to 2014 many of them changed roles and the table listed below outlines the multiple roles of each subject.

Table 1.

Interview Subjects List

	Current Position	Former Position
President A	Retired President	President
Vice President A	Vice President	Staff
Dean A	Staff	Dean
Dean B	Dean	Faculty/Union President
Dean C	Dean	Faculty
Faculty A	Faculty	Dean
Faculty B	Faculty/Union President	Faculty
Faculty C	Faculty	Faculty
Staff A	Staff	Staff

Note. This list describes the pseudonym assigned to each ATCC interviewee, their current position and form roles at the college.

Individuals outside the employ of ATCC who served on the college's employer advisory board included the county economic development director and the former K-12 public school superintendent. Four additional interviews were conducted with individuals who are or were part of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System. One individual is a member of the board of trustees and a former Minnesota legislator, one retired college president who was a member of the System's leadership council at the time of the mission change, and one current staff member and one retired staff member who were deeply involved in the mission change application process at the system level.

As I described in the proposal and which is outlined in Chapter 3, all interview subjects are identified by pseudonyms that pertain to their current role in the college or

their role in the community or college system for confidentiality. Data collection from the participants was gathered as proposed through interviews of up to 1 hour and 10 minutes conducted either in person at a mutually agreed upon location or by telephone using a phone conferencing system. The interviews were conducted using a standard questionnaire, which is included in appendix A.. Data collection from the participants was gathered as proposed through interviews of up to 1 hour and 10 minutes conducted either in person at a mutually agreed upon location or by telephone using a phone conferencing system. The interviews were conducted using a standard questionnaire, which is included in appendix A. A questionnaire was developed for internal interviewees that were employed by ATCC and a separate but similar questionnaire for external interviewees who were part of the community or the colleges and universities system. Each interview was audio recorded and I also took notes on paper for each interview to assist in developing follow up questions or note information for further review. Following the interview, each audio recording was given to a contracted transcriptionist for conversion to written form. The transcripts were then forwarded to the interview subject for their review and corrections or clarifications.

In each interview, I asked the subject for recommendations of additional written information or documentation that would be valuable for my review of the subject of the college's mission change process, and related policies or legislation. Following the interviews I gathered the documents from the college or other source to use in triangulation of the data collected through the interviews.

Data Collection

An amalgam of approaches was employed for the data management and analysis as is recommended by Babbie (2012) and Yin (2009). The process for this included taking notes during interviews, reading and taking notes on the documents and interview transcripts reviewed, and then recording any patterns that became evident and corresponding themes and categories that emerged. Additionally, I utilized the NVivo 10 software to identify any findings in the case that were similar or in contrast with the documents and other written information that was collected and examined.

The interview data that was collected including the audio files as MP3's and the written transcripts were uploaded into the NVivo 10 software as a way to speed up the coding process (Ozkan, 2004). The software categorized the data by question in what are referred to as nodes, which indicated, "coded data related to the study" (p.596). For this study nodes were created based upon the research questions and the themes that were identified through the review of the literature, as well as the themes that were identified as I read through each of the transcripts. Documents could also be uploaded into the software in a pdf format, which was achieved through the scanning of printed documents that were shared with me, or electronic copies forwarded to me via email or downloaded from the Internet. The data provided could also be coded and attributed to each identified node.
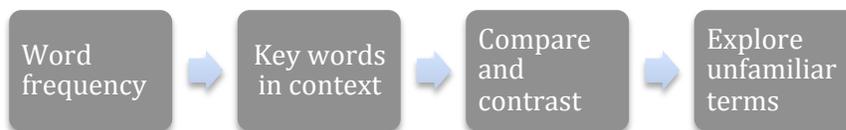
Figure 1.

Coding process using a four-part approach (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

The first step was to run the word-based technique of examining the frequency of words that was completed electronically by uploading the transcripts of the interviews into the NVivo10 software. The result was a long list of words that needed to be further coded by looking for key words in context. By doing a visual observation of the transcripts, it was possible to identify and select words with a high frequency that could be identified as nodes as part of the coding process (Ozkan, 2004).

The next step was to take the list of key words in context and locate them within each interview through the use of coding density indicators and coding stripes it was possible to identify them and mark them within each question of the interview similar codes that were indicated by node. This further assisted in identifying codes as it could be clearly seen in the coding where a similar set of words was used in multiple questions and across multiple interviews.

A list of initial codes was identified through the literature review and the themes identified in the Burruss study which resulted in the identification of 24 initial codes,

each aligned with the subcategory of the questions that were asked of each participant in

the interview. The revised list of key words in context were then charted and compared

against the list of initial codes and I noted their appearance in the interview narratives and

in the archival documents (see appendix H).

Table 2 .

List of the Initial Codes Identified for Comparison

Meeting specific business and industry needs	Student demands, roles, and responsibilities
Outreach to business and industry	Budgeting and finance
Business and industry organizations	Meeting students' needs
Outreach to community and community organizations	Personnel specific to business or industry needs
Changes in curriculum	Meeting community needs
Service area	Mission change
Operating as a business	Enrollment and state funding allocation
Course offerings changes based on demand	Eroding democratic mission or technical mission
Alignment with state college system	Administrator role and future planning
Community surveys	Fundraising
Instructor practices	Accountability
Continuing education	Employment for graduates

The fourth step in the coding process was to identify any unfamiliar terms or key

words that did not align directly to the codes established for the comparison. I discovered

one additional code that was unique to this study and resulted in its addition to the nodes

list for coding. The code was union contract.

The initial 25 codes were reduced to 20 either because they were not evident in

the key words identified in the transcript and document review as was the case of

continuing education and personnel specific to business or industry needs or were

significantly lower in representation (frequency) in the transcripts or documents reviewed including accountability, instructor practices, and fundraising. The remaining 20 codes were categorized into 6 themes shown on the following table with the exception of the code "mission change" that was represented across all themes. A full list of the codes and frequency counts from the transcript and document reviews are provided in Appendix H.

Table 3

Selected themes for coding and the assigned codes.

Themes (node category)	Codes Assigned
Administration leadership	Administrator role and future planning
	Operating as a business
The role of the faculty	Changes in curriculum
	Eroding democratic mission/technical mission
	Union contract
Business and industry as consumer	Business and industry organizations
	Changes in the curriculum
	Community surveys
	Meeting specific business and industry needs
	Outreach to business and industry
Students and the general community as consumer	Changes in the curriculum.
	Community surveys
	Course offerings changes based on demand
	Employment for graduates
	Meeting community needs
	Meeting students' needs
	Outreach to community and community organizations
	Service area
	Student demands, roles, and responsibilities
System-wide policy	Alignment with state college system
	Budgeting and funding
	Changes in the curriculum
	Enrollment and state funding allocation
	Eroding democratic mission/technical mission
	Union contract
Community college funding	Budgeting and funding
	Enrollment and state funding allocation

The use of coding software tools made it tempting to utilize a quantitative mindset

in coding of the data, and to mitigate this bias of relying upon frequency alone, each

interview and document reviewed was read through multiple times and highlighted

sections of the narratives were demarcated as coding stripes and allocated to one of the

categories and then reviewed at separate sessions to further notate them to one or more of

the coding nodes. In this manner, some codes that were not mentioned by every interview

subject or did not have a large number of mentions were examined and considered fully

as part of the analyses. An example of this is the inclusion of the union contract coding

node, which was not identified in the initial coding list as it did not surface in the

literature review and was not a part of the Burruss study findings. It was an unforeseen

discovery achieved through "deliberate naiveté" which allows for the openness to

schemes of interpretation (Kvale, 2009, p.28).

Upon completion of the coding process I was able to identify the key findings and

align them to each of the case study's research questions regarding ATCC's mission

change process. Each finding was supported with factual data from the interviews and the

archival documents that allowed for triangulation of the data. Furthermore, an

examination of the findings was also compared to the findings of the Burruss study from

which the research questions were derived to identify if any themes were similar or

contrasting.

Data Analysis

The software utilized for this study was a qualitative research product called

NVivo 10, which was purchased to conduct this research. The software was loaded onto

into a Macintosh computer operating system. The software allowed for the upload of

MP3 audio files as well as the transcribed audio, which was saved as Microsoft Word documents, as well as PDF files that were the archival documents.

As I had not used this software product previously, I reviewed the video tutorials in order to become familiar with the terminology and software functions. The utilization of an electronic coding software in qualitative research requires the researcher to extensively read and review the data collected, but what it does is save the researcher time by allowing for the organization and management of the collected data and to code it in a manner by which themes are easily identifiable and the density of those themes in large collections of data with greater ease (Graham, 2013).

As a starting point the data files were uploaded into the software as internal sources. This included both audio files and the approved transcripts from the interview subjects. I ran a word frequency search to identify if there were any additional words or word combinations that were not previously identified in the codes from the literature review process and the Burruss study (see Appendix H). A word combination identified that was not included in the original coding list was "union contract", which showed up in 12 sources and with a frequency of 56 times. As a result, this was added to the list and nodes were created for each code for identification when reviewing the transcripts and assigning portions of the transcript to specific codes, which are referred to in NVivo as "coding stripes" (Graham, 2013).

Manageability of the data was achieved by the creation of categories for the nodes, which are identified as administration, faculty, businesses, students, system policy, and funding policy. Each of these relates to a question area of the interview form and the

relationship between a particularly constituency and its role in the mission change process. I grouped the nodes from each interview into the various categories and then looked at the each category and identified themes that arose from those categories. The open ended questions that were asked in the interviews did result in some data nodes being represented in multiple categories. This was evidenced when I was interviewing one of the participants who held a different role during the mission change such as a faculty member who was a union leader then and is now an administrator. Because of the multiple roles their point of view was sought from the faculty perspective as well as the leadership perspective. A further example of this is when interviewees spoke about the community and included in their description a conglomeration of employers, residents, and students in K-12 education, which resulted in inclusion in both business/industry and students categories.

The multiple perspectives from an individual's vantage point were also evident in discrepant themes and reflected both the political behavior that was anticipated when the study was designed and the limited view of the individual being interviewed. An example of this is was an employee of the college who was not involved intimately with certain elements of the mission change application process and they developed their own suppositions for the reasons for certain behaviors or lack of actions. This was also the case with parties external to the college whose testimony was influenced by their own experiences with the higher education system or another institution. As the researcher, I made the specific effort to probe or clarify the statements and seek insight through follow up questions when a statement appeared to be divergent from what I had heard in other

interviews or read as part of the literature review. However, at no time did I reveal in my

follow up questions that their statements were divergent so as not to bias their narrative

or reveal the data collected from other individuals interviewed.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, including case studies, the internal and external validity

will not be measured similarly to that of quantitative research (Creswell, 2012). This

does not suggest that qualitative case studies are devoid of trustworthiness; rather

Creswell (2012) recommends the use of alternative techniques such as triangulation with

alternative sources of data. This was the methodological foundation that was proposed in

chapter 3 and executed in the collection and analysis of the data for this study. Based

upon this, there are four aspects of trustworthiness that were utilized as a measure of the

data including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

The credibility of the data gathered through the interviews was given

consideration in the data collection methodology. As outlined in chapter 3, the sample

was derived by convenience sampling and thus it was important to make sure that the

individuals from whom data was collected represented a cross section of the institution

and external parties involved in the process of mission change at Alexandria Technical

and Community College (ATCC). The interviews were conducted only with individual

who had first hand knowledge of the process and the institution, and I sought out multiple

sources for recommendations for interview participants. Credibility was further

established by conducting the interviews on an individual basis. Each participant shared

their role in the institution or in the community or college system as part of my initial

contact with them as a potential participant. Then in the interviews, each had the opportunity to speak freely and was offered the opportunity to make their name anonymous. What I found was that ATCC was well grounded in its identity and mission both before the change of mission and after that the participants felt comfortable sharing their opinions and motivations openly and their historical experience with the college gave credibility to the data they provided.

The transferability of the data from this case to others was a concern, as qualitative research has the potential to gather narrative information without a theoretical foundation. This was acknowledged in the development of the study and the alignment of this study to the recommendations for further study from the Burruss study from North Carolina suggested that conducting a similar study in another region of the country and in a different community college system would increase the potential for transferability of the data in the case to the larger 2-year college community. Likewise, several study participants noted the applicability of the information on mission change to other MnSCU technical college mission changes including Pine Technical College in January of 2014 and to the other system members who were still single mission focused as either a community college or a technical college as they consider future mission change.

The dependability of the data from the interviews was difficult to anticipate, as the participants were not pre-identified in the design of the study as they were derived from a convenience sampling method. Dependability was first established by conducting a data collection process by which the same set of questions was asked of each participant. Even when a participant had already provided information on the subject of

the question, I still asked the question of the participant and gave them an additional

opportunity to share their recollections, thoughts, or opinions on the subject matter. When

all the data was collected and in the coding process dependability of the data was

evidenced when the statements about a similar meeting, decision, or aspect of the mission

change process was described similarly by several participants but in their own words.

There was a surprising amount of similarity of thought between the various participants

interviewed and their answers spoke not only to an observation of the process, but of the

organizational culture of the institution and the relationship between members of each

constituency.

In addition to dependability, confirmability is essential if the study is to be

accepted into the scholarly body of literature on the subject of community college

mission change. The design of the study and its data collection methodology were

established based upon the qualitative research traditions of scholars such as Creswell

and Yin. The data collection process and data analysis were conducted through the

assistance of current technology including NVivo 10 coding software. And finally, the

data that was gathered through the interview process were validated through the use of

member checking and triangulation. This was accomplished primarily through a review

of the MnSCU board of trustees and union meetings, from system-wide reports, reports to

foundations, and from a review of the application for program approval for the Associate

of Arts degree which is the supporting document that facilitated the change in college

mission to a comprehensive community and technical college.

Results

General and Descriptive

The mission change that created what is today known as Alexandria Technical and Community College was officially confirmed on June 16, 2010, however it was discovered through this case study that the mission change process was embarked upon as early as 2000 and again in 2004 when other Minnesota 2-year technical colleges were becoming comprehensive community and technical colleges. Because of this long history of mission change conversations with various constituencies inside the college, in its community and service delivery area, and with its governing body, the mission change process became part of the organizational culture of the institution. The college in many ways operated with the comprehensive mission prior to the ability to seek college system approval for the change, which will be further described in this chapter.

The existence of this unique institutional perspective made the submission and final approval of the mission change application by the MnSCU board of trustees more of a formality and a political acknowledgement of a mission that had changed long before in the mindset of the institution and the community of Alexandria, Minnesota. This theme was present in all but one individual interviewed and the enlightenment on process through the interview identified a series of specific themes that arose which shed light on the distance between the local operation of a community college and the system of governance for a statewide family of colleges.

Alexandria Technical and Community College serves a rural community without the benefit of a large metropolitan population from which to draw and the success of its

2-year college programming is highly attributed to its align with the needs of the employers in the region. The interviews revealed an institutional perspective of academic capitalism that was less theoretical in nature and more borne from the necessity of self-reliance and finding an entrepreneurial solution to challenges that has become second nature in the organizational culture. The neoliberal policy environment that has developed nationally and impacted states like Minnesota through federal financial aid policy have pressed state legislatures and the college systems to make decisions with an increasing focus on the sources of revenue and to the consumer of the education whether that is the student or the end user of the skills gained, the employer. It is in this policy environment that colleges such as Alexandria Technical and Community College (ATCC) found themselves stalled in their mission change process at the college system level and forced to create alternative pathways to achieve similar end goals while the policy-makers caught up and established the necessary framework to accommodate the college's request and the potential for future requests from other institutions within the family of state colleges in Minnesota.

The primary research question was: what are the mission implications of an increasingly neoliberal (capitalistic) environment in community and technical colleges? The findings were further developed through four subordinate questions, which resulted in a series of themes, which are described as the relationship with business and industry, the challenge of federal financial aid policy, the entrepreneurial approach to public policy challenges,

Relationship With Business and Industry

ATCC has a long history of alignment between the business community and the college. The college's mission is stated as "Alexandria Technical & Community College creates opportunity for individuals and businesses through education, innovation, and leadership". The mission statement further denotes that "The college's high-quality technical and transfer programs and services meet their needs, interests, and abilities and strengthen the economic, social, and cultural life of Minnesota's communities" (n.d., Mission, *Alexandria Technical and Community College*, retrieved December 15, 2014 from http://alextech.edu/en/AboutATC/Mission.aspx). What is important in this mission statement is the inclusion of the term transfer and the words social and cultural life, which denote the expanded mission and the importance of the social democratic perspective in the college's role in its community and with employment readiness.

Interviews with the community including individuals who served on the advisory board known as the Futures Committee and the faculty spoke of ATCC as a superior provider of technical education that is recognized by industry, especially manufacturers locally, regionally, and nationally. However, the interviewees also spoke of the importance of the soft skills for employers that are developed through the liberal arts, which are also vital to employee readiness. School Superintendent A (personal communication, November 12, 2014) explained it as:

> I think it (mission change) has given the students a broader sense of their future
> and provided them with a broader skill set because it's no longer just about the
> specific trade skill or talent, it's really about the whole mind of the learner. I think

that's important as they look to the future because whatever you degree you leave with, you're going to have to apply that degree in several settings so I think that a comprehensive look at education is important.

This perspective was further substantiated through data in the college's application for mission change (Alexandria Technical College, 2009) stating that:

The use of EMSI strategic advantage software indicates that the highest demand future skills for work in the Alexandria seven county area reflect liberal arts education needs. This does not undermine the need for technicians, particularly in manufacturing, construction and health care. It does indicate that growth of professional jobs In Alexandria will require a different skill set. (p. 2))

Another perspective arose in the interviews with both internal and external interviewees. The mission change not only attracts young students to the community as residents, but it also brought the ability to complete a degree to community residents that would never have left the community to pursue higher education at a stage in life after the traditional college years and who would not otherwise succeed in an online education environment. This was reflected in the application for mission change document (Alexandria Technical College, 2009, p. 1) in the disclosure that the increasing number of undeclared (those not seeking a technical major) students were coming from the local community and that this was not as a result of college in the schools programs. Faculty A, a former faculty member and administrator observed this as well "I think of it as a service to especially your local community. We're seeing more local people coming here (to the

college as students) than I think we ever have" (personal communication, October 31,

2014).

Financial Aid Policy Challenges

The strongest public policy theme in the interview data collected was on the

subject of eligibility for federal financial aid by students at ATCC. Federal financial aid

dollars to students at technical colleges in the United States are limited to those students

who declare a technical program major (United States Department of Education, n.d.).

Students who are undeclared cannot receive financial aid and when students do declare a

technical major and try to take courses outside their approved program of study, in

preparation for transfer to a university they do not quality for financial aid for those

courses (personal communication, MnSCU C, November 20, 2014). This creates a

disadvantage in terms of financial support for students when the community colleges and

the comprehensive community and technical colleges have the ability to enroll a student

in a course of study known as the Associate of Arts degree for the pursuit of transfer to a

university or 4-year which is established for general studies, also referred to as liberal arts

courses that prepare a student for transfer to a 4-year university where all the courses are

eligible for grants and student loans.

ATCC found that individuals in their community and service delivery area were

going outside their community to other MnSCU colleges in the region to enroll in courses

because they could receive financial assistance to take liberal arts courses, which was

inefficient from a consumer perspective because the student had to travel outside the

community to take courses that could and were often being offered locally at the
technical college.

A neoliberal or business perspective was expressed by all interviewees who
voiced this policy barrier on at least one of several levels. The first was the feeling that
the State's support of technical colleges through the MnSCU allocation formula (i.e. the
funding distribution from the Legislature to the individual colleges) was not weighted to
support the increased program costs of technical education such as automotive or health
care programs and that State allocations would continue to decrease in the future. The
second was that the inability to offer financial aid for liberal arts courses at one institution
while it was offered at others served to limit the competitive nature of ATCC and its
ability to grow its enrollment with local constituents especially young people the
community wished to retain as full year residents following graduation from high school.

College System Considerations

Alexandria Technical and Community College (ATCC) is one of 31 members of
the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System (MnSCU). A reoccurring theme in
the interviews was that the policy environment at MnSCU required consideration of the
impact of each mission change within the System as a whole. Because of the
interconnectedness of all of the colleges and universities members, consideration was
required at a higher level as to the potential competition between sister institutions and
the potential for duplication of services within a particular region. While Alexandria's
business and employer community was supportive as were the residents, the System
approval of the change in mission had to consider the potential for future applications

from other member colleges in other regions and the process by which the System would make decisions that represented the needs and resources of the entire state.

A sense of understanding was communicated by administrators at ATCC because they recognized that their change in mission would draw more local residents to ATCC for liberal arts courses that may have chosen a neighboring community college such as Minnesota State Community and Technical College, Ridgewater College, and St. Cloud Technical and Community College. The general feeling of the administrators was that the local concerns about competition were minor in comparison to the potential issues that would arise in the future if the remaining stand alone technical colleges were to all request mission changes to comprehensive status. These issues related heavily to the perception that technical education would be diminished in the state and its impact on the state's ability to attract industry and economic development based on the quality of higher education in technical fields which has largely been the role of the MnSCU System by comparison to the other state higher education system, the University of Minnesota. According to vice president A "It was always about what is going to happen to the System (MnSCU), what is the impact of the legislation, what is the impact on somebody else, and so from a system thinking perspective those are legitimate things to put on the table, but this was never about whether Alex Tech had the ability to offer the AA degree" (personal communication, October 31, 2014).

Interim Solutions

The mission change process initiated in 2004 that was stalled by the MnSCU System leadership necessitated interim solutions of an entrepreneurial nature. ATCC was

asked to evidence in their application to the MnSCU Board of Trustees that they had attempted to partner with other institutions in the system to meet student needs in a manner other than mission change. According to associate vice chancellor A this request was common as part of the requirements for the application to offer the AA degree and yet other neighboring 2-year technical colleges formerly known as Northwest Technical College, which became part of the merged Minnesota State Community and Technical College in 2003 were able to start offering the AA degree across all of its sites without going through the same program application ATCC was asked to complete (Minnesota State Community and Technical College, 2013).

ATCC in an effort to meet the consumer demand from the student, the community, and its area employers and simultaneously meet the prerequisites for a mission change, the institution partnered to deliver an AA in Alexandria with Bemidji State University (BSU) and Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU), also members of MnSCU (Alexandria Technical College, 2009). The product was an Associate of Arts degree awarded by BSU where students took the additional liberal arts courses needed through partner university classes, often taught by the ATCC faculty with the ability to access financial aid through a consortium agreement.

The solution was deemed viable from a political point of view, but proved operationally cumbersome and challenging for the students, the ATCC personnel, and financially for the institution. Course variety was limited in the partnership and students ended up being advised by ATCC personnel as opposed to the institution from which they would matriculate. ATCC also shouldered operational costs beyond instructional

cost without gaining the benefit of the institutional accountability and success measures such as enrollment and matriculation, which contributes to the State funding allocation formula. As an institution that perceived itself as student centered and operated from a practical, business-like point of view, the differentiation of treatment between institutions within the same college system put into question the context in which higher education was being operated in Minnesota.

Bifurcated Faculty Union Contract

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System (MnSCU) was created in 1995 by the unification of the former technical college system, the community college system, and the state universities with the exception of the University of Minnesota. At the time of its inception the faculty unions in the 2-year colleges were represented by two separate bargaining units the United Technical Educators (UTCE) and the Minnesota Community College Faculty (Minnesota State College Faculty, 2008). In 2001 the two unions came together to become the Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF) which resulted in a bifurcated union contract that has full time faculty teaching at a technical college at 32 credits per year while community college faculty only teach 30 credits per year (Minnesota State College Faculty, 2008, March, p. 40).

Multiple administrators and faculty union leaders spoke of this unique contractual history in their interviews, discussing that as part of the mission change process at ATCC the administrators had to address that the change to a comprehensive college would result in the liberal arts faculty members teaching 2 fewer credits for the same amount of pay as compared to the technical faculty. The result of which was a potential divide between the

technical faculty and the liberal arts faculty, and a potential increase in the payroll for the college because the liberal arts faculty had been teaching 32 credits and in all likelihood would continue to with an additional overload payment for the credits taught over 30. The internal political situation was of far more concern than the financial implications because the college administration calculated that the estimated increase in enrollment for liberal arts courses would exceed the expenses of the bifurcate contract issue, resulting in a net return on investment.

The contract driven credit load issue between technical faculty and liberal arts/general education faculty was in the opinion of the faculty interviewed more about the conflict between the faculty union and MnSCU and less about the relationship between faculty in in liberal arts and those in the technical disciplines. Faculty A gave an example of the nature of the faculty relationship explaining that the Math faculty work with the Manufacturing programs to better understand the industry "They get together and say okay, I'm teaching math, but how is it applied?" (personal communication, October 31, 2014). Conversely, a union leader at the institution noted that in addition to the change in full load for some faculty, other faculty that had been considered technical faculty before the change in mission was reclassified with the liberal arts faculty (Faculy B personal communication, November 20, 2014). Conversation on this subject of the bifurcated contract has not been limited to ATCC, and as recently as April of 2013 a motion was brought forth to address the contract language to make teaching loads equitable across the 2-year colleges in the system (Minnesota State College Faculty, 2013).

Summary

The mission change process at ATCC was both an institutional transition and a college system political event. While neither the first nor the last mission change to comprehensive status in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System, it did bring to light challenges of trying to align with an increasingly neoliberal policy in the higher education environment and deal with a bureaucratic legacy. The primary research question for this study was the examination of the mission implications for community and technical colleges and the results provided insight through an examination of the mission change process that resulted in the creation of a comprehensive community and technical college at ATCC in 2009.

The subordinate questions explored the specific relationships between ATCC and its constituencies such as the students, the business and local community, and the statewide governing bodies. The findings showed that the alignment between the community and the college were solidified locally more than 5 years before the MnSCU System was comfortable presenting the application for the Associate of Arts degree with the MnSCU Board of Trustees, which authorized the change in mission and the name of the institution. Political issues such as union contract language dating back to the formation of MnSCU in 1995, the existence of a competitive allocation formula for scarce state financial resources, and the desire to remain viewed as a system committed to technical education aligned with economic development all complicated and slowed the momentum generated at the local level.

The interviews conducted with both internal and external players in the mission change process produced strong themes about the types of education required by communities and industry in a neoliberal society and about how bureaucratic college systems balance historical challenges, locally driven change, and efficiency and equity across multiple institutions. Divergent perspectives were acknowledged in the results and the themes were triangulated with archival documents.

Chapter 5 synthesizes the results of the data collection and document review to introduce the key findings. The discussion will also expand on the knowledge from the literature review to close the gap identified, note limitations of the study that were identified, make recommendations for additional research, and the implications for social change in public higher education.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This study is a qualitative case study of one Minnesota technical college who changed its mission to become a comprehensive community and technical college. The case study methodology was selected for this research because it "reveals the multiplicity of factors (which) have interacted to produce the unique character of the entity that is the subject of study" (Yin, 1988, p. 82). The research questions for study included one primary research question of what are the mission implications of an increasingly neoliberal (capitalistic) environment in community and technical colleges? Four subordinate questions were also included in the study:

1. What changes in college mission have been observed that indicate an increased alignment with surrounding business and industry?

2. What is the nature of the relationship between the community and technical college and business and industry?

3. What impact has public policy decisions by your governing bodies (both the state legislature and the state college and university system) had on the mission changes at the college?

4. What impact has public policy decisions had on the internal governance at the college and your relationship with internal constituencies?

Through a data collection process that included 15 interviews conducted with individuals who were involved in the subject college's mission change process either from an internal college perspective or an external community or higher education

perspective. These interviews produced themes that aligned with those of the literature review especially the case study conducted by Burruss (2010) that described the duality of mission in 2-year colleges including both the traditional social democratic citizen-building with the neo-liberal focus on operating in a business like manner and meeting the vocation skill needs of the community at large.

This chapter is an interpretation of the data collection and analysis outlined in Chapter 4, describing the alignments between the data and the literature review conducted prior to the study, a presentation of the themes identified in the data, recommendations for any future studies, and a personal reflection as the researcher. Chapter 5 concludes with a discussion of the implications for social change and the potential use of this research in my role as an educator and community development professional.

Interpretation of the Findings

The narratives of the interviews with Alexandria Technical and Community College (ATCC) did generate findings that address the primary research question of the mission implications of an increasingly neoliberal (capitalistic) environment in community and technical colleges. What is illuminating was the differences in the perspectives of those implications of mission change and this is central to the outcomes of this case study research study.

The ATCC administration's description of the history of the college's mission change process from a technical college to a comprehensive 2-year college is exemplary of the academic capitalism construct. According to Slaughter and Rhodes (2009, p. 20)

"the theory of academic capitalism in the new economy sees groups of actors within universities and colleges- faculty, students, administrators, and managerial professionals- as using a variety of state resources to intersect the new economy." All but one of the internal interviewees from ATCC (administrators, faculty, and staff) that were interviewed described the issue of accessing financial aid for students who were seeking a program of study other than a vocational skills major traditionally represented in the technical college curriculum.

Those interviewed described the individual and employer demand for liberal arts education including what is referred to as soft skills both from high school students through the Post Secondary Education Option (PSEO) and adults seeking to prepare for academic transfer to complete a 4-year degree locally instead of through an alternative community college. The student perspective while not directly observed in the interview process, was reflected in the document review and is exemplified by a student comment from the final report on a grant project in which ATCC students and other community college students took part (Minnesota Office of Higher Education, 2010).

> We ARE the students, and we should not be determining what we should be taught – we have no idea how to begin to know those things. We can only know what those things are once they are established and only then can we identity if we are indeed receiving the education we should per those competencies/standards. It is up for the faculty and employers to decide what they want students to know (p. 6-7).

The inability to meet consumer demand locally through their institution and the deferment of a decision by their state colleges and universities system resulted in a partnership with Bemidji State University for a shared Associate of Arts degree (AA) offering at ATCC prior to 2010. Implementation of the interim alternative to mission change resulted in the determination that this partnership strategy was inefficient, which further exemplifies the literature review findings that describe higher education in the new economy as increasingly business-like and seeking to maximize output at the lowest possible cost (Knoll, 2009, Lovell & Trouth, 2002). The student's needs while met, were achieved at a higher operational cost as staff at ATCC were providing services that would normally be offered by the university, but could not be done so efficiently from a distance. Furthermore, ATCC was providing these student related services for students who would contribute to the student headcount that provided additional financial return on investment in the form of the state funds appropriated through the state colleges and universities.

The ongoing existence of a lose-lose solution caused ATCC administrators and faculty to continue to advocate with state college and universities system leaders for the opportunity to change their mission and offer the AA degree as a comprehensive community and technical college where the revenue and outcomes could be allocated to their own institution and they would reap the financial benefits in terms of student enrollment and in the attributed accountability measures that impacted allocation of state funds to the institution.

The external perspective of the mission change process was also exemplary of the academic capitalism construct, but in a completely different manner. The individuals interviewed from the community and from the state colleges and universities system focused on the need for vocational and technical education and ATCC's historic leadership in the state as a premier provider of this type of education. All 15 interviewees also repeated this recognition of the historical role of ATCC in the state. What was evident from the narratives is that on the local level the inclusion of liberal arts education was an evolution or expansion of the employer linked vocational skills preparation while the larger higher education system still clearly delineated vocational technical programs from the social democratic liberal arts transfer mission.

For those viewing the larger higher education scheme from a state perspective, the addition of the liberal arts was viewed at least initially as inefficient when there were community colleges that could be accessed by distance learning options or commuting instead of replicating the curriculum locally in Alexandria. Providing liberal arts at fewer institutions had the potential to maximize class sizes and existing faculty that would lower the cost per student across the entire system and provide a more business like approach to the use of limited public funding resources. However, what makes sense from a theoretical context is not easily achieved in a political environment as an ATCC participant in the Lumina grant Tuning Project describes:

In Minnesota we sometimes wonder how we got so many different educational institutions. It is a big question. We all compete for students and money. It isn't going to change anytime soon. It maybe should, but entertaining that possibility makes us all

uncomfortable and insecure. It is what it is. (Minnesota Office of Higher Education, 2010, p. 21)

The MnSCU System's support for the exploration of a shared service strategy prior to the 2009 application for mission change was a experiment in neoliberal policy direction and only after it had been tried and evidence that consumer groups (e.g. students and employers) were still in demand of the mission change was the second proposal presented to the System's Office of the Chancellor for board of trustee decision. The narrative from system employees and other external parties who were present through the entire process over nearly a decade showed that on multiple occasions the ATCC leadership consulted with its perceived competitors for discourse on the implications that extended beyond the local service delivery area in an effort to combat the competitive nature of the institutions, but that policy barriers and other financial issues were larger than the relationship between institutions.

ATCC's entire mission change process extended over nearly a decade from the initial discussions with the advisory committees and internal staff and faculty and resulted in a withdrawn application for mission change in 2004. The process, which was not completed until 2010 was perceived as longer than other stand alone technical colleges in the state (e.g. Saint Cloud Technical and Community College, Saint Paul College, and South Central College). The extensive nature of the process, including the input gathered from a wide variety of constituencies provided a substantial amount of information on the subordinate research questions for this study including the alignment

of the business community, the impact of public policy decisions, and faculty shared governance, and relationships within the institution.

A central theme with all interviewees regardless of the role at the institution or in the community was the perception of ATCC as not only a local resource for high quality technical skills education, but also a contributor to state and national vocational education needs. External parties and administrators also discussed the reputation of ATCC as part of the fabric of the community and its sustainability and growth strategy supporting Gleazer's (1980) view of the 2-year college mission "to encourage and facilitate lifelong learning with community as process and product." (Bogart, 1994, p. 62). In the discussions held with various constituencies, the college administrators heard an enlightened version of work-readiness that also included soft skills derived through skill attainment in critical thinking, creativity, communication, logic, and other liberal arts outcomes. This increase in employer attention to what is referred to as soft skills as important in labor force preparedness is echoed in system documents including the Lumina grant final report on the tuning project (Minnesota Office of Higher Education, 2010) and the Workforce of the Future report (Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System, 2009).

Employers and community representatives also recognized the financial efficiencies that could be achieved through college coursework being offered in the high schools and the ability for students to start their baccalaureate journey at home in the 2-year college environment. The business perspective of external parties generated a lack of understanding for the logic behind financial aid policy and the inability of their local

college to make changes quickly once the need was identified and the mission change solution was drafted. A similar sentiment was also expressed by internal college staff and faculty who were not familiar with the state colleges and universities system policy or federal financial aid regulations, as to why student and employer needs would not be placed ahead of other more bureaucratic issues based upon the research conducted by the system in its Workforce of the Future report (Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System, 2009). Employers surveyed showed concern that current and future employees have "the necessary skills and knowledge to remain competitive" (p. 4) and that this "challenges higher education to become more nimble and responsive to future needs of business and industry" (p. 4)

Public policy issues arose in the narratives, which supported the gap that exists between neo-liberal policy in higher education and the established bureaucratic systems in which these policies are being implemented. As previously mentioned the policies of the federal government with regard to financial aid eligibility were a primary theme in the need for the mission change to add the AA degree to the curriculum. The narratives did not suggest that there was an significant problem with the college's name, its public perception as a high quality academic institution, or the quality of its faculty in liberal arts topics. It was completely the opposite, in that the identified need to become comprehensive was viewed internally as a policy change that should not significantly impact the vocational history or reputation of the institution and is reflected in the choice to be called a technical and community college and not a "community and technical college" or just "college", which are more common in Minnesota among the 2-year

colleges who become comprehensive (Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System, 2013).

This gap between neoliberalism and federal academic policy was also voiced in interviews conducted with the state colleges and universities system staff who according to MnSCU Associate Vice chancellor A (personal communication, March 13, 2015) made numerous attempts in partnership with other academic leaders to change the nature of the policies to make it possible for expansion of aid eligibility to include undeclared students in technical colleges to no avail.

Financial policy issues that surfaced in the narrative also reflected on state policy with regard to the allocation of public dollars to the state colleges and universities. Administrators at ATCC identified a reduction in state support to the colleges as a whole and a shift to greater institutional reliance on tuition and grants or philanthropy to support the rising costs of higher education, which supports the neoliberal environment described by Hartwich (2009) as being more akin to private businesses than a government agency. The MnSCU allocation formula that distributes the state government's allocation to the system annually was perceived as challenging for the technical colleges who provide curriculum at higher costs for equipment and classroom space, and with limitations as to class size.

The interviews identified that ATCC, viewing themselves as a social purpose business calculated their financial options based on the trends in the allocation formula and recognized that unless there was a change in the funding policy to incentivize

collaboration between colleges and universities, the mission change would produce greater enrollment revenue and maintain the public support in a diversified strategy.

MnSCU policy and shared institutional governance were also impacted by the collective bargaining within the system. The interviews revealed that the administration and faculty are required to meet regularly as part of the shared governance of a college (MnSCU Administrator A, personal communication, November 20, 2014). However, the organizational culture of ATCC was such that administrators and faculty leaders including representatives of the collective bargaining unit had a close relationship historically and conversed about the mission change not only in formal meetings but in conversations at all levels whether with internal parties or in the conversation with employers and community advisory members (Dean B, personal communication, March 13, 2015). Still with the existence of organized labor there was skepticism about the impact of change by factions within the college faculty. "To me it (the bifurcated contract) was one of the bigger concerns at that time and probably remains the biggest negative from a faculty perspective" (Dean B, personal communication, March 13, 2015).

The literature review revealed that the academic capitalism construct would change the traditional role of the faculty as the guardians of knowledge to a segmented knowledge commodity that was consumable by the student in an efficient manner that aligned with the needs of the employer or end user of the knowledge in the labor force (Bobbit, 1918, Labaree, 2006, & Lynch, 2006). The narratives revealed an organizational culture in which a shared mission for the benefit of the student and the community existed both prior to the mission change and after. However, the existence of organized

labor and a colleges and universities system that exerted external pressure and

perspective impacted the ability with which the institution had to change its mission

because the mission change to comprehensive status initiated changes that as an

institution would not have been an issue (Faculty A, personal communication, October

31, 2014).

As described in Chapter 4, the existence of a bifurcated faculty union contract that

was created as a result of the establishment of the Minnesota State Colleges and

Universities System set into motion changes in the credit load to pay ratio for a portion of

the faculty within the institution that had not been previously been required under the

union contract (Minnesota State College Faculty, 2008). The existence of such a

collective bargaining agreement generated a divide between the technical faculty and the

liberal arts faculty that was based solely on contractual language and not on any local

decision making. Because according to Morphew (2006) mission is a product of a shared

organizational culture and history, and plays a role in motivating organizational

members, this external influence had a disruptive impact on the mission change process

and has in the perspective of many of the interviewees a historical impact on the

organizational culture of the institution. In the document review to triangulate this

finding, I found that the issue of the bifurcated contract is something that the Minnesota

State College Faculty (MSCF) union has voiced as a concern among other institutions in

the system (Minnesota State College Faculty, 2013).

Limitations of the Study

This study was based on a similar study that was conducted in rural North Carolina by Dr. Jennifer Burruss (2010). In her study she noted the limitation of geographic region and the same is true for this study as well. The research for this case study consisted of 15 interviews conducted at one technical college who changed its mission to become comprehensive in one community in Minnesota. This college is only one 2 year college of 24 in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System (Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System, 2013) and it is unreasonable to believe that the findings from this single case study would be valid for all 2 year colleges in the US. It is not the purpose of the qualitative case study to produce results of this nature, rather it, like the study that inspired this study serves to reveal new information about the process of mission change that can contribute to the literature and may stimulate future study of higher education and public policy.

The results of the interviews also represent the personal reflections of the mission change process, which started years before the application for mission change was approved by the MnSCU board of trustees. As such, the narrative represents recollections from memory that may have become less clear over the period of a decade. To mitigate this limitation, triangulation of archival documents was conducted, however much of the information about personal communications and the organizational climate is purely the opinion of the interviewee and is subject to personal bias. These individuals socially construct their perceptions based upon their role in the college, their background, and their experiences with the state colleges and universities system. The results obtained are

limited to the scope of the institution and the community it serves. A similar study at another MnSCU college or another part of the United States may not result in similar results.

The results produced by this study did as they were designed. They produced a narrative rich with information about the phenomenon of mission change in a 2 year college in one geographic area of the United States. The findings also offer an invitation for further research, which are covered in the next section of the chapter. What the study does not do is to delve deeply into issues of organized labor and the relationship between faculty and administration outside the subject institution, Alexandria Technical and Community College. It does suggest that broadening the research questions to the issue of organized labor in future study would provide even greater insight, which could contribute to the literature, especially as it pertains to Minnesota.

Recommendations for Future Study

Geography and organizational culture play a strong role in the perceptions of the individuals interviewed in a study such as this. The research questions for this study were based on a study that was previously conducted in a different geographic area of the United States and with a community college (Burruss, 2010). This study focused on a different geographic area as per the recommendation of the Burruss study (2010) and differed slightly by examining a stand alone technical college that changed its mission to become a comprehensive community and technical college. These questions and the narrative that was generated from the 15 interviews did reveal the nature of the

relationship between business and the institution and between the subject college's system, the community, and the institution in relation to the mission change process.

What emerged from the interviews in this study was a host of additional information that serves as a basis for a potential future study of community college mission change and academic capitalism in Minnesota and beyond. The literature review conducted suggested there was a gap in the current exploration into the nature of power and influence in the community and technical colleges and the involvement of the internal and external constituents on the future of higher education in a particular community, state, or region (Baker III, 1996; Bastedo & Gumport, 2003). This study is only one examination of the phenomenon of mission change in the 2 year colleges and there is still more room for additional research.

When reflecting on this study and the Burruss study (2010), what became evident is that neither study examined the differences in the mission change experience of multiple institutions of similar geography or similar classification (e.g. technical college or comprehensive college). Since the mission change at Alexandria Technical and Community College in 2010, another stand alone Minnesota technical college, Pine Technical College changed its mission to become comprehensive (Pine Technical College, 2014). This opportunity to explore the differences in the process from two colleges who are part of the same bureaucratic higher education system, that experienced a mission change resulting in the same comprehensive status, and did so during a similar period of time presents a potential data set that could provide further exploration of the results developed in this study.

The second recommendation for future study is to examine the role that organized labor plays in the mission change process. The bifurcated contract between Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System (MnSCU) and the Minnesota State College Faculty union surfaced in multiple interviews as an external policy challenge that impacted the mission change. Additional study of other MnSCU colleges that have changed their mission and the role the bifurcated contract played in the process would help to identify if this issue was isolated in this technical college's experience or if it is a larger challenge that impacts the college system as a whole.

The third recommendation for additional study is to specifically examine the MnSCU allocation formula for state government funding from the college system to the individual colleges and universities and its impact on mission change. This method for appropriating funding in a systematic manner has been suggested from the narratives as being a factor in the mission change process. However, the extent to which this formula creates incentive for mission change is undetermined from the data collected in this study and should be examined across multiple institutions that have changed their mission to become comprehensive.

Implications for Social Change

"Higher education plays a major part in shaping the quality of leadership in modern American society" (Astin, 2000, p. 11). This suggests that education is an agent of social change because it shapes the leaders who create and implement public policy. As such, this study was conducted to examine the nature of neoliberal public policy in public higher education through the lens of mission change. The goal of the study was to

research through a series of narratives the perspectives of individuals involved in the mission change process from a variety of view points, both internal and external to the institution. This research has the potential to become part of an expansion in the literature on neoliberalism in higher education and the fundamental questions of who higher education serves and why.

The primary social implication of the study was to develop a discourse on who controls 2-year public higher education in the current public policy environment. As we learned through the voices of the individuals involved in the mission change at ATCC, the pressure from decreased public funding for higher education is something they do not view as temporary and their response has been to operate in a more capitalistic manner. What they learned through their mission change process is that while policy makers demand a more capitalist approach to education, the public policy environment has not maintained the same speed of change as the resource demands of the constituency.

This analysis of the process by which higher education responds to the needs of its expanding community of constituents and the resource limitations of publicly funded higher education gives rise to more conversations about what barriers exist to academic entrepreneurship on the part of institutions and how policy makers can actively participate in alignment between neoliberal policy and operation of higher education in a more business like manner. An example of this was the MnSCU bifurcated union contract in the ATCC mission change where there exists a set of system wide policies that must be addressed from a level above that of the individual institution.

Conclusion

In chapter 1, I introduced the problem in the 2 year colleges of increasing demand for services and decreasing public resources. The chapter then described how some of these colleges have responded to this increasingly neoliberal policy environment by changing their mission to reflect a more capitalist mission resulting in a comprehensive community and technical college (Milliron & Wilson, 2006). The resulting study was described as being a qualitative case study of a Minnesota technical college who became comprehensive and who's research questions were significantly influenced by a previous study conducted in North Carolina by Dr. Jennifer Burruss (2010). The first chapter also introduced the neoliberal theoretical context of David Ayers (2005) and David Harvey (2006) as it relates to phenomenon of academic capitalism including the commodification of public education (Knoll, 2009, Lovell & Trouth, 2002) as compared to the traditional role of the community college as a social democratic organization (Mann, 2009).

In chapter 2, I provided a review of the literature that provided background on the history and nature of the 2 year colleges as a distinct classification of higher education institution. It was important to share this background information in order to understand the complexity of not only the financial issues that arise as part of the move to a neoliberal policy environment, but the philosophical issues such as the traditional social democratic mission that impact the mission change process (Gleazer, 1980). The literature review also outlined mission change as the framework by which these constructs could be viewed and the qualitative case study as the methodology for the study.

In chapter 3, I outlined the qualitative case study as the methodological framework for the study. The subject of the case study, Alexandria Technical and Community College located in Minnesota who changed their mission from a technical college to become a comprehensive community and technical college in 2010. The study was influenced by the Burruss study (2010) and consisted of 15 interviews with college faculty, staff, administrators, and advisors, as well as members of the state colleges and universities system. In addition, this chapter described the coding method using the NVivo 10 software and triangulation of archival documents as a manner by which I established validity of the information in the narratives.

In chapter 4, I analyzed the data collected through the interviews. The data that was processed through the NVivo software resulted in 20 initial codes, which were organized into coding stripes, which were aligned into data nodes that produced results. The results evidenced a strong historical relationship between Alexandria Technical and Community College (ATCC) before, during, and after the mission change. In the public policy realm, there were strong themes around financial aid eligibility as a driver for the mission change in order to increase institutional revenue and to service the needs of the students, and the barriers from the college system level such as the bifurcated faculty union contract that generated challenges to ATCC in operating in a more capitalistic manner.

In chapter 5, I interpreted the data collected to suggest that ATCC historically operated in a capitalistic manner and that the mission change was in direct alignment with a neoliberal policy perspective. The process by which this college changed its mission

was complicated by its membership in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System (MnSCU) because while the policies of state and national higher education were becoming increasingly neoliberal, the governing structures of the system and its collective bargaining agreements were still traditional in their orientation.

I suggested that the limitations of the study centered on geography and then recommended that more research be conducted in other areas of the United States as I did taking similar research questions from the Burruss (2010) study which was conducted in North Carolina and looking at them in Minnesota. In addition, I also suggested that there was another MnSCU technical college, Pine Technical and Community College who completed a mission change since the ATCC change in 2010. This college was referenced in a number of the interviews and I believe it should be studied in order to compare and contrast the mission change process to see if the same themes are evident.

It can be said that this study has narrowed the gap in the literature on community college mission change and neoliberal policy in public institutions of higher learning. And yet, it also emphasizes that the variables in how these colleges respond to the constituencies they serve, the student, the community, the employer, and even the society are numerous and complex. They operate in a highly bureaucratic and established system both in how they are funded from the federal government and at the state level through their colleges and universities system. Change in the mindset of one institution or one community cannot be isolated because the resulting actions, including mission change require the support and authorization of outside parties to take effect. Alexandria Technical and Community College was an excellent subject for this study because in my

observation they have a neoliberal mindset and have worked through the public policy

challenges to secure a future that aligns with their employer and constituent needs. They

are an example of social change in action and their journey has illuminated the broader

policy context in which 2 year colleges navigate to survive in a global higher education

market.

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Appendix A

Interview Script/Protocol for all college interviewees (internal)

Dissertation: College Mission Change and Neoliberalism: a Case Study of one Minnesota Technical and Community College.

Date of Interview:_____   Start time:_____   End time:_____

Location:_____

Interviewee: _____

Position/Title:_____

Number of years in current position: _____

Number of years with the institution (if applicable): _____

Previous positions held in the institution (if applicable- list all):

Interviewer will provide a brief description of the dissertation and the study being conducted.

- Explanation of why you have been asked to participate

- The meeting should last approximately 1 hour

- Affirmation of confidentiality

- An audio recording will be made as well as note taking by the researcher

Script

First, I would like to thank you for your time and participation in this interview. Before we begin, I must inform you that everything you tell me will be held strictly confidential. In the dissertation, I will be identifying the name of the college but will use a pseudonym for you on your request. I will use an audio recording device while I take

notes today to include all the comments into the analysis, which will be transcripted following this interview by another party. The transcriptionist and I are both committed to the confidentiality of your information and no other parties will be allowed access to the data. I will store the data files in a secure location where only I will have access and the data will be destroyed after a period of five years following the completion of the dissertation.

Once I have gathered your narrative data, I will make the transcript available to you for your review and for any potential corrections. Now I have eleven questions that I would like to ask you, unless you have any other questions for me? The questions will then be read aloud to the interview subject.

1. How has the mission of the college changed since becoming a community and technical college (or if appropriate technical and community college)?

2. How have you personally been involved in the mission change process?

3. How has the faculty been involved in the mission change process?

4. How have the students been involved in the mission change process?

5. How has the business community been involved in the mission change process?

6. How has the college administration been involved in the mission change process?

7. What role has the Minnesota Colleges and Universities System Office or the Minnesota Legislature played in the mission change process?

8. How have funding policies or other mandates from the government impacted the mission change process?

9. How has the college's relationship with the business community or employers of your students/graduates affected the mission change process?

10. What impact has the mission change had on the curriculum?

11. What, if anything, would you like to add to this discussion on mission change at your college?

Post- interview

Thank you for your time and please accept this nominal gift card of $10 in appreciation for your time. Based on information we just covered are there any other individuals at the college, the system office, or in the community that you suggest I speak with as part of my data collection? Also, are there any specific documents (internal, system, or public) that you believe would be helpful in my research on this subject?

Interview Script/Protocol for interviewees external to the college

Dissertation: College Mission Change and Neoliberalism: a Case Study of one Minnesota Technical and Community College.

Date of Interview:_____ Start time:_____ End time:_____

Location:_____

Interviewee: _____

Position/Title:_____

Current relationship to the college: _____

Previous positions held in the institution (if applicable- list all):

Interviewer will provide a brief description of the dissertation and study being conducted.

- Explanation of why you have been asked to participate

- The meeting should last approximately 1 hour

- Affirmation of confidentiality

- An audio recording will be made as well as note taking by the researcher

Script

First, I would like to thank you for your time and participation in this interview. Before we begin, I must inform you that everything you tell me will be held strictly confidential. In the dissertation, I will be identifying the name of the college in my study and the colleges and universities system, however I will identify you and your business or employer by a pseudonym at your request. I am going to be using an audio recording device while I take notes today to include all the comments in my analysis, which will be transcripted following this interview by another party. The transcriptionist and I are both

committed to the confidentiality of the information collected and no other parties will be

allowed access to the data. I will store the data files in a secure location where only I will

have access and the data will be destroyed after a period of five years following the

completion of the dissertation.

Once I have gathered your narrative data, I will make the transcript available to

you for your review and for any potential corrections. Now I have 11 questions that I

would like to ask you, unless you have any other questions for me? The questions will

then be read aloud to the participants.

1. How has the mission of the college changed at the community and technical college (or if appropriate technical and community college)?

2. How have you personally been involved in the mission change process?

3. How have you observed the faculty involvement in the mission change process?

4. How have you observed student involvement in the mission change process?

5. How have you observed the business community's involvement in the mission change process?

6. How have you observed the college administration involvement in the mission change process?

7. To your knowledge what role has the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System Office or the Minnesota state legislature played in the mission change process?

8. Are there funding policies or other mandates from the government that have impacted the mission change process?

9. If so, how?

10. How has the college's relationship with the business community affected the mission change process?

11. What, if anything, would you like to add to this discussion on mission change at your college?

Post- interview

Thank you for your time and please accept this nominal gift card of $10 in appreciation for your time. Based on information we just covered are there any other individuals at the college, the system office, or the community that you suggest I speak with as part of my data collection? Also, are there any specific documents (internal, system, or public) that you believe would be helpful in my research on this subject?

Appendix B

Letter of Invitation (email) to Participate in the Study- Individuals

You are invited to take part in a research study of mission change in technical and community colleges. The researcher is inviting 2-year college administrators, faculty, and staff, as well as advisory committee members representing the business community in your community to be in the study. This study is being conducted by a researcher named Christine Mollenkopf-Pigsley, a doctoral student in Public Policy and Public Administration at Walden University. You may already know her as a former employee of Dakota County Technical College and an adjunct faculty member at Minnesota State University Mankato, but this study is separate from that role.

The purpose of this study is to conduct a case study of the mission change process at Alexandra Technical and Community College that resulted in the institution becoming a comprehensive community and technical college and how the process was impacted by the fiscal and policy environment. If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in an individual interview of approximately one hour that will take place either in person at your location or via a conference call or WebEx.

Here are some sample questions that will be asked:
- How have you personally been involved in the mission change process?
- How has the college's relationship with the business community or employers of your students/graduates affected the mission change process?

To thank you for participating in this study you will receive a gift card of $10 for a local coffee shop or restaurant. This gift will be given to you by mail along with the transcripted notes of our conversation for your review.

To join this study as a participant please contact the researcher at xxx-xxx-xxxx or by email at studentname@waldenu.edu.

Appendix C

Consent Form (email)

You have indicated an interest to take part in a research study of mission change at Alexandria Technical and Community College. The researcher is inviting 2-year college administrators, faculty, and staff as well as advisory committee members representing the Alexandria business community to be in the study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

A researcher named Christine Mollenkopf-Pigsley, a doctoral student in Public Policy and Public Administration at Walden University, is conducting this study. You may already know the researcher as a former employee of Dakota County Technical College and an adjunct faculty member at Minnesota State University Mankato, but this study is separate from that role.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to conduct a case study of the mission change process at a Minnesota 2-year college that has become comprehensive (community and technical college) and how the process has been impacted by the current fiscal and policy environment.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in an individual interview of approximately one hour that will be audio recorded and then transcribed by a third party transcriptionist. Following the transcription you will be provided with a copy of it to review and make corrections before the data is analyzed.

Here are some sample questions:
- How have you personally been involved in the mission change process?
- How has the college's relationship with the business community or employers of your students/graduates affected the mission change process?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at the college or the systems office will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as fatigue from sitting for a period of time. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

The potential individual benefits of participating in this study include an opportunity to share your thoughts, observations, and opinions about the mission change process and contribute to a body of knowledge that can help shape future decision-making at community colleges.

Payment:
Participants in this study will receive a thank you gift in the form of a gift card of $10 for a local coffee shop or restaurant. This gift will be given to you by mail along with the transcripted notes of our conversation for your review.

Privacy:
Any information you provide will be kept confidential and the researcher will use a pseudonym for you at your request but the institution and state colleges and universities system will be identified by name. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Data will be kept secure by keeping the data collected in locked storage and only the researcher and her transcriptionist will have access to the data. The transcriptionist will sign a confidentiality agreement. Data will be kept for a period of at least five years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:
You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via phone at xxx-xxx-xxxx or via email at studentname@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is xxx-xxx-xxxx. Walden University's approval number for this study is 03-17-14-0137432 and it expires on March 16, 2015.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form as an email that you may print or save for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By replying to this email with the words, "I consent", I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Appendix D

Letter of Cooperation- System

Dr. Todd Harmening
System Director for Planning
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System

Dear Dr. Harmening:

My name is Christine Mollenkopf-Pigsley, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. As part of the program requirements for the PhD in Public Policy and Public Administration, I am conducting a study of mission change in 2-year colleges that have changed their mission to become comprehensive. The title of this dissertation is College Mission Change and Neoliberalism: a Case Study of one Minnesota Technical and Community College. The primary research question for this study is: what are the implications of an increasingly neoliberal environment in community and technical colleges.

I plan to employ a qualitative case study research methodology. As such, I will be utilizing interviews and archival document analysis. I would like the opportunity to make Alexandria Technical and Community College the subject of this case study. The data collection will include 12 interviews with senior administrators, union leaders, and faculty members who were active in the mission change process that occurred in 2009-2010. Additional interviews will be conducted with other staff and program advisory committee members or business connections to the college. Finally, I would like your authorization to interview 3 System level individuals either employees or trustees for the study and assistance as needed in accessing archival documents from the System related to the subject college's mission change, as mutually agreed upon.

I have received conditional approval from the Walden University Institutional Research Board (IRB) and would request similar approval from your internal research body. I will conduct this study with strict adherence to all IRB guidelines for ethical research and I agree to hold the information strictly confidential. If desired by the subject college or the System, I will utilize a pseudonym for your institution as well as the colleges and universities system to protect the identity of the subject institution. I am including a copy of the dissertation proposal and the IRB approval paperwork with this letter.

I am available to speak with you to answer any questions or concerns and to coordinate access to archival data. I can be contacted at studentname@waldenu.edu or xxx-xxx-xxxx. I look forward to your response to my request so I may move forward with the study as soon as possible. I will follow up with a phone call within the next seven days. Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Appendix E

Letter of Cooperation- Institution

Kevin Kopischke
President
Alexandria Technical and Community College

Dear President Kopischke

My name is Christine Mollenkopf-Pigsley, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. As part of the program requirements for the PhD in Public Policy and Public Administration, I am conducting a study of mission change in 2-year colleges that have changed their mission to become comprehensive. The title of this dissertation is College Mission Change and Neoliberalism: a Case Study of one Minnesota Technical and Community College. The primary research question for this study is: what are the implications of an increasingly neoliberal environment in community and technical colleges.

I plan to employ a qualitative case study research methodology. As such, I will be utilizing interviews and archival document analysis. I would like the opportunity to interview you and five members of current and former college leadership (e.g. administrators, union leaders, and faculty shared governance members) who participated in the mission change process in 2009-2010. These interviews are anticipated to take approximately one hour each and I am flexible as to the location and timing of the interviews in order to facilitate their schedules and workloads. I am also requesting permission to conduct additional interviews with up to six members of the following stakeholder populations: faculty, staff, and program advisory committee members or business connections to the college. Each interview should take approximately one hour and will be scheduled at the convenience of the participant. Finally, I would like your assistance in accessing archival documents related to mission change, as mutually agreed upon.

I have received conditional approval from the Walden University Institutional Research Board (IRB) and would request similar approval from your internal research body. I will conduct this study with strict adherence to all IRB guidelines for ethical research and I agree to hold the information strictly confidential. If desired by your college or the System, I will utilize a pseudonym for your institution as well as the colleges and universities system to protect the identity of the subject institution. I am including a copy of the dissertation proposal and the IRB approval paperwork with this letter.

I am available to speak with you to answer any questions or concerns and to coordinate access to archival data. I can be contacted at studentname@waldenu.edu or xxx-xxx-xxxx

. I look forward to your response to my request so I may move forward with the study as soon as possible. I will follow up with a phone call within the next seven days. Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Appendix F

Document Review Form

Site:_____

Document Title:_____

Date Reviewed:_____

Description of the document:

Event or contact associated with the document (if applicable):

Original purpose of the document:

Target audience:

Significance of the document:

Brief summary of the contents of the document:

Appendix G

Transcriptionist Confidentiality Agreement

Transcriptionist Confidentiality Agreement

Name of Signer: **Deanna Threadgill**

During the course of my activity in transcribing data for this research: College Mission Change and Neoliberalism: a Case Study of one Minnesota Community and Technical College, I will have access to information, which is confidential and should not be disclosed. I acknowledge that the information must remain confidential, and that improper disclosure of confidential information can be damaging to the participant.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement I acknowledge and agree that:

1. I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family.
2. I will not in any way divulge, copy, release, sell, loan, alter or destroy any confidential information except as properly authorized.
3. I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the participant's name is not used.
4. I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modification or purging of confidential information.
5. I agree that my obligations under this agreement will continue after termination of the job that I will perform.
6. I understand that violation of this agreement will have legal implications.
7. I will only access or use systems or devices I'm officially authorized to access and I will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or devices to unauthorized individuals.

Signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.

Signature: _Deanna Threadgill_   Date: _3/12/2014_

Appendix H

NVivo10 Nodes Data Collection

1. Administration leadership
2. The role of the faculty
3. Business and industry as consumer
4. Students and the general
   community as consumer
5. System wide policy
6. Community college funding

INITIAL CODES	SOURCE	NODE CATEGORY
Meeting specific business/industry needs	Interviews Documents	Business/industry as consumer
Outreach to business/industry	Interviews Documents	Business/industry as consumer
Business/industry organizations	Interviews Documents	Business/industry as consumer
Outreach to community/ community organizations	Interviews Documents	Students and community as consumer
Changes in curriculum	Interviews Documents	System wide policy Students and community as consumer Business/industry as consumer
Course offerings changed based on demand	Interviews Documents	Students and community as consumer
Student demands, roles, responsibilities	Interviews Documents	Students and community as consumer
Meeting students' needs	Interviews Documents	Students and community as consumer
Meeting community needs	Interviews Documents	Students and community as consumer
Budgeting/funding	Interviews Documents	Community college funding System policy
Enrollment/state allocation	Interviews Documents	Community college funding System wide policy
Employment for graduates	Interviews Documents	Students and community as consumer
Service area	Interviews Documents	Students System wide policy
Mission change	Interviews Documents	All categories

Eroding democratic mission/technical mission	Interviews	System-wide policy
	Documents	Role of faculty
Alignment with state college system	Interviews	System wide policy
Administrator role/future planning	Interviews	Administration leadership
Operating as a business	Interviews	Administration leadership
Community surveys	Interviews	Students and community as consumer
		Business/Industry as consumer
Fundraising	Interviews	not selected for further coding
Instructor practices	Interviews	not selected for further coding
Accountability	Interviews	not selected for further coding
Continuing education	Not present	not selected for further coding
Personnel specific to business/industry needs	Not present	not selected for further coding

NEW THEMES	SOURCE	NODE CATEGORY
Union contract	Interviews	Role of faculty
	Documents	System policy

REVISED CODING THEMES	INTERVIEW FREQUENCY	# of REFERENCES
Business/industry needs	15/15	298
Business/industry outreach	15/15	60
Business/industry organizations	15/15	131
Outreach to community	15/15	266
Changes in curriculum	9/15	62
Course offerings changed based on demand	12/15	229
Student demands	15/15	503
Meeting students' needs	15/15	637
Meeting community needs	15/15	431
Budgeting/funding	15/15	69
Enrollment/state allocation	15/15	99
Employment for graduates	14/14	33
Service area	15/15	82
Mission change	15/15	782
Technical mission	15/15	716
System Alignment	15/15	195
Administrator role/future planning	15/15	147
Operating as a business	15/15	116
Community surveys	15/15	277
Union contract	12/15	56
Fundraising	1/15	2
Accountability	4/15	6
Instructor practices	6/15	19
Continuing Education	0/15	0
Personnel specific to business/industry needs	0/15	0

Appendix I

Document Review Completed Form 1

Site: Electronic file provided by Alexandria Technical & Community College

Document Title: **2009 Alexandria Technical College Application for Associate of Arts Degree/mission change/new program application**

Date Reviewed: November 25, 2014

Description of the document:
This is the application document that the college submitted to the MnSCU System Office to apply for mission change to comprehensive status.

Event or contact associated with the document (if applicable): Jan Doebbert, VP of Academic & Student Affairs, Alex Tech

Original purpose of the document: Mission change and addition of the AA degree to the college's program list.

Target audience: MnSCU System Board of Trustees and associated program staff

Significance of the document: It provides the rationale, research, and public comment on the mission change process. It is the public document that outlined the process and rationale to the governing body, which supported their request in 2009.

Brief summary of the contents of the document:

1. As early as 2000 work started on mission change and efforts were brought forward again in 2004.
2. Other partnerships (Bemidji State and SW Mn State Universities) were attempted to meet consumer demand.
3. Financial aid and student progress policies are issues/barriers to meeting student needs (identified as 200 undeclared students).
4. Accountability measures for completion with System do not count toward ATC in the partnership arrangements.
5. Local students wanted the AA (increasing undeclared student enrollment).
6. "The use of EMSI strategic advantage software indicates that the highest demand future skills for work in the Alexandria seven county area reflect liberal arts education needs. This does not undermine the need for technicians, particularly in manufacturing, construction and health care. It does indicate that growth of professional jobs In Alexandria will require a different skill set." (page 2).

7. The concern from the System Office was been the "residual or related message for other technical colleges and the system goal of supporting economic development and technical training" and "marked concern about the impact of program duplication on the competitive environment for surrounding institutions".

8. No advantage in being a technical college. Programs offered at technical colleges are also offered at comprehensive colleges while the AA degree is not available for technical colleges.

9. "There is no unique funding protection (recognizing that high cost programs in comprehensive colleges also receive allocation for comparable programs) apart from the 32 credit workload assignment and that technical college faculty are require to do student advising." (page 2)

10. "In 2010, technical colleges account less than 10% of the system full year equivalent (FYE)." (page 2)

Document Review Completed Form 2

Site: Electronic file provided by Alexandria Technical & Community College

Document Title: **Lumina Report- Tuning Process Project**
The Minnesota Office of Higher Education Final Report Grant number 6142 Tuning
Project Grant period March 19, 2009 through February 28, 2010

Date Reviewed: November 25, 2014

Description of the document:
This is the final report from the MN OHE on the Lumina Grant Project that Alex Tech
was part of.

Event or contact associated with the document (if applicable): Jan Doebbert, VP of
Academic & Student Affairs, Alex Tech

Original purpose of the document: grant report to funder

Target audience: funding program officer

Significance of the document: It provides 3rd party information on the faculty of Alex
Tech and other participating 2 year colleges and universities around mission of education
in both technical and liberal arts disciplines and on the competencies valued by a variety
of constituencies (e.g. business, universities). It also provides insight on student demands
with regard to technical and liberal arts education.

Brief summary of the contents of the document:
1. Quote from student "We ARE the students, and we should not be determining
   what we should be taught – we have no idea how to begin to know those things.
   We can only know what those things are once they are established and only then
   can we identity if we are indeed receiving the education we should per those
   competencies/standards. It is up for the faculty and employers to decide what they
   want students to know. I hope that makes sense."
2. Quote from student "I was affected by credits not transferring myself and felt like
   the credits I completed at my first two-year public technical college was a waste
   of time and money. When everyone is on the same page and offering the same
   programs, students' lives will be much more convenient."
3. "Minnesota postsecondary enterprise has two very strong faculty unions. These
   unions will want to be more involved with the Tuning process than was possible

with the pilot process given the short timeline. The involvement of unions will take additional administrative time."

4. "A valuable piece of information that is relevant to the community colleges, and completely missed in the survey, is the reflections of students that have transferred to a university but did not graduate from NHCC. In fact, our best transfer students typically do not earn a two year degree. They complete the set of courses required to move onto a four-year university and transfer without the two-year degree because it is of little value to them."

5. "The perspectives and internal cultures of the University of Minnesota, state universities and state two-year colleges are quite different. Workload for instructors and students are quite different. Universities value graduate degrees for their instructors, two-year schools value work experience for their instructors more than degrees. Because of these very different perspectives two-year schools have a higher value for the practical application of design in choosing their instructors and in the outcomes of their students. Universities place the philosophy of design and research in design at a higher level. Two-year schools are immersed in preparing the student for the job market and are highly concerned that their instructors have work experience and stay in touch with the marketplace."

6. "In Minnesota we sometimes wonder how we got so many different educational institutions. It is a big question. We all compete for students and money. It isn't going to change anytime soon. It maybe should, but entertaining that possibility makes us all uncomfortable and insecure. It is what it is." Alex Tech participant