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# Decision Processes, Synergism, and Shared Governance in a California Community College District

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# Walden University

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2017

Abstract

Decision Processes, Synergism, and Shared Governance in a California Community

College District

by

Howard Teruo Kubota

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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## Abstract

Many California community colleges face difficult decisions when implementing the State's shared governance mandate on institutional planning and budgeting processes. Using Allison and Zelikow's rational, organizational, and political decision models as the foundation, the purpose of this narrative study was to explore decision processes used by a successful community college district in California to understand its success with the State's mandated institutional planning and budgeting processes. Data were collected through semistructured interviews with 10 individuals representing a board of trustees, 3 administrations, 3 academic senates, and a faculty association. Data were inductively coded and then subjected to Ollerenshaw and Creswell's narrative analysis procedure. All 10 narratives were assigned decision process scores based on Allison and Zelikow's framework and 6 specific planning and budgeting decision events. Findings indicate that elements from all 3 decision models were routinely used to create synergism of actions leading to a collaborative and strong unity of effort. In addition, favored decision-making processes may have overcome rational choice impediments in the budgeting area. The positive social change implication includes a recommendation to the academic leaders of all 72 California community college districts that they capitalize on the synergistic interactions of decision processes required for successful institutional planning and budgeting. In addition, leaders should use favored decision models sparingly to fulfill California's legislative mandate for a quality and college-educated workforce. The ultimate unity of effort for academic leaders is to correct the shortfall of a million college graduates needed by 2025 for California's workforce.

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## Dedication

I wish to dedicate this dissertation to my 103-year-old mother, Chiyoe Kubota, and to my late father, Zenpachi Kubota, both of whom had spoken daily to me about the importance of education. Equally, but perhaps more so, I wish to dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Chieko Aida Kubota, who has made incalculable sacrifices over many years while I was enrolled in the Ph.D. program. Her immeasurable sacrifices over those long years were both monetary and intangible. Monetarily, she helped pay for the high cost of the doctoral program, and regarding the intangibles, she emotionally and morally provided me with needed support during many instances of my going through fatigue and discouragement. Thank you, Chieko!

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At the research site, I wish to thank each participant who represented the board of trustees, administrators, academic senates, and faculty association for their understanding and cooperation with the difficult and lengthy interviewing process.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Introduction**

My research sought to understand the necessary interplay of decision processes used by community college leaders when implementing California's shared governance mandate. The rationale for my study was the need for leaders at the 72 California Community College (CCC) districts to apply effective decision processes that address the State's persistent budget and student crises. Furthermore, the social change implications are that my study may help these leaders to ensure the success of their students, as one million college graduates are needed for California's work force by the year 2025.

Chapter 1 includes a history of relationship between CCC faculties and boards of trustees, a review of current student and budget crises within the CCC system, and explanations of California's Master Plan and the CCC system's shared governance legislation (AB 1725). In the chapter, I also consider issues with implementing a shared governance mandate between the boards of trustees and the academic senates and describe the decision processes applied by the board members, academic senators, administrators, and faculty association members. Finally, I offer my thoughts on why the California legislators believe that successful implementation of a shared governance mandate is critical to achieving positive student outcomes.

### **Background**

Globally, faculty members and faculty associations have long demanded shared governance with governing boards and administrators in order to maintain managerial

control over higher education. During the medieval period, however, faculty members completely self-governed their institutions (Cohen & Brawer, 2008), as there were no separate bodies of governing boards and administrators. This long and deep history of faculty governance may explain the continuing passionate demand for shared governance by faculty groups at all levels of higher education, especially in the Western world.

The relationship between faculties and governing boards in the CCC system has changed significantly over time. In 1907, California's Ballard Act created junior colleges as part of the kindergarten through Grade 14 educational system (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office [CCCCO], 2012). These newly formed colleges operated wholly within the K through 12 educational system and were completely outside of the shared governance scheme (Wagoner, 2008). Beginning in 1910 and continuing into the 1950s, these early colleges were under the supervision of local boards of education, a top-down hierarchical system of governance (Potter & Phelan, 2008). Governing boards rarely questioned administrative decisions, including those from the president and his or her staff (Townsend & Twombly, 2007). Consequently, these boards ignored the need for any form of faculty participation in the governance of their institutions (Townsend & Twombly, 2007). In sum, during the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, faculty members had minor roles when governing the CCC system.

In California, as well as in other parts of the nation, issues concerning shared governance and crises relating to student success and budgetary constraints were interrelated. To increase student success, the President's Commission on Higher

Education proposed the development of community college programs aimed at facilitating the transfer of students to universities (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). However, in California until the late 1980s, board members and administrators hindered the participation of faculty members in the governance of their institutions (Potter & Phelan, 2008). Without full participation in governance, faculty members had limited contributions to the healthy growth of educational programs, which in turn prevented the smooth academic transfer of CCC students to universities (Potter & Phelan, 2008). Thus, issues concerning shared governance and crises relating to student success appeared to be interrelated.

Until the late 1980s, a major factor that prevented active participation in governance by faculty members was California's budget crisis. During the 1970s, California consumers, frustrated with property tax and gasoline price increases, initiated a taxpayer revolt (Huyck, 2011). By 1978, the revolt resulted in voter approval of Proposition 13, which gave homeowners relief over a portion of their property tax payments (Huyck, 2011). The Proposition placed limits on property taxes, resulting in a decrease in the amount of funding available for community colleges in the state. Passage of Proposition 13 and the poor student success rate, a problem that was compounded by the effects of the State's budget crisis, spurred efforts to reform the CCC system (Huyck, 2011). The state legislature enacted in 1988 Assembly Bill 1725 (AB 1725) (Breneman, 2008) as a reform movement. Enactment of AB 1725 provided legislative backing for shared governance in the CCC system.

The California legislature started with the 1960 Donahoe Higher Education Act, known as the Master Plan, and then followed with the 1988 AB 1725 to remedy the crisis over student success by instituting changes in shared governance structure and practices at each of the 72 CCC districts (Twombly & Townsend, 2008). To encourage participatory governance by faculty members, California legislators enacted the California Master Plan in 1960 (Levine, 2005; Twombly & Townsend, 2008). Legislators sought to encourage shared governance under the belief that active participation by faculty members would provide needed expert information and support for development and delivery of key educational programs at a level of expertise that was lacking among trustees and administrators (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, 2013). Thus, through enactment of the Master Plan and then AB 1725, legislators took long steps to encourage faculty participation in the governance of the CCC system.

In 1987, California legislators created a commission to review the 1960 Master Plan and then asked commission members to report on shared governance in California higher education (Baldassarre, Bonner, Petek, & Shrestha, 2011). Commission members reported that local boards of trustees needed to strengthen CCC's shared governance structures (Potter & Phelan, 2008). The Commission also concluded that the boards should be accountable for the successful transfer of academic courses to baccalaureate programs at the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU)



systems (Potter & Phelan, 2008). The 1960 Master Plan and the 1987 Commission laid the foundation for the 1988 enactment of AB 1725.

In 1988, the California legislature enacted AB 1725, which is commonly referred to as the shared governance mandate. Under AB 1725, legislators directed the state's Community College Board of Governors to develop regulations, which became Title 5, Division 6, Chapter 4, Subchapter 2, Article 2. This regulation mandated the local boards of trustees to collegially consult with their local academic senate groups over all educational issues relating to academic and professional matters (Cal. Code Regs. tit. 5, § 53200-53204). CCC Board of Governors specified 10 academic and professional areas in which local district boards must confer with academic senates in determining educational policies. The tenth item on this list is the legal right of academic senates to participate on resolving issues pertaining to institutional planning and budget processes, which are policy areas that have been long under the exclusive control of the boards of trustees (Smith, 2012).

Since 1988, arguments have continued for and against shared governance, with the academic senates and faculty associations standing for shared governance and the boards and administrators at some CCC districts standing against it. Many CCC leaders expected that full implementation of the mandate will face continuing difficulties at some college districts (Baldassarre, Bonner, Petek, & Shrestha, 2011). For example, in June 2012, City College of San Francisco (CCSF), which is the largest institution of higher education in California, was ordered by the Accrediting Commission for Community and

Junior Colleges (ACCJC) to show cause as to why its accreditation should not be revoked (Bradley, 2012, para. 4). Since then, CCSF leaders have struggled to prevent loss of accreditation and subsequent closure (Bradley, 2012, para. 3). The commission criticized the college for poor fiscal management, for a lack of adequate student tracking and program review related to the student outcome crisis, and for “glacial style of democratic governance” (Bradley, 2012, para. 6).

On matters relating to shared governance, ACCJC issued stern conditions for CCSF, which their leaders needed to address, in order to keep its accreditation. ACCJC leaders, in particular the board of trustees and the academic senates, needed to improve their decision processes based on the State’s shared governance mandate, so as to improve community college programs and services directed at assuring student success (Bradley, 2012, para. 14). Pamila Fisher, CCSF’s interim chancellor, reaffirmed that CCSF needs to address the appropriate roles for the trustees, faculty groups, and administrators to use decision processes that are more effective and to follow the State’s shared governance mandate pertaining to institutional planning focused on student outcomes (Bradley, 2012, para. 28). Indeed, other CCCs have faced and are continuing to face difficulties on satisfying the State’s mandate.

The issues faced by CCSF college leaders are not uncommon among CCCs. Per Rivera (2013), relevant faculty members or accrediting agency have filed similar cases against the local boards for violating AB 1725. These include the South Orange County Community College court case of 2005 (Irvine Valley College, 2005) and the Santa

Monica CCC accreditation case of 2011 (Clifford, 2011). This legal context provided the justification for my research on the decision processes of CCC district policymakers.

Accordingly, my study focused on the decision processes using multiple decision models by four groups of actors during the planning and budgeting processes of the shared governance mandate.

In my study, I attempted to understand the effects of the decision processes that involved the use of rational, organizational, or political decision models, which are widely used by government leaders (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). The intent of my study was to understand how the multiple and combined uses of the three decision models might produce synergism of actions among community college district policymakers (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). In my study, the policymakers were selected from the district's board of trustees and from the individual community colleges' administrators, academic senates, and faculty association. I anticipated that the use of all three decision models, in contrast to a single favored model, was more likely to lead to unity of effort in implementing the State's shared governance mandate, especially the code provision that relates to institutional planning and budgeting processes. Results of my study may inform leaders who represent the 72 CCCs and help them resolve some of California's persistent educational and budgetary issues (Duglass, 2012; Melguizo, Hagedorn, & Cypers, 2008). The problem with understanding decision processes and decision models are explained in the following sections.

### **Problem Statement**

Leaders of the 72 CCC districts need to understand their decision processes involving the use of three commonly used decision models as means for assuring the implementation of the State's shared governance mandate. Each CCC district is legally bound to implement California's shared governance education code (Cal. Code Regs. tit. 5, § 53200-53204; Smith, 2012). The relevant code provision deals with institutional planning and budgeting processes, which is an area of the mandate that is in constant dispute among leaders at some CCC districts (Potter, & Phelan, 2008). I divided district leaders into four groups, which are board of trustees, administrators, academic senates, and faculty association (labor union), henceforth referred to as the four actor groups. Although the board of trustees and administrators tend to decide together and the academic senates and faculty association tend to decide together, these two clusters of groups may experience conflict over the mandated issues pertaining to institutional planning and budgeting processes (Potter, & Phelan, 2008). To aid in understanding the decision processes that are practiced by the four actor groups, I relied on concepts from the rational, organizational, and political decision models (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). Thus, through these decision processes, the four groups of actors influenced the preferred educational outcome, which was the collaborative implementation of the institutional planning and budgeting provisions of the shared governance mandate.

### **Purpose of the Study**

My purpose of the study was to understand whether decision processes that combined the use of rational, organizational, and political decision models produced a synergism of actions among four actor groups, who were required to implement California's shared governance mandate. I anticipated that these actors would use multiple and combined decision processes to create synergism of actions leading to a strong unity of effort during implementation of the State's shared governance mandate. However, there was a possibility that one or two decision models could dominate when contentious issues are involved.

### **Research Questions**

The primary inquiry that I sought to answer in the study was whether the decision processes involving the varied application of rational, organizational, or political decision models ensured successful implementation of the shared governance mandate, in particular the institutional planning and budgeting processes portion of the mandate. Given the primary inquiry, the following are my research questions (RQ) for the study:

RQ1. To what extent are the four groups of actors knowledgeable about California's 1988 shared governance mandate?

RQ2. To what extent are the four groups of actors committed to implementing the mandated provision concerning institutional planning and budgeting processes?

RQ3. To what extent do the four groups of actors apply rational, organizational, or political decision models in their decision processes that relate to implementing

California's shared governance mandate pertaining to institutional planning and budgeting processes?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The analytical approach to the decision processes involved the combined use of all three decision models, which were seamlessly applied as complements to each other within a single decision process. The underlying theories and models that provided bases for my analytical approach were utility maximizing theory (Radnitzky & Bernholz, 1987; Simon, 1991), organizational behavior theory (Argyris & Schon, 1978; Schein, 2004), and the political decision-making model (Neustadt, 1990; Neustadt & May, 1986). For my study, the three widely used decision models by government leaders were referred to as the rational actor model or RAM based on utility maximizing theory, the organizational behavior model or OBM based on organizational behavior theory, and the governmental politics model or GPM based on a political decision-making model (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, p. 379). These three decision models are used throughout my study.

When all three models are integrated and applied in a given decision process, Allison and Zelikow (1999) postulated that the combined models may produce synergisms among groups of diverse policymakers, resulting in the implementation of the preferred institutional outcome. In my study, the preferred institutional outcome was the successful implementation of shared governance mandate, in particular the institutional planning and budgeting processes portions of the mandate. Using "multiple, overlapping,

competing conceptual models are the best” for producing synergisms and for understanding the effectiveness of decision processes (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, p. 401). Vieth (2007) added, “Three decision-making models are taken together to discuss processes and problems. . . . Each model explores decision making from a different frame of reference, and all three lenses together better explain the decision-making process . . . than any one model could by itself” (p. 25). Thus, the integrated application of the rational, organizational, and political decision models by each group of actors may promote a synergism of actions and support a common institutional outcome.

### **Nature of the Study**

My chosen research design was qualitative, which allowed for deeper study of the decision processes and for better understanding of how decision models affected shared governance. My qualitative method employed a narrative analysis in which members from the four groups of actors were asked to story their experiences concerning their decision processes. Narrative analysis can produce a wealth of detailed information about small number of people, and it is able to increase the depth of understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Accordingly, the purpose of my study was to produce detailed information about the decision processes used by leaders from four actor groups at the chosen CCC district. Furthermore, the purpose was to increase the depth of understanding about how these decision processes affected implementation of the shared governance mandate.

The use of narrative analysis based on the problem-solving structure developed by Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002) was appropriate for my study. Narrative analysis has developed into an approach for studying organizations, such as those in higher education. My study focused on four groups of actors whose members were interviewed (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) to describe in detail how each member applied decision processes, what decision models were used, and how the outcomes affected the shared governance mandate, all in story like fashion (Gubrium, Jaber, & Holstein, 2009). The four groups of actors were leaders who represented the boards of trustees, the academic senates, the administrators, and the faculty association. The interview questions were carefully developed and asked to elicit stories about the decision processes. For the benefit of CCC leaders, the results of my study revealed themes, such as agreement among the four groups of actors on the need to control operating cost, to recognize standard operating procedures, or to negotiate and compromise on conflicting proposals. Thus, any discovered themes may show new ways of looking at decision processes. King (2003) reminded readers that “Once a story is told . . . it is loose in the world” (p. 10). Finding and interpreting stories is the nature of my study.

### **Definitions**

*Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC):* A state level organization, created out of Title 5 Section 53206, which represents 72 local academic senates, and it strives to provide California community college (CCC) faculty with formal



and effective procedure for participating in the formation of state policies on academic and professional matters (Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, 2007).

*Community College League of California (CCLC):* A state level organization that represents objectives of the boards of trustees and administrators of 72 community college districts, but it also maintains independence, where on occasion it may be at variance with the positions taken by the local boards and administrators (Community College League of California, 2012).

*Decision models:* Three widely used models, which include the rational actor based on utility maximizing theory, the organizational behavior based on organizational behavior theory, and governmental politics based on political decision-making model. Allison and Zelikow (1999), who investigated decision processes of government leaders, initiated the analytical use of all three models.

*Decision processes:* Cognitive processes that are practiced by four groups of CCC district leaders, who choose among three decision models, in an effort to determine and implement educational policies consistent with the shared governance mandate for the CCC system.

*Faculty participation in governance:* The rationale for establishing shared governance process at each of the 72 CCCs, in which faculty members provide needed expertise and analytical skills towards solving complex educational issues. Their participations assure best means by which to successfully develop and deliver appropriate

educational programs and services to meet student and institutional within the CCC system (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, 2013).

*Four actor groups:* The boards of trustees and administrators, who may act in tandem; and the academic senates (faculty) and faculty association (union), who also may act in tandem, with both clusters often proposing different educational policies, while struggling to implement California's shared governance mandate for the CCC district.

*Higher Education Act of 1960 (a.k.a. Master Plan):* California legislative action designed to promote faculty participatory governance as means for facilitating the successful articulation of transfer courses from the CCC system to the California Universities (UC) and to the California State Universities (CSU), and as means for helping to increase the rate of student success towards achieving baccalaureate degree (Cohen & Brawer, 2008).

*Institutional planning and budgeting processes:* One of eleven provisions of the academic and professional matters that is mandated under California's 1988 shared governance education code. That provision continues to be difficult to implement at some CCC districts, because that part of the mandate has been long perceived to be under the exclusive control of the boards of trustees (Smith, 2012),

*Narrative analysis:* Approach to qualitative study used to explore experiences of multiple actors in an organizational setting and to gain understanding of such issues as the decision processes (Lawler, 2012).

*Shared governance mandate:* CCC Education Code, Title 5, Sections 53200-53204, in which the local boards of trustees are mandated to collegially consult with the academic senates regarding issues of academic and professional matters, including the controversial areas of institutional planning and budgeting processes (Assembly Bill 1725, 1988).

*Synergism of actions:* Diverse actor groups behave as one decision-making body through the more than additive application of decision processes from the rational, organizational, and political decision models.

*Unity of effort:* As a minimum, diverse actor groups persevere to obtain a common goal using favored decision process, or better, they use a synergistic combination of decision processes.

*Tripartite higher education system:* State level collegiate system involving the 72 CCCs, UC, and CSU, whose structures and processes are designed to facilitate the transfer of community college students into the universities' upper division course studies (Cohen & Brawer, 2008).

### **Assumptions**

My study was designed to gather interview data from highly educated, informed, and articulate leaders, from four actor groups, who operate CCC district. Therefore, I made following assumptions about these leaders: a) They possess working knowledge of shared governance mandate (Title 5, Sections 53200-53204). b) They are committed to implementing the mandated provision pertaining to institutional planning and budgeting

processes. c) They are skilled in applying decision processes that involves the use of the rational, organizational, and political decision models.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The scope or boundaries for my study were defined as follows: a) The study was delimited to the decision processes, as opposed to the resulting institutional outcome. b) The study was delimited geographically to the chosen research site, as opposed to the state level CCC system. c) Furthermore, the study was delimited to the mandated shared governance rights accorded to faculty members, as opposed to rights afforded under separate education codes to other groups, such as to classified employees, students, and other vested members in the community.

Regarding the decision processes, the study focused on the four groups of actors and on how they applied the three widely used decision models, but the resulting implementation of the shared governance mandate was incidental to the purpose of the study. Regarding the research site, the study was delimited to actors and processes within the chosen college district. Any reference to external institutions and events were mentioned only to clarify issues that existed at the local level.

### **Limitations**

My study used a narrative analysis and was inherently constrained. I did not seek to determine causal relationship among key variables or actors of interest, but rather, I focused on increasing the understanding of decision processes as practiced by leaders at a successful CCC district. I also did not seek to generalize findings of the research to all of

the 72 CCC districts, but rather, I sought to explore data in detail to generate findings and interpretations on the use of decision processes at one district.

Another form of constraint in the study came from using the purposeful sampling, by which limits were placed on types and numbers of respondents who were interviewed. In the effort to achieve the purpose of the study, the participants for my study were selected as follows: I selected and interviewed two trustees and three senators, all of whom were current or former leaders of their respective organization. In addition, I selected and interviewed three administrators and two leaders of the faculty association, all of whom were current or former leaders of their respective organization. Selection of categories and numbers of participants are explained in Chapter 4.

### **Significance and Social Change Implications**

My study was intended to produce three significant changes in the following areas. The first change was to fill a gap in the literature. The second change was to demonstrate useful research processes and results to professionals in higher education. The third change, the social change implication, was to foster decision processes that lead to student success.

I hope my study fills a gap in the literature on understanding the effectiveness of decision processes being practiced by diverse leaders from boards of trustees, academic senates, administrators, and faculty associations at CCC districts. Furthermore, I hope my study fills a gap on understanding Allison and Zelikow's (1999) decision processes based on the rational, organizational, and political decision models. This combined use of these

decision processes may produce synergism of actions among diverse groups of actors and result in a unity of effort towards the shared governance mandate.

I hope that the findings of my study will influence all four groups of leaders at the 72 CCC districts to strengthen their decision processes resulting in a more assured pattern of implementation of the CCC shared governance mandate. For example, in California, looking to year 2025, there will be one million fewer college graduates than are needed in the workforce. Through shared governance involving the boards of trustees, academic senates, administrators, and faculty associations, strategies can be found to affect student success in the following areas: a) Increase college attendance rates, b) Increase transfer rates from community colleges to four-year universities, and c) Increase graduation rates from universities (Duglass, 2012; Melguizo, Hagedorn, & Cypers, 2008).

A synergism of actions by four diverse actor groups while implementing the mandate may lead to higher levels of student success, which means that more students will have opportunities to gain associate, baccalaureate, and higher college degrees. My hope for positive social change is that my study will contribute towards increasing higher educational opportunities for under-represented minorities and other marginalized students. Ultimately, my hope is that my findings will foster better political, economic, social, and cultural lives for all.

### **Summary**

The thrust of Chapter 1 was to introduce my study. The introduction focused on the background, the problem, the purpose, and the nature of the study. The central theme

of my study was to understand the effectiveness of decision processes that involved combining and using the rational, organizational, and political decision models by four actor groups at a chosen CCC district. The district was chosen because of its success with California's shared governance mandate pertaining to institutional planning and budgeting processes.

Other important themes in Chapter 1 included explanation of research questions, conceptual framework, and definition of terms. The bases and boundaries of the study were established through assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. Finally, the chapter concluded with description of significant changes that may result from my study, including positive social changes.

Chapter 2 contains a detailed explanation of the conceptual framework involving three approaches to decision processes and a discussion about the history of faculty participation in governance of higher education. The chapter then explains policy and governance issues affecting CCCs and concludes with an examination of methodologies used in the research literature.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

The purpose of my study was to understand how decision processes that combined the use of rational, organizational, or political decision models allowed members from four actor groups to implement California's shared governance education code. The four diverse actor groups are the board of trustees, administrators, academic senates, and faculty association of a chosen CCC district. I anticipated that these actors would use multiple and combined decision models in a synergistic manner toward implementation of the State's shared governance mandate. In my study, the relevant shared governance mandate sections deal with institutional planning and budgeting processes.

To establish the relevance of the problem, I used literature in social behavioral science (Neustadt, 1990; Schein, 2004; Simon, 1991) and Allison and Zelikow's (1999) conceptualization of decision processes involving the three decision models. Allison and Zelikow proposed that effective decision processes could be achieved when government leaders integrate and apply all three decision models, resulting in successful delivery of the targeted public policy outcome. In my study, the public policy outcome was the successful implementation of shared governance mandate.

The literature review begins with coverage of conceptual framework involving three approaches to the decision processes, continues with historic descriptions of faculty participation in governance of higher education and the hierarchical structure of boards of



trustees during the early development of CCC. The review follows with descriptions of policy and governance issues relating to the California's Master Plan for Higher Education, the funding of community colleges under Proposition 13, and the shared governance mandate under AB 1725. The review also supports my choice to use four groups of actors that are boards of trustees, administrative, academic senates, and faculty associations. The review concludes with a description of quantitative and qualitative methodologies found in the research literature.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

In conducting my literature search, I used the following search databases: Academic Search Premier, Academic Search Complete, Education Research Complete, Educational Resource Information Center, ProQuest Dissertation, EbscoHost, and SocINDEX. I used the following key search terms and their combinations: community college, shared governance, faculty participation, academic senate, master plan for higher education, AB 1725, Proposition 13, budget crisis in higher education, student outcome at community colleges, Allison and Zelikow's (1999), qualitative methods, and narrative approaches. During the search process, I used the listed search terms in each of the databases in order to identify germane literature.

My search protocol and use of scholar publications and peer-reviewed journals provided a rigorous foundation to my study. Additionally, in order to gain increased relevance and accuracy to my study, I added current professional publications from the

following associations: AAUP, ASCCC, CCLC, Community College Weekly Publications, and National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education.

I also drew from personal perspectives for limited areas of the literature review where clarity was needed. My work experience that directly related to my study justified providing personal perspectives. I have 25 years of full-time employment as an associate professor at a CCC district. I am also a long-term member of the executive committee of my local academic senate and the state level ASCCC. As an active member of both groups, I directly observed and experienced the decision processes that take place among boards of trustees, administrators, academic senates, and faculty associations concerning issues related to the implementation of shared governance mandate.

### **Support for the Conceptual Framework**

A conceptual framework is essential to conducting meaningful research, especially when it comes to interpreting qualitative data (Kilbourn, 2006). A conceptual framework is used to guide “what is taken to be data and what data are selected for interpretation” (para 1). Data interpretations are also filtered through a conceptual framework or lens thereby giving the researcher an understanding of reality.

### **Single and Multiple Decision Processes**

I reviewed Allison and Zelikow's (1999) rational, organizational, and political decision models separately and described in detail their characteristic processes, uses, and effects on institutional outcomes. I then reviewed the literature for applications of multiple decision models. I was especially interested in multiple decision processes that

were more than additive in effect, which I termed "synergism of actions." I was interested in the use of single or multiple decision processes among diverse actors towards a focused goal, which I termed "unity of effort."

**Decision process based on each of the three decision models.** The relevant three decision models are the utility maximizing theory, the organizational behavior theory, and the political decision-making model, which are introduced below.

*Utility maximizing theory (UMT).* The first decision process was the application of decision model based on the UMT. UMT was developed through the help of Radnitzky and Bernholz (1987) and by Simon (1991). Under this theory, an actor chooses decisions and action in response to strategic threats and opportunities that are directed at the institution (Fedderson, 2004; Gilboa, 2009). The core concepts of the model are that various goals are considered in the decision process and that a rational actor will explore all of the alternatives and select the one that provides the highest payoff (Vieth, 2007, p. 25).

In response to strategic threats and opportunities, the decision process involved four steps as means for making the final decision (Friedrichs & Karl-Dieter, 2002). For illustration purpose, each step was accompanied with an example from the viewpoint of a member from a board of trustees: a) A strategic goal is specified, as for example, to implement institutional planning and budgeting according to the shared governance mandate. b) Two or more alternatives are generated, as for example, one alternative is to limit faculty participation in governance matters to 25% of the budget and another

alternative is to set the limit at 50%. c) Consequences for each alternative are analyzed by specifying all possible payoffs and tradeoffs, as for example, one payoff is assurance of budget stability, but one tradeoff is loss of faculty support. 4) The last step is to decide on the alternative that is perceived to offer the highest utility value to the institution, as for example, choose an institutional planning and budgeting processes that makes 50% of the budget negotiable.

Following the ideas of UMT, various authors have used the rational actor model (RAM) to study variety of research questions that emerged out of various issues and geographic centers (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). For example, regarding research about rational “preference reversals,” Sher and McKenzie (2014) conducted an experiment with students at the University of California San Diego in which “options-as-information” model considered a hypothetical rational actor with limited knowledge about the market distribution of a stimulus attribute (p. 1127). Next, regarding research about behavioral economics, Kaufmann (2013) studied decision processes within an academic department of a state level university, in which he questioned the idea that people make rational decisions and attacked the notion that rational actor preferences are independent of those of others (p. 23). Finally, regarding research about national voter turnout, Minozzi (2013) explored “endogenous beliefs model,” in which players form beliefs that maximize a utility function that represents preferences (p. 566).

Thus, under RAM, the actor’s behavior was described as decision and action that are purposively chosen by the decision maker, who claims to be completely informed and

to have made the decision based on value maximization (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, p.379). Unfortunately, when decision process is solely based on RAM, such process may not produce the preferred institutional outcome, because the process fails to account for existing organizational and political considerations (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). In other words, the effectiveness of the decision process based solely on RAM is somewhat limited because the process fails to incorporate existing structural and procedural requirements of the organization and the existing power structure and negotiating requirements of the political process. Vieth (2007) suggested that each decision model explores decision making from a different frame of reference and that all three lenses together better explain the effectiveness of a decision, so as to appeal to and to gain the cooperation of actor groups with diverse backgrounds and interests. Next, I reviewed decision process that was based on use of the organizational behavior theory and speculated its effect on the implementation of the shared governance mandate.

*Organizational behavior theory (OBT).* The second decision process was the application of decision model based on the OBT. OBT was developed through the help of Argyris and Schon (1978) and Schein (2004). An organization is defined to be a “group of individual members assembled in regular ways and provided with established structures and procedures to achieve an objective” (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991, p. 41). Furthermore, OBT emphasizes the “distinctive logic, capacities, culture, and procedures of the organizations” (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, p. 5). For example, relative to the distinctive culture, the favored resolution practice of the faculty group is through

consensus building of the collegial model (Minor & Tierney, 2005). Relative to the distinctive procedures, the “existing organizational structures, procedure, and repertoires” result in producing regular and predictable patterns of decision-making behavior, a favored practice of administration (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, p. 6). Thus, the prominent feature of the OBT is that much of the operation is culture and program driven (Miller & Miles, 2008) and that most of the operational tasks are decided through “preestablished routines” (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, p. 168). Under OBT, the decisions and actions of government officials, such as behaviors of the board of trustees and the academic senates, are characterized as outputs of organizational process (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, p.379). As such, the decisions and actions were those that have often been previously made and taken. Under this theory, Allison and Zelikow (1999) refer to the decision process as based on organizational behavior model (OBM), which will be detailed below.

The decision processes and attending actions, of the four groups of actors, can also take into consideration the following three possible factors that serve as sources to the organizational output: a) The first factor is objectives. Each operational objective is described as a set of targets and constraints, such as the mandated provisions under AB 1725, which prescribes the expected performance of a given task, and therefore the objective serves to identify the organizational output (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). b) The second factor is standard operating procedures (SOP). The SOPs of the organization give assurances of providing reliable performance of the critical tasks and of meeting compliance with the stated targets and constraints (Scott, 2008). SOPs are thought to

assure the performance of the preferred institutional outcome, which in the case of my study was to assure the implementation of the shared governance. Thus, the decision process in this instance was determined mainly by organizational routines and not by the purposive and chosen decisions made by leaders. That is to say, a substantial gap separated what leaders choose, based on UMT, and what organizations dictate through their outputs based on the OBT. c) The third factor is organizational learning and change. Major threats and opportunities can instigate organizational learning and change (Simon, 1991).

Examples of situations in which changes in the organization are likely to occur include prolonged budgetary famine, such as California's current financial crisis, and dramatic performance failures, such as California's persistent poor student performance and success issues. In both examples, the mission and operational objectives are redefined creating over time a new organizational culture (Bellot, 2011). The new culture then serves as the source for the new organizational output, and the new culture serves as a basis for future decision process and actions (Tierney, 2008). In my work experience, I found that California's prolonged budgetary famine has changed the culture of the board of trustees towards a more conservative fiscal policy.

Following the ideas of OBT, various authors have used the OBM to study variety of research questions that emerge out of various issues and geographic centers (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). For example, regarding research about national level voter mobilization, Burch (2009) studied the efforts of county party headquarters and got a sense of the

efficacy of standard operating procedures of organizations that engage in voter mobilization efforts (p. 2). Next, regarding research about part-time faculty members, Schmidt (2013) studied 100 state level universities and found that two thirds of the universities have procedures in place, in which the academic senates were off-limits to adjunct instructors with less than half the workload of a full-time faculty member (para. 2). Finally, regarding research about shared governance at British universities, Shattock (2013) found a need for governing councils and academic senates to work as partners. Participatory governance is best conducted through a stable organizational structure with clear representative channels for consultation and the communication of views (p. 224).

Thus, under OBM, decisions and actions of government leaders are characterized as outputs of the organizational structure and procedures. As such, the decision process is it has often been previously made and taken or it relates to organizational learning and change. However, when the decision process is solely based on OBM, the process is not likely to produce the preferred institutional outcome, because the process may fail to consider existing rational and political considerations (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). In other words, the effectiveness of decision process based on OBM is somewhat limited, because the process failed to incorporate the existing 4-step rational analysis requirement of the utility maximizing process and the existing power structure and negotiating requirement of the political process. Again, Vieth (2007) suggested that multiple lenses together may better explain the effectiveness of decision processes. Next, I examined decision process that is based on a political decision-making model.



*Political decision-making model (PDMM)*. The third decision process is based on the PDMM, which was developed through the help of Neustadt and May (1986) and Neustadt (1990). Under this model, the decisions and actions of the organization are political resultants (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, p. 294): a) As to the political component, participating actors compete for power within an established decision-making channel of the organization. As means for strengthening political power, actors form coalitions to influence and produce the desired institutional outcome (Kater & Levin, 2005). In my experience, collaborations take place between the academic senates and the faculty association. b) As to the resultant component, decisions and actions result from “compromise, conflict, and confusion of players with diverse interests and unequal influence” (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, p. 294).

I noticed conflicting relationships, which existed among trustees and between trustees and other groups of actors within the district. These political actors may be focused on diverse and competing political issues instead of on a single strategic issue that is commonly associated with RAM or OBM (Kater & Levin, 2005). Thus, there are many competing players belonging to diverse groups in the PDMM, and they bargain and compromise among themselves in an effort to influence institutional outcomes.

Following the ideas of PDMM, various authors have adopted the governmental politics model (GPM) to study variety of research questions that emerged out of various issues and geographic centers (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). For example, regarding research about international development of poverty reduction, Hickey (2012) found that

interventions targeting directly at poor groups can be politically sustainable (p. 1232) and that there is growing awareness within mainstream development that politics, and not just institutions, matter for development of pro-poor policies (p. 1244). In addition, regarding research question about parliamentary systems of government, Brummer (2012) examined the scope of Allison and Zelikow's (1999) GPM within the parliamentary systems and argued that the system features bargaining processes among governmental actors, including the formation of coalition governments and extensive use of "pulling and hauling" among ministers (p. 1).

Allison and Zelikow's (1999) GPM is frequently applied as framework in foreign policy analysis, but the model has broader appeal. There are certain characteristics of decision processes practiced by actors at a CCC district that show an "emergence of competing policy preferences" between members of the board of trustees and the academic senates and "the ensuing bargaining processes" between them (Brummer, 2012, p. 8). Thus, the explanatory power of GPM may be used with respect to understanding decision processes at a CCC district.

Under GPM, decisions and actions of government leaders are characterized as results of political process. As such, the decision process is based on existing power structure and negotiating characteristics of politics. However, when the decision process is solely based on GPM, such process may not produce the preferred institutional outcome, because the process often fails to consider existing rational and organizational considerations (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). In other words, the effectiveness of decision

process based solely on the GPM is limited because the process fails to incorporate the 4-step rational analysis requirement of the utility maximizing process and fails to use the structural and procedural requirements of the organizational process. Once again, as suggested by Vieth (2007), all three lenses or decisions models together may better explain the effectiveness of decision processes and their outcomes.

**Decision processes based on multiple decision models.** The combined approach suggests that leaders commonly apply multiple decision models to varying extents and degrees, but that the preferred decision process combines all three decision models in such a way as to produce a synergism of actions that achieves the targeted institutional outcome. In my study, effective decision processes were based on an integrated application of three decision models. My study drew on concepts developed by Allison and Zelikow (1999), who introduced three widely used decision models, which can be seamlessly applied as complements to each other. When all three models are integrated and applied in a given decision process, Allison and Zelikow (1999) postulated that the combined models tend to produce synergisms and are prone to result in implementation of the preferred institutional outcome. In my study, the preferred institutional outcome was the successful implementation of the shared governance mandate. Using “multiple, overlapping, competing conceptual models are the best” for understanding the effectiveness of decision processes (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, p. 401). In my study, the application of all three decision models, by each of the diverse groups of actors, served to filter out conflicting causal factors that are associated with each of the three decision

models (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). The resultant synergisms may produce a common institutional outcome that is agreeable to all competing groups of actors.

### **Literature Gap on Combined and Level of Use**

Other researchers have used Allison and Zelikow's (1999) decision models as their conceptual frameworks. One researcher used their decision models to study the interaction among competing policymakers in the New York City school system (Guerriero, 2000). Another researcher used their models and applied them to institutions of higher education and to the issue of shared governance (Paron, 2000). However, in both cases, the conceptual frameworks of these researchers were limited to studying decision processes based on individual decision models. These studies were not designed to confirm Allison and Zelikow's (1999) supposition that decision processes based on combining rational, organizational, and political decision models would produce preferred institutional outcomes.

Whereas Allison and Zelikow's (1999) concept of combining all three decision models are frequently used to explain successes in the U.S. foreign affairs, Vieth (2007), for his part, applied their concepts to explain successes in the divergent and complicated field of higher education. He showed the applicability of all three decision models goes beyond explaining national and international issues. Vieth explored the decision processes that went into developing a partnership among three California universities. The need for more and better-trained educational leaders in California schools prompted the creation of a unique partnership between two state universities and one university.

Universities form agreements so they can better serve students in higher education and because one university may not have the faculty members and range of specialization required to offer a complete program of study. Within the universities' diversity of background and needs, all three decision models helped to explain the complicated interactions and development of the three-way partnership.

Thus, by understanding the workings of all three models, participants may understand decisions made in the past and anticipate decisions in the future (Vieth, 2007). In other words, decision processes are worth studying to determine how and why organizations struggle with outcomes. The struggle may be due to participants who ignore or misapply one or more of the three decision models and, therefore, are unable to create synergism of actions among participants to achieve optimal organizational outcomes in a collaborative manner. With such knowledge of the how's and why's, organizations are better equipped to conduct effective decisions in the future. For all of the reasons given above, my study was intended to fill an important gap in the literature, in which Allison and Zelikow's (1999) three-model concept has never been adopted to explain failures and successes in the decision processes applied at the CCC district.

### **History: Governance Over California Community Colleges**

Understanding the history of CCC faculty participation in governance is critical to understanding successful decision processes. In addition, there needs to be an understanding of the criticisms that power sharing creates, especially with the board of

trustees. Finally, understanding the developmental history of academic governing boards may explain their resistance to change.

### **Faculty Participation in Governance**

The literature review of the history of faculty participation in governance showed that its inclusion into my study was essential to the understanding and development of the research problem and purpose of the study. Faculty governance over higher education started in northern France about eight centuries ago, and its original intent was to provide and maintain academic professionalism. Furthermore, during the medieval period, it is recorded that faculties were self-governing in the operation of their universities and were not simply participating in governance (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Thus, the continuing and passionate demand for shared governance by faculty groups at all levels of higher education is rooted in the long and deep history of faculty participation in governance of institutions of higher education.

**Its development in America.** However, in the United States, during the first half of 1800s, governance structure changed in the universities and colleges, at which time institutional planning and budgetary policies were being influenced by business organizations and by elected officials (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Such changes in governance were generally accepted during that time because faculty members comfortably relied on the lay trustees to generate the needed financial resources. Consequently, in the years that followed, faculty members lost influence over the universities and they gradually lost dominance over the governance of higher education

(Cohen & Brawer, 2008). However, faculty members reasserted participatory governance during the early years of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*Early 1900s.* During the first 25 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, James McKeen Cattell, a Columbia University scholar, began a movement to reestablish faculty governance in higher education (Cohen & Kisker, 2009). Through sustained effort by Cattell and others, faculty members began to exert their influence over institutions of higher education again. For example, in 1915, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) was founded, and its active and consistent effort have since then fueled the progress toward shared governance. Thus, the resuscitating efforts by Cattell and by AAUP helped to fuel, in later years, shared governance legislations in California, such as the Donahoe Higher Education Act of 1960 (a.k.a., the Master Plan) and Higher Education Act of 1988 (AB 1725).

Conversely, Cohen and Brawer (2008) reported an increased centralization and decreased faculty role in shared governance of U.S. higher education during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. During this period, the authors explained that a centralized structure in higher education was needed to accommodate the growth in student enrollment and to support the development of specialized programs. Faculty members organized into academic departments while full time administrators, including deans and staff, expanded to administer the running of the institution (Cohen & Kisker, 2009). Notwithstanding loss of faculty dominance, there remained a continuing role for faculties in governance as authority for their respective specializations. Additionally, faculty members maintained

increasing control over academic affairs, but they did not have influence over the broader administrative areas of institutional planning and budgeting processes, which were important problem areas of my study.

*1940s through 1960s.* During 1940s through 1960s, AAUP leaders disseminated a formal statement within the community of higher education that faculties have the legitimate right to be the major participants in the governance of universities and colleges (Townsend & Twombly, 2007). The AAUP articulated five principles on faculty participatory governance: That faculties be responsibility for educational policies; that they be responsibility over academic personnel matters; that they participate in hiring administrative personnel; that they be consulted on matters relating to institutional planning and budgeting; and that they, through the formally organized academic senates, conduct shared governance (Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, 2007). The intent of disseminating and promoting such policy statements was to firmly establish and maintain faculty participation in the governance process, and much of those early policy statements were incorporated into CCC shared governance legislations.

*Critic of shared governance.* At the same time, continuing arguments were made that shared governance creates adversarial relationships and hardens groups among trustees, faculties, administrators, and staff, instead of uniting them (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Other critics have added that shared governance is too slow in making quick decisions when needed and that it is divisive among leaders, such that institutional planning and budgeting are hindered and made inconsistent. In essence, not only did



shared governance fail to produce synergism of actions, but also hindered the necessary collaboration required for unity of effort. Thus, through such critics, the early boards of trustees at many of the CCC districts resisted implementing the state's shared governance mandate, in particular the provision that calls for institutional planning and budgeting processes. Nonetheless, for California's academic senates, the deep and long history of faculty governance in higher education served as a bulwark against critic of shared governance.

### **Development of California Junior Colleges and Boards of Trustees**

**Concept of junior college.** The review of literature pertaining to the history of CCCs and to the early structure and practice of boards of trustees was also foundational to the development of the research problem and purpose of the study. It is foundational because this part of the history described the decision processes that were practiced by the early boards of trustees and administrators, who together unilaterally governed California's junior colleges, outside the historically traditional shared governance with faculty.

The concept of junior college had its beginning in the Northeastern and Midwestern United States in the 1890s; and since then, it expanded to other parts of the country, arriving in California during the first decade of twentieth century (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). In California, as an extension of high schools, the idea of junior college began its formation and expansion during the early 1900s (Wagoner, 2008). The

formation and expansion of California's community colleges started with the passage of the Ballard Act of 1907, as is described below.

**Ballard Act of 1907.** In 1907, California's Ballard Act, also referred to as the Caminetti Law, was passed, and it authorized high schools to offer post-secondary courses that led to college degrees (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). These colleges were structural extensions of the secondary education system, and they were located on high school premises. The Act of 1907 created California's junior colleges as part of the kindergarten through grade 14 (K-14) educational systems (Wagoner, 2008).

Accordingly, the decision processes pertaining to resources and programs of the newly formed colleges operated wholly within the secondary educational system, completely outside the shared governance scheme.

***Growth in number of colleges.*** In 1910, Fresno was the first community in California to offer post high school courses within its school district (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2012). By 1917, fifteen additional junior colleges were created, and by 1922, there were twenty-six more junior colleges in California. By 1930, the California junior colleges system had expanded to one fifth of the nation's junior colleges and to one third of California's college students (Community College League of California, 2012). However, the most rapid growth period occurred during the years between 1965 and 1975 (Townsend & Twombly, 2007), at which time these colleges were referred to as community colleges. Owing to the Ballard Act of 1917, today, the CCC system is the largest higher education system in the nation, with 2.1

million students attending 112 community colleges within the 72 community college districts (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2012). But, the Ballard Act failed to provide faculty the needed shared governance system, which is explained in the paragraphs to follow.

In California, these new colleges expanded into rural communities, where students could live at home while they attended the local community colleges (Townsend & Twombly, 2007). These colleges answered the need for the state to develop a skilled workforce capable of operating the rapidly advancing technology (Lei, 2008). Today, in addition to providing job and career related skills, CCCs focus on general education programs that lead to transfer to 4-year colleges, and they also provide basic or remedial courses, and even courses in lifetime learning (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). However, on matters dealing with program development and delivery that lead to transfer to a 4-year college, student performance and transfer success rate have been disappointments (Wilson, 2010). Poor student performance and success rate may have been due to absence of faculty participation in governance that existed during early stages of California's community college development, during which time top-down hierarchical system prevailed.

**Top-down hierarchical system.** Beginning in 1910 and into the 1950s, and prior to the 1960 Master Plan, California's community colleges were structurally linked to the K-12 public schools, as 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> grades. These early colleges were under the supervision of local boards of education, and they were administered under the top-down

hierarchical system (Cohen & Brawer, 2003), which typically administered K through 12 school grades. With their roots in the public-school system rather than in higher education, it was natural that these early CCC would operate under the existing structure of the local elementary and high school districts, where hierarchical system of governance and finance ruled (Brown & Niemi, 2007). Additionally, these institutions were operated by using part-time faculty who were drawn from secondary schools, along with a few post-secondary faculty who were present to assist (Townsend, & Twombly, 2007), but these early faculty members, out of fear, remained silent about issues pertaining to lack of participatory governance (Jenkins & Jenson, 2010). Thus, the early CCCs maintained many features that resembled top-down hierarchical system, in which faculty participation in governance was nonexistent.

*Boards of trustees: Rubber stamped administrative decisions.* With roots in the secondary school system, the early CCCs were administered mainly by former instructors who had become full-time administrators. Cohen and Brawer (2008) suggested that many of them were autocrats who had freed themselves from the control of their superiors. Administrative decisions, during the days under the secondary school system, have often gone unquestioned by governing boards. In other words, boards of trustees regularly approved administrative policies and decisions, making the administrators de facto decision makers (Potter & Phelan, 2008). Consequently, the boards ignored the need for any form of faculty participation in the governance of the institution. There was no need for a synergism of action such as for collaboration.

**Move to break away from K-14 structure.** During the 1961 session, the California legislature passed number of bills, which eliminated administrative structures that tied California's community colleges with high school and which required the existing colleges to transform themselves into independent community college districts (Townsend & Twombly, 2007). Still further, the most substantive change that affected the CCCs was the California Master Plan of 1960, which firmly established CCC as an integral member of the state's tripartite higher education system, along with the UC and CSU systems, so as to facilitate transfer of community college students into the universities' upper division course work (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Accordingly, the following sections of this paper will describe faculties' continuing struggle to achieve genuine participatory governance at each of the CCC districts. Faculties continued to struggle, in spite of legislative adoption of the Master Plan of 1960s through 1980s, and legislative enactment of the AB 1725 of 1988, which mandated adoption of shared governance at each of the 72 CCC districts.

### **Policy and Governance Issues**

#### **California's Master Plan: 1960s Through 1980s**

The literature review of California's Master Plan was relevant to the understanding and development of the research problem and purpose of the study. The Master Plan was relevant because it served as precursor to the enactment of CCC Reform Act, which mandated the local boards of trustees to apply decision processes that achieve shared governance for faculty groups via the academic senates. In particular, the CCC

Reform Act provided faculty the right to participate in the formation of policies pertaining to institutional plan and budget development for the college district.

**Mission of 1947 and obstacles.** The mission for the nation's community colleges began with the 1947 President's Commission on Higher Education, which proposed the development of an appropriate programs aimed at providing academic transfer through general education, and also at offering vocational and technical training, as well as developmental (remedial) programs (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). However, in California until the year 1960, community colleges were structurally linked to the hierarchical system of public secondary schools as 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> grades, so faculties were unable to participate in the governance of the institution (Brown & Niemi, 2007). Without active involvement in shared governance, faculties were inhibited in contributing to the healthy growth of educational programs, in particular to those that related to academic transfer of CCC students into universities.

**Donahoe Higher Education Act.** In order to encourage participatory governance, in 1960, California legislature enacted the Donahoe Higher Education Act, which became known as the California Master Plan (Levine, 2005; Twombly & Townsend, 2008). This legislation mandated the removal of all community colleges away from the K-14 structure, a structure that existed for more than 50 years. Furthermore, this Act transferred the CCCs into the state's tripartite higher education system, which included the UC and the CSU systems and which provided an existing structure and process for shared governance practices.

***Rationale for participatory governance.*** The California Master Plan encouraged participatory governance under the belief that active participation by faculties would provide needed expert information and support for development and delivery of key educational programs, a level of expertise that is lacking among trustees and administrators (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, 2013). The key educational programs are four in number: a) transfer education for students pursuing their first two years of undergraduate courses; b) career and technical education for those seeking opportunities to earn professional certificates, and associate degrees that qualify them to work in private and public sectors; c) developmental education for those needing basic education and study skills; and d) lifelong learning for citizens striving to maintain continuing education (Mellow & Heelan, 2014). Thus, under the Master Plan, an important reason for promoting participatory governance was to facilitate the successful articulation of transfer courses between CCC system and universities, so as to help increase the rate of student success towards achieving baccalaureate degree. Understanding the relationship between the use of common decision models and participatory governance is one goal of my study.

***Affordability and accessibility.*** In general, community colleges were created to keep the cost of education low while providing high quality educational programs. In California, the bases for its community colleges were the concepts of affordability and accessibility (Sandy, Gonzalez, & Hilmer, 2006). Callan (2009) stated that one primary goal of the Master Plan was “the commitment that every California high school graduate

who was able to benefit from college could attend a college or university” (p. 4). In order to promote the concepts of affordability and accessibility, for many years until 2008, residents of California were not charged tuition to attend community colleges.

Additionally, any person who is over the age of 18 or who has graduated from high school is eligible to attend its community college (California Community College Chancellor’s Office, 2012). Accordingly, through faculty participation in governance, the legislature intended that concepts of affordability and accessibility be preserved for students attending California’s community colleges. Governance decisions based on only affordability concerns suggest the sole use of a rational decision-making model.

**Review of the Master Plan.** In 1984, the California legislature created a Commission to review the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education. The Commission was asked to report on various aspects of the Plan, which included student access, student success, and matters relating to shared governance in higher education (Baldassarre, Bonner, Petek, & Shrestha, 2011). The Commission gave the legislature an unfavorable report on three aspects of the 1960 Master Plan.

***Student access: Failed.*** On matters relating to student access, the commission found that, between 1960 and 1980, the state had failed on its policy commitment to make higher education available to every Californian who qualified and wished to benefit from college. Furthermore, this commitment to access has been eroding steadily since the 1980s (Conner & Rabovksy, 2011), as is detailed in the following paragraphs. The findings of the commission provide reason for the need to understand the decision



processes being applied by policymakers at the CCC districts and the effects these decisions are having on shared governance outcomes that lead to student success.

***Student success: Failed.*** Regarding student success, student opportunity has declined substantially in California between 1960 and 1980. The consequences of diminished opportunity are shown in the declining educational achievements of certain demographic groups of the population (Jenkins, 2007; Museus & Quaye, 2009). For example, Californians of the age 25 to 35-year-old are 41st in the nation in the percentage with an associate degree, and 22nd in the percentage with a bachelor's degree. In contrast, California's older population of the age 65 years and above ranks eighth in the proportion that has attained an associate degree, and fifth in the percentage with a baccalaureate degree (Callan, 2009, p. 23). The Commission's finding of declining educational achievements, again, points to the need to understand the decision processes among district policymakers.

The commission's finding is supported by other studies. As indication showing drop in student performance, studies found that 64% of students attending California's community colleges needed at least one remedial course, while two-thirds of these students averaged one year or more of remedial course work (Melguizo, Hagedorn, & Cypers, 2008). Accordingly, because of problems relating to students' lack of academic preparation and as state funding continues to become less available, student retention and transfer issues challenged the Master Plan (Mellow & Heelan, 2014). For example, at CCCs, only 41 percent of students, from among those who seek to transfer to a four-year

institution, are successful, whereas for African Americans, only 34 percent succeed, and for Latinos, the figure is 31 percent (Martin & Meyer, 2010; Strayhorn, 2010). Thus, in terms of student success measurement, the Master Plan has failed on its expectations (Somerville, 2008). Findings of other studies, therefore, provided further need to understand the decision processes being applied by policymakers at the CCC districts, and the effects these decisions are having on shared governance and student success.

***Shared governance: Failed.*** The Commission for Review of Master Plan reported in the mid-1980s that sharing of governance by the boards of trustees with the faculty senates has been and continued to be “marginally true in the CCC” (Commission for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education, 1986, p. 20). Douglass (2012) suggested that faculty participation in governance needs to increase substantially at each of the CCC districts, so as to help resolve the following: In California, looking to year 2025, there will be one million fewer college graduates than are needed in the workforce. Through a shared governance perspective, this deficiency could be studied and ways could be found to increase college attendance rates, to increase transfer rates from community colleges to four-year universities, and to increase graduation rates from universities (Melguizo, Hagedorn, & Cypers, 2008). Thus, through the exercise of one or more decision models, the boards of trustees at each CCC district need to increase faculty participation in governance, so as to utilize faculties’ broad range of talent and to reverse the projected deficiency in college graduates. This participation falls under my synergism of actions term.

### **California's Proposition 13 of 1978**

Review of literature pertaining to California's Proposition 13 of 1978 was pertinent to the understanding and development of the research problem and purpose of the study. The Proposition was pertinent because it resulted in reduced funding for the CCC districts, and it changed the decision processes of the boards of trustees, who felt the pressure to make quick board decisions and to take unilateral actions, outside the shared governance mandate (McLendon, Hearn, & Mokher, 2009). The voter approved Proposition 13 of 1978 put major financial and political pressure on the state's community college system, all of which are described below.

**Birth of Proposition 13.** As recession reached national level during the early 1970s, along with huge spending to support the Vietnam War effort, fiscal and monetary limits were being debated at all levels of government. In California, during the 1970s, homeowners became very unhappy over property tax increases, including frustration with increases in price of gasoline, all of which initiated a well-organized taxpayer revolt (Masterson, 2008). By 1978, the revolt resulted in voter approval of Proposition 13, which gave homeowners relief over portion of their property tax payments. The Proposition placed limits on property taxes, and it shifted taxes from the local to the state government, resulting in reduced funding available for CCCs (Huyck, 2011). Thus, Proposition 13 made funding of public higher education more difficult, such as to bring about constraints on the resources and programs of the CCC system.

**Effects of Proposition 13.** Regardless of the effects of funding shifts between the state and local levels, the passage of Proposition 13 reduced net annual per student funding. Similarly, in the years that followed Proposition 13, state budgets were severely constrained due to the state having to absorb the increase in funding needed to operate the community colleges (Huyck, 2011). With the state now heavily burdened to fund the CCC system, the California Legislature and the Governor turned to making suggestions and decisions about specific programs and activities of the community colleges (Rivera, 2011). Proposition 13, consequently, brought about adverse effects on the state budget, on student funding, and on program developments throughout the CCC system.

***Public criticism of CCCs: Boards of trustees pressured.*** Additionally, editorial criticisms began to appear in the public media that the CCCs were offering frivolous courses and that the students were wasting time taking wrong courses and failing to achieve their educational goals, all at taxpayer expense (Leonhardt, 2010). With the state being responsible for funding, concerned state level leaders began looking deeper into community college programs and budget and expressing criticism over educational quality and accountability. The financial constraints of Proposition 13, while amidst a deep recession, adversely affected educational programs and destabilized college operation (Okpala, Hopson, & Okpala, 2011). Thus, bad publicity and pressure placed on public officials forced the state to lay off community college faculty, administrators, and staff. Those publicity and pressure adversely affected educational programs at each of the 72 CCC districts.

Continuing public criticisms served as mandate for the local boards of trustees at all 72 college districts to delete summer sessions and to reduce support services, resulting in disruption of the CCC mission that was long touted in the Master Plan. This harsh action taken by the local boards resulted in unsystematic layoffs and random-like elimination of courses and services (Porchea, Allen, Robbins, & Phelps, 2010). Political decisions inflicted damage upon the resources and programs of CCC districts, and these decisions were made outside of the shared governance structure and without faculty consultation and participation. Clearly, the sole application of the political decision model did not produce a synergism of actions.

**California's budget crisis.** Since approval of Proposition 13, the CCC system has been challenged with number of financial constraints and budget actions, in which the following serves as an example. The state enacted a budget cut amounting to \$313 million for academic year 2011-12 and made another cut amounting to \$102 million in January 2012 for CCCs. Each of the community college districts was thereafter informed on February 2012 that they would have an additional \$149 million mid-year cut. This means, the state has cut the community college budget by a total of \$564 million for the academic year 2011-12. This cut also means that, out of \$564 million, \$385 million is cut in the form of permanent workload reduction, meaning fewer classes will be offered and fewer students will be served (Community Colleges League of California, 2012). This example of state level CCC budget cuts illustrated major financial actions that were administered outside the State's shared governance mandate and that adversely affected

the programs and operations within the CCC system. Conversely, budgets for years 2013 and 2014 appeared less damaging to programs and operations within the CCC system, and therefore the budgets for those years seemingly generated less concern over shared governance.

*Beginning of CCC reform movement.* Passage of Proposition 13, along with resulting budget constraints, were triggering factors that initiated the CCC reform movement, in which legislators created the Commission for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education of 1987 and enacted the Community College Reform Act of 1988. Prior to the two major reforms, studies by the California Business Roundtable (1984) and the Little Hoover Commission (1985) were already in place to recommend changes in mission, governance, faculty status, and funding of the community colleges (Breneman, 2008). However, a more significant study was the report produced by the 1987 Commission, because it served as precursor to California's AB 1725 of 1988 (Chea, 2013). In the Master Plan report, the Commission stressed the need for the local boards to strengthen substantially the shared governance structure of the CCC districts, and for the boards to be accountable for the successful articulation of baccalaureate programs with the UC and CSU systems, all of which led to the enactment of AB 1725.

### **California's Assembly Bill 1725 of 1988**

The literature review of California's AB 1725 of 1988 was necessary because the law forced both the board and faculty to reexamine their decision processes, required developing collaborative shared governance structures, and facilitated implementing the

state mandate. AB 1725, commonly referred to as Shared Governance Legislation, was enacted by the California legislature in August 1988 and was signed into law by the governor the following month (Assembly Bill 1725, 1988).

**Assembly Bill 1725 defined.**

*Title 5: Shared governance mandate.* This legislation directed the State's Community College Board of Governors to develop regulations (Title 5, Division 6, Chapter 4, Subchapter 2, Article 2) that would mandate the local boards of trustees to consult collegially with faculty, via the academic senates (Cal. Code Regs. tit. 5, § 53200-53204). The Board of Governors, in its regulation, mandated that each of the 72 State's local boards of trustees shall consult collegially with their academic senates by either relying primarily on the senates' recommendation or by deciding on the basis of mutual agreement when meeting with the academic senates regarding issues of academic and professional matters. Thus, the specified sections of Title 5 of the shared governance mandate focused on giving faculty, via the academic senates, legal powers to participatory governance, while other sections of California Education Code provided other groups rights to shared governance, under terms consistent with their special needs.

*Academic and professional matters.* Title 5, Section 53200(c), specified academic and professional matters to include the following participatory rights: 1) curriculum, includes establishing prerequisites and placing courses within disciplines; 2) degree and certificate requirements; 3) grading policies; 4) educational program developments; 5) standards or polices regarding student preparation and success; 6)

district and college governance structures, as related to faculty roles; 7) faculty roles and involvement in accreditation processes, including self-study and reports; 8) policies for faculty professional development activities; 9) processes for program review; 10) processes for institutional planning and budget development; and 11) other academic and professional matters as mutually agreed upon between the governing board and the academic senate (Cal. Code Regs. tit. 5, § 53200-53204). Accordingly, my study focused on the right of faculty to be collegially consulted on issues relating to institutional planning and budgeting processes, an area of decision processes that were long held to be under the exclusive purview of the board of trustees and administrators of the CCC district.

*Institutional plan and budget processes.* The Board of Governors for CCC specified ten academic and professional areas in which local boards must confer collegially with academic senates in determining policies. The tenth item on this list is the legal right of academic senates to participate on resolving issues pertaining to institutional planning and budget processes. However, because there was a question about the authority of academic senates concerning matters relating to planning and budgeting, the state level ASCCC and CCLC met to resolve this question. Both organizations came to the agreement that the local academic senates' authority extended only to the development of planning and budget *processes* and not to the specifics of the plans and budgets themselves (Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, 2007). As a result of this agreement regarding the local senates' authority on the development of



planning and budgeting processes, clarity was gained on what is no longer a contentious shared governance issue between trustees and faculties.

**Early actions of local boards of trustees.** The original language, which was written into AB 1725 prior to its adoption, called for the elimination of the local boards of trustees at each of the college district. Under such language, the ultimate authority for the CCCs would be the State level Community College Board of Governors, such as is the case of the system at the UC and the CSU. However, the final adopted version of AB 1725 did not eliminate the local boards of trustees and did not create a statewide system for all of the state's community college districts. The original proposal to eliminate the local boards for all of the CCCs was rejected because of intense opposition from all of the local boards of trustees against such approach. With success, the same group of local boards then demanded the removal of the shared governance feature of the legislation, arguing that decision to keep the local boards was the same as acknowledging that the boards of trustees are to remain as the sole policy making body (Potter, & Phelan, 2008). However, on the demand to remove shared governance, the boards were not able to delete or change that part of the legislation.

In terms of the final product, Title 5 of AB 1725 required all CCC districts to immediately establish local board policies that acknowledge in writing all eleven provisions of the shared governance mandate (Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, 2007). With the establishment of the broad board policy, this set the stage for conducting decision processes among four groups of actors and to begin the

process of empowering academic senates to actively participate in the governance of the CCC districts.

**Rights of other constituencies preserved.** Earlier, it was pointed out that my study is limited to dealing with sections 53200-53204 of Title 5 of the California Education Code, in which the legislature specifically addressed educational issues regarding faculty rights and mandated the local boards of trustees to establish and implement shared governance policies with the academic senates. Concurrently, there are other sections of the education code that address the right to participate by other groups who represent administrators, staff members, unions, students, and the public.

***Faculty: Accorded greater weight.*** Relative to the rights of other participants in shared governance, the California legislature determined that the advice and judgment of the academic senates are given greater weight than the advice and judgment of other relevant groups in connection with the shared governance mandate. However, there are situations where laws on collective bargaining found in California's Government Code Section 3540 prevail over the shared governance mandate (see section, Faculty Collective Bargaining Unit: Union rights prevail over shared governance). Nonetheless, the intent of the shared governance regulations (sections 53200-53204) is to ensure that, while other participants should have the opportunity to participate, the State Board of Governors gives greater weight to academic senates on all issues relative to academic and professional matters, which include all eleven provisions mentioned in Sections 53200 (Smith, 2012). The intent of section 53200-53204 of Title 5, which grants faculty greater

weight, demonstrated that priority is placed on education and that the academic senates play a key role in that process.

**Continuing debate over shared governance.** Since 1988 when the shared governance mandate was adopted, there are still arguments for and against shared governance (Cohen, & Brawer, 2008). It is expected that proper implementation of the mandate will face continuing difficulties at some college districts. Therefore, in order to explain such difficulties, there was need to understand the decision processes that are applied by four groups of local leaders of the CCCs at the district level.

*Arguments against shared governance.* In response to powers exercised by the CCC Board of Governors, some state-level organizations, including the CCLC (association representing all trustees and administrators of 72 CCC districts), expressed concern that the Board of Governors went beyond the mandate of AB 1725 and diminished the decision-making authority of the local governing boards (Potter, & Phelan, 2008). In particular, the concern focused on Title 5 provision that deals with institutional planning and budgeting processes, both of which have always been under the exclusive purview of the boards of trustees and administrators. Consequently, at many of the state's community college districts, delays were extended beyond the start date regarding the extent of authority academic senates may assume over issues concerning institutional planning and budgeting process (Cohen, & Brawer, 2008). Meanwhile, all 72 CCC districts have addressed at least the minimum requirement of the state mandate,

which is the establishment of basic board policy, evidenced in writing, that sets up the required shared governance structure and processes with the academic senates.

***Arguments for shared governance.*** Conversely, proponents of AB 1725 reminded critics that shared governance process is necessary to the success of California's higher education system. Proponents relied on proclamation given in the Nation's 1947 Mission Statement and on need for shared governance mentioned number of times in California's Master Plan from the 1960s through the 1980s. Shared governance processes are necessary because they provide needed expertise and analytical skills that are brought forth by participating faculty groups who contribute to solving complex educational issues (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, 2013). Additionally, shared governance processes are necessary because a collaborative form of governance, through effective decision processes applied by four group of competing actors, assures the best means by which to successfully develop and deliver appropriate educational programs and services to meet student and institutional needs at each of the CCC districts (Crellin, 2010; Kezar & Lester, 2009). Thus, arguments for shared governance rest with availing faculty expertise and with assuring benefits attached to collaborative form of governance, all of which contribute toward helping to resolve California's budget and student crises.

**Sanctions to insure compliance.** To insure compliance with AB 1725 mandate, regulation provided the state of California with two possible sanctions: the first is denial of funding and the second is a court order. Relative to funding, the California education

code mandates that the Board of Governors establish minimum conditions entitling districts to receive state aid (Cal. Edu. Code § 70901). The Board can withhold funding from any district that does not meet these conditions. One of these minimum conditions is for local boards of trustees to adopt written board policy and procedure on shared governance, consistent with sections 53200 thru 53204 of the education code. Therefore, one of the minimum conditions that districts must meet to receive state aid is to assure the rights of academic senates to assume primary responsibility for making recommendations concerning issues relative to academic and professional matters. The other condition is to assure the right to enter into mutual agreement between the board of trustees and the academic senates relative to academic and professional matters.

Relative to court order, if the local academic senates, including the district administrators and boards, know that they have exhausted all efforts to work cooperatively and they believe the regulations are being ignored, then the following steps are recommended. Firstly, the respective representative group, which is the statewide ASCCC for the senate or the CCLC for the administrator and board, should be contacted for assistance. Secondly, the local academic senates and boards may mutually request readily available technical assistance through the process established jointly by the ASCCC and the CCLC. Thirdly, if the local academic senates believe that there is clear noncompliance, they may file a complaint with the Legal Affairs Division of the CCCCCO. Finally, the local senates may pursue remedies with the state Attorney General or in court (Kaplan & Lee, 2007). Thus, the state of California is ultimately assured of

compliance with shared governance mandate through either denial of funding or court order.

**Lingering uncertainties over implementation process.** Since 1988, colleges and districts have responded in different ways to AB 1725 and to attendant regulations specified by the Board of Governors. For example, government studies found that the adopted district policies and procedures often mirrored the shared governance structures and practices that are rooted in the history and culture of each college district (Callan, 2009). In other words, some colleges and districts have developed and implemented effective models of participatory governance, while others have not. Other studies revealed that implementing the mandate through the CCC system is a complex process and assessing the effectiveness of that law is equally complicated (Peters, 2007). Accordingly, findings of the government and other studies justified the need to explore the role of the decision processes being applied by each group of competing local leaders and to assess the resulting institutional outcome that may or may not be consistent with the intent of the shared governance mandate.

***Recent cases point to decision process as a problem source.*** Notwithstanding availability of tools to insure implementation of shared governance, such as the trustee handbook, the how-to-do-it workshop, and the sanctions under the Education Code and the Legal Affairs Division, some CCC districts are still having difficulty fully executing the shared governance mandate (Head, & Johnson, 2011). An example of college district having such difficulty was the case of CCSF during 2012, in which an accreditation team

found the San Francisco college to have failed to implement the shared governance mandate (Beno, 2011; Bradley, 2012). The need to insure sustainable implementation of shared governance, especially in the mandated area of institutional planning and budgeting processes, has become critical due to the California's persistent budget crisis and the student outcome crisis, both of which were described earlier. Consequently, due to findings of implementation difficulties at some college districts and because of need to ameliorate the budget and student crises through participatory governance, my study examined the decision processes that are applied by four groups of actors, all of whom will be reviewed in the following sections.

#### **Four Actor Groups Involved in Decision Processes**

In my study, four groups of local actors are involved with the decision processes affecting the shared governance mandate, with the two primary actors being the boards of trustees and the academic senates, and the two closely related secondary actors being the administrators and the faculty associations. As I explained earlier, the purpose of my study was to understand the decision process that relate to sections 53200-53204 of Title 5 of the California Education Code, in which the legislature mandated the boards of trustees to accord faculty the right to participatory governance. The divergent interest and rights of other groups, such as students, to shared governance are detailed in other sections of the education code; and therefore, sections 53200-53204 are not relevant to their participatory interest.

## **Boards of Trustees**

The literature review of the board of trustees of the local community college districts was critical to the understanding and development of the research problem and purpose of the study. The review of the trustees was critical because they are the final policy making authority for the district and because, through the decision process, they affect how faculty is brought into participatory governance (Hagedorn & VanSlette, 2009). Though history on boards of trustees was described earlier, this section will further explore the functions of boards, the guidelines boards are provided per shared governance, and leadership tips in their dealings with the academic senates that are helpful to advance successful implementation of shared governance.

**Functions of board of trustees.** The primary function of all boards of trustees, associated with California's 72 community college districts, is to develop and adopt broad policies of substantive and procedural nature (Community College League of California, 2012). Initially, a board of trustees must enact policies that delegate authority to the chief executive officers (CEOs), the leader of the administrator actor group, to operate the districts. The CEOs, who are chancellors over multiple college districts or presidents over single college districts, are charged with the administrative responsibility for developing, updating, and making implementation ready the board adopted policies, other than policies that directly affect faculty and classified employees (Smith, 2012). For example, if boards develop broad policy statements, which encourage faculty participation in the governance over institutional planning and budgeting processes, then



the chancellors are expected to create detailed procedures that make it possible for faculties to implement these policies. Board policies represent the group decision of the governing board, and administrative procedures provide the detailed methods associated with implementing the board policies (Smith, 2012). Furthermore, the quality of board policies is made better through collective voice of both the boards and the participating academic senates, and the associated procedures are made more effective through collaborative efforts of both administrators and senates (Western Association of Schools and Colleges [WASC], 2009). Thus, the shared governance work of the board of trustees was made more effective and efficient, through willing participation by administrators and active participation by faculty members.

**Shared governance guidance.** At each of the CCC districts, as means to assist newly elected trustees with their policy forming responsibilities, the CCLC published the Trustee Handbook, which provides detailed information concerning responsibilities and duties of the board as a whole and of each trustee (Community College League of California, 2012). The following list describes duties of the trustees including examples that relate to shared governance: a) The board establishes the overall direction and standards for the college's educational programs and services, including programs and services that relate to California's Master Plan; b) ensures that the district is in compliance with the law, such as with the Title 5, Section 53200; c) ensures that resources are wisely and prudently used, such as to fully tap faculty knowledge and skills via participatory governance; d) defines clear expectations for college staff, such as to

monitor administrative execution of board's shared governance policy; and e) establishes standards for board operations and trustee involvement, such as to apply appropriate decision processes that supports shared governance mandate (p. 74). Faculty participation in governance at the district level, therefore, was facilitated when trustees focused and applied sections of the Handbook that explain how to affect shared governance with the academic senates.

**Prescription for success.** With respect to the shared governance mandate, by which boards are required to collegially consult with faculties via the academic senates, the trustees are expected to behave collaboratively while conducting decision processes. Baldrige, Curtis, Ecker, and Riley (2000) prescribed the following shared governance formula for success when boards deal with faculties: First, boards “should seek to ask questions that create dialogue, and be open to listening more so than to telling.” Second, boards should “seek out expertise of faculty,” and direct that knowledge towards resolving educational issues. Third, boards should “seek ways to create buy-in and negotiate,” rather than seek to regulate (p. 141). Thus, when dealing with faculties, the boards routinely incorporated this shared governance formula into their decision processes in order to encourage and facilitate shared governance. Similarly, because the culture of creating consensus and negotiating is essentially political, academic senates regularly incorporated this political process into their decision processes in order to facilitate for itself participatory governance.

*Boards need to teach faculties value of political process.* The institution of higher education, including the CCC districts, is a politicized institution, wherein conflict situations that manifest between the boards and faculties are assumed to be normal (Jenkins & Jenson, 2010). Therefore, to manage effectively the CCC districts, the political model openly accepts conflict and deals with it through businesslike conflict resolution methods. For the academic senates, this conflict often needs to be resolved through bargaining, negotiating, and compromising, rather than through consensus building of the collegial model, which is the favored practice of the faculty groups (Twombly & Townsend, 2008). This political process and resolution method, which are popular with the boards of trustees, should affect the perception of what it takes to make shared governance work. The process and method should also encourage academic senates to reciprocate with negotiation and compromise postures (Jenkins & Jenson, 2010), as means for implementing shared governance, particularly over the difficult area relating to institutional planning and budgeting processes. At a time when community colleges faced great challenges from the external environment, such as California's unprecedented budget and student crises, faculties and boards collaborated and worked toward better student performance and success rate goals, while operating with limited resources.

### **College Administrators**

**Duties of administrators.** The review of literature about college administrators was important to the understanding and development of the research problem and

purpose of the study. The review of administrators was important because, through decision processes, administrators influence board decisions and they affect academic senates' demand for effective shared governance. Earlier, it was shown that the administrators of the local community colleges are the presidents in single college districts or are the chancellors in multi-college districts, who are in charge of the administrative functions of the institution. Regarding shared governance mandate, the responsibilities and duties of the district administrators, along with staff members and all classified employees, are to develop board approved policies into workable procedures, which then support and facilitate the participatory roles of the academic senates (Fleming, 2010). However, in some rare cases, the administrative arm has failed to satisfy the mandate, due to its disconnect with the board or to its unwillingness to fully support and facilitate shared governance with faculty members (Miller & Miles, 2008), as was suggested in the case of SFCC in 2012. Consequently, my study included observing how administrators supported and facilitated board policies on shared governance with academic senates and examining the administrators' decision processes.

**Strength of bureaucratic structure.** The administrative component of the institutions of higher education, including the CCC system, is characterized as functioning efficiently and effectively through its bureaucratic structure. The salient feature of the bureaucratic structure is that the organization operates through many rules and regulations; that is, much of the policies and procedures are executed through standard operating procedures (SOP) (Zusman, 2005). The library regulations and

budgetary guidelines serve as example of standard operating procedures that hold the CCC system together. Thus, given the board approved policies on shared governance, the administrators' bureaucratic structure and processes are designed to support and sustain the participatory governance role of the academic senates.

**Administrators' duty: Implement board policies.** However, reviews of the early literature written shortly after the 1988 mandate indicated that some of the strongest criticism of shared governance in higher education came from administrators (Guffey, Rampp, & Masters, 1999; Miller & Miles, 2008). For example, some have implied that shared governance is tedious, time consuming, and wasteful. Other later studies suggested that many community college administrators were uncertain about to what extent they should actively embrace and support participatory governance (Eddy & Van Der Linden, 2006). Fleming (2010) and Del Favero and Bray (2005) wrote that, as they are the administrative arm of the board of trustees and are duty bound to fully execute the board approved policies, it is necessary that administrators develop trust and working relationships with the academic senates concerning faculty participation in shared governance.

### **Faculty and Academic Senates**

Along with the boards of trustees, the literature review of faculties and the academic senates of the CCC districts were also critical to the understanding and development of the research problem and purpose of the study. This review was critical because faculty members are direct beneficiaries of the shared governance mandate and

because how senates applied decision processes influenced the outcome of participatory governance, which ultimately is designed to benefit the students and the community (Burke, 2010). Accordingly, review of literature examined progressive status of faculty employed within the CCC system, examined faculties' need for pre-service and developmental training per shared governance, examined faculty leadership being provided by state level ASCCC, and examined political nature of institutional planning and budgeting processes.

**Across the nation.** Review of the literature projected contrasting images of community college faculties, who are employed across the nation as compared to those working in California (Kim, Twombly, & Wolf-Wendel, 2008). In other states, relatively little research has been done to understand faculties employed at community colleges. Twombly and Townsend (2008) wrote that community college faculties employed at other states are often described as somewhat "deficient" based on finding that 67% of them were found to be part-time faculty (p. 8). In other words, while two-thirds of all community college faculties are part-time, full-time faculty members do the "bulk of the teaching," which amounts to two-thirds of all classes (p. 12). Consequently, it can be argued that faculties at other states have serious educational problem, as the "deficient" image contributes toward denying them participation in the governance of the community colleges.

**California community college faculty.** In the CCCs, faculty members are seen as the heart and soul of the state's higher education system (Hardy & Laanan, 2006;

Twombly & Townsend, 2008). Faculty members at many of the community college districts have earned progressive status, owed to adoption of a collaborative approach to governance that is mandated in the state's education code (Miller & Miles, 2008).

Through participatory governance, CCC faculties have made decisions on curriculum and other traditional academic areas, but they have also influenced decisions on critical issues that boards and administrators have historically reserved for themselves (Kezar & Lester, 2009; McClenney, 2004). An example of a nontraditional area, in which faculties have begun to discuss and influence, is the vital area involving institutional planning and budgetary processes (Alfred, 2008). Through participation in institutional planning and budgeting processes, CCC academic senates are provided opportunities to influence board and administrator decision processes, which have led to better student performance and success rate.

***Faculty leadership skills: Short on district training.*** Through participation rights over the governance of institutional planning and budgeting, academic senate leaders want to help fix the district budget crunch, while meeting the growing enrollment demands of the students and the increasing standards set by the accrediting agencies (Kezar & Lester, 2009). However, many senate leaders have not received formal pre-service and developmental training; and consequently, they feel limited in their ability to apply effectively the needed decision-making skills in the institutional planning and budgeting processes (Twombly & Townsend, 2008). Without formal pre-service and

developmental training, senate leaders must look elsewhere to qualify if they want to help fix the district budget problems.

***Long on manual: Leadership and budgeting skills.*** As means for providing necessary knowledge and skills to the local academic senate leaders, the state-level ASCCC stepped in as surrogate to provide forms of pre-service and developmental training (Reille & Kezar, 2010). For example, ASCCC (2007) published and provided a leadership manual entitled, *Empowering Local Senates: Roles and Responsibilities of and Strategies for an Effective Senate*. This manual describes ways in which faculties can effectively meet their academic and professional responsibilities. The appendices contain essential leadership materials, such as Models for Governance; Governance Consultation Forms; and how to set up Standing, Operational, and Advisory Committees.

As the academic senates are expected to participate in the governance over matters pertaining to institutional planning and budgeting processes, understanding budget and other fiscal information is an important part of the job of senate leaders (Alfred, 2008). They do not need to know all the details of the budget, but they must have enough understanding of budgetary concept and process to assert themselves effectively. In order to help, Davison and Hanna (2009) published a manual entitled, *Budget considerations: A primer for senate leaders*. This manual provides vital informational resources and tools that greatly help local senate leaders during budget discussion with their counterparts. For example, tracking the long-term financial trend is found to be the single most important skill, along with the ability to spot changes and to understand



budgetary history (p. 1). Clearly, without an understanding of budgetary concepts and processes, the faculty was unable to participate in the governance over institutional planning and budgeting processes.

**Budget a political document.** Accreditation standards, as they apply to CCC, require integration of the budget with institutional planning and require setting up of long-term financial priorities for the institution. Additionally, accreditation requires that academic senates be provided opportunities to participate in the development of institutional plans and budgets. These standards, though they are not directly tied to the state mandate, give strong and effective support to shared governance requirements because for any college to do otherwise means loss of accreditation (Beno, 2007). In other words, boards and administrators are expected to follow guidelines and processes for financial planning and budget development, per accreditation standards, while providing academic senates opportunities to participate in the development of processes pertaining to institutional plans and budgets (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, 2013). Additionally, notwithstanding the academic senates' right to participate over governance and their priority position over other participants, the budget is a political document that is the result of the senates' negotiation skills over what will be funded and to what extent (Twombly & Townsend, 2008). Consequently, development of institutional plans and budgets was a challenging task for senate leaders because there are many groups with different goals and priorities competing for allocation of limited resources. More importantly, it was challenging for these leaders because they needed to

understand the effectiveness of their decision processes, which directly related to the purpose of my study.

*Academic senates keep pressure on board.* Thus, regarding institutional planning and budgeting efforts, it was vital that senate leaders maintained close working relationships with the district budget officers and that they be kept apprised of the financial information that gets to the boards and administrators. At the same time, faculties needed to keep the pressure on the boards and to ensure themselves that they are participating in all of the local planning and budget policy discussions (Twombly & Townsend, 2008). As was previously mentioned, the accreditation standard required the boards of trustees and administrators to follow its own board policy on shared governance with the academic senates over planning and budgeting processes.

**Advice to faculty: Shared governance means work.** Ultimately, shared governance required a major commitment of time and energy on the part of academic senate leaders and sufficient commitment on the part of their constituent faculty members of the college district. However, Jenkins and Jenson (2010) observed that, when the boards and administration introduced for discussion the subject of shared governance, “some faculty members complained about the amount of work it involves” (para. 23). In such instances, boards and administrators are certain to point out that shared governance will fail “unless faculties are willing to share the burden and responsibility of governing” (para. 24). As shared governance meant work for the senates and faculties at large and that the work included decision processes, my study had important material to cover.

## **Faculty Associations**

**Faculty association and senate roles are separate.** The literature on faculty association (union) of the local community college districts was also important to the understanding and development of the research problem and purpose of the study. A review of the faculty association is important because, while the unions' decision processes are primarily intended to promote better working condition for its members, nonetheless, the unions indirectly influence the decisions processes of the faculty senates over issues pertaining to shared governance (American Association of University Professors, 2008). The role of the faculty association is introduced to define and separate the role of the faculty collective bargaining unit and the role of academic senates, although the benefits realized by the work of both groups accrues to all faculty members. Furthermore, this section explains how the faculty collective bargaining units were able to support and facilitate the shared governance effort of the academic senates, while managing to keep the unions and the shared governance functions separate during negotiations with the boards of trustees (Garfield, 2008). In sum, the role of faculty associations and academic senates are separate, but their work overlaps, which are described below.

**Faculty association and academic senate issues overlap.** Both the faculty bargaining units and the faculty senates have separate roles; but the shared governance issues, as identified in the eleven provisions of the Title 5, sometime overlap into issues that are pursued by the faculty collective bargaining agents and vice versa (Garfield,

2008). Thus, in order to protect and promote the best interest of faculties, that is, for participating in governance over academic and professional issues as well as for gaining better working condition, both groups needed to cooperate and collaborate as closely as possible, so as to avoid confusion and misunderstanding with the boards and administrators (Julius, 2006). As issues covered under the eleven provisions of Title 5 are pursued by both the faculty associations and the academic senates, there was obvious need for both groups to communicate and collaborate with each other on a continuing basis.

*Boards and administrators' perspectives.* However, efforts to create and maintain close cooperation and collaboration between the senates and the associations may complicate and make more difficult the process of implementing the shared governance mandate. For example, studies showed that the boards and administrators have hesitated working with the academic senates about shared governance, when the senates are perceived to be deeply involved in the efforts of the faculty associations (Gallos, 2008). Such deep involvement confuses the boards and administrators, and it is seen as though the faculties, via the academic senates, are actually manipulating to gain better working conditions for themselves (Wickens, 2008). In other words, during such confusion, the boards and administrators have misgivings about working with both academic senates and faculty associations, when attempts are being made to resolve shared governance issues at one meeting and attempts are being made to negotiate collective bargaining demands at another.

**Title 5, Section 53204: Union rights preserved.** California's Title 5, Section 53200-53204, did not in any way change the collective bargaining law of the Educational Employment Relations Act, Government Code Section 3540 et sec. Under Section 53204 of Title 5, shared governance regulation specifically stated that nothing in Sections 53200-53203 may be used to "detract from any negotiated agreements between collective bargaining groups and district boards of trustees" (Smith, 2012, p. 121). Regarding the shared governance rules under the mandate, in which senates maintained general priority over other groups, Section 53204 of Title 5 made an exception to the priority rule.

*Union rights prevail over shared governance.* Title 5 confirmed that any matter within the scope of collective bargaining may be negotiated between representatives of the collective bargaining units and the boards of trustees, regardless of any existing policies agreed to between the boards and senates. That is to say, boards and associations through collective bargaining agreements can change shared governance policies previously adopted by the boards, even though such agreements were based upon recommendation of the academic senates or mutually agreed to with the academic senates, as defined under Title 5 (Neil & Salt, 2008). However, in reality, preventive actions are usually taken by faculty associations and academic senates to avoid untimely cancellations of policy agreements achieved between the boards and senates, as explained below.

*Association collaborates with senate to support shared governance.* As the responsibilities of the local academic senates and the local faculty bargaining unions

overlap, Section 53204 of the shared governance mandate recognized the need of both groups to maintain close cooperation and collaboration with each other (Smith, 2012). Accordingly, boards and administrators need to overlook and disregard communications taking place between leaders of the senate and the association. The boards just need to provide leadership to assure implementation of the shared governance mandate (American Association of University Professors, 2008). In conclusion, the collaborative actions of faculty associations and academic senates, as well as actions of the boards of trustees and administrators, were supposed to promote and manage the implementation the State's shared governance mandate.

### **Research Methods Found in the Literature**

A review of the recent literature for common research methods revealed several quantitative and qualitative approaches. These approaches shaped my methodological decisions in subsequent chapters.

#### **Quantitative Methods**

Researchers use quantitative methods in the public policy and administration field to compare research variables. They often use data that come from limited sets of standardized questions, solicit responses from dozens of people, and generalize their research findings to the greater population of the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In one such quantitative study, Francis (2011) explored public safety preparedness against violent acts of terrorism. He used a 45-question survey, which was designed to collect data on "terrorism preparedness, leadership, organizational challenges, and organizational

climate” (p. 77). His study also had the usual features of a quantitative method such as hypotheses, variables, random sampling of a population, and a statistical model.

A characteristic feature of quantitative research is that data from many people are desired and required. For example, Francis (2011) determined that 300 public safety agencies would be solicited for participation in his study. “The sample included randomly selected police departments (N = 100), fire departments (N = 100), and emergency medical services (N = 100)” (p. 79). Yet, out of 300 public safety agencies solicited, only 64 chief executives participated in the study (p. 114). Francis found that several variables showed statistically significant relationships “with the strongest relationship between terrorism preparedness and processes” (p. 115). Although Francis did not overtly generalize his findings, there were implications about organizations merely following processes to increase terrorism preparedness.

In another quantitative study, Runkle (2016) declared that the purpose of the study was to quantitatively explore the behaviors of emergency department nurses in relation to their formal reporting of patient assaults. He used 36 questions to collect data for the assessment of nurses’ behaviors in reporting of patient assaults. Runkle (2016) randomly selected N = 527. The research project yielded 107 respondents, which was a 20% overall response rate from the population, and which was considered an acceptable response rate (p. 116).

A regression model was used to test the independent variables of “nurse demographics, rational choice perceptions and organization culture perceptions” against

the dependent variable of “nurses reporting of patient-inflicted assaults” (Runkle, 2016, p. 11). His findings indicated that “nurse incident reporting behaviors [dependent variable] following a patient inflicted assault were significantly related to rational choice actions [independent variable]” (p. 127). I too covered organizational behaviors such as following processes but from a qualitative viewpoint.

### **Qualitative Methods**

From the literature reviewed, I identified several relevant articles pertaining to qualitative research methods. Qualitative research uses words, texts, and observations, and its objective is to provide a better understanding of people’s experiences and of the world in which they live (Creswell, 2012). The qualitative method of inquiry can produce a wealth of detailed information about a small number of people, and it is able to increase the depth of understanding of research problems (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). A qualitative method appealed to me, as my purpose was to produce wealth of detailed information about the decision processes used by a small number of leaders from a community college district.

In reviewing the literature, I found routine uses of qualitative methods to produce information for decision makers on health and social policies. For example, Lewin et al. (2015) indicated that they needed a case study approach for “assessing how much confidence to place in specific review findings to help users judge how much emphasis they should give to these findings in their decisions” (p. 2). These authors used a case study method, which was “easy to use, provided a systematic approach to making



judgements, allowed these judgements to be reported transparently, and allowed judgements to be understood easily” (p. 4). Yet, the use of a case study method appears limited to specific decision events pertaining to a well-bounded problem. There are also phenomenological, ethnographic, and narrative approaches which may be better suited for my needs.

In my continuing review of the literature, I found an article that used another qualitative method. For example, in this phenomenological inquiry, Davidson (2016) examined the experience of decision process of “transitioning from student affairs work at not-for-profit universities to work in institutions of higher education that generate revenue or dividends for owners, commonly called for-profit institutions” (p. 778). For-profit universities have received much scrutiny, with critics pointing to questionable legitimacy of management practices and other issues relating to for-profit operations of higher education (Davidson, 2016). Davidson (2016) professed that the “for-profit institutions of higher education (FPIHE) have a long history in the United States and are likely to survive present-day controversies,” helped along with the practice of decision processes by relevant stakeholders (p. 778). Next is an application of an ethnographic method on the examination of decision process.

In an ethnographic study, McKeever, Anderson, and Jack (2014) located their study in “the ‘fishbowl’ of Inisgrianan, focusing on the social interactions of people living together and getting things done” through decision processes (p. 458). Their qualitative approach using an ethnographic study was suited because their objectives

were to understand social capital “from the way people lived their lives, rather than measuring how many” (p.458). McKeever, Anderson, and Jack (2014) attempted to do more than merely describe events by providing explanations about how social capital works in decision process. Finally, narrative approaches are often found in the literature.

Narrative analysis is now used to explore experiences of multiple actors in an organizational setting and to gain understanding of such issues as decision processes (Lawler, 2012; Savin-Baden & Niekerk, 2007). Examples of peer-reviewed journal articles, which feature narrative approach and storytelling to the analysis of organizations and decision processes, are those written by Barker and Gower (2010) and Brown, Gabriel, and Gherardi (2009). Brown, Gabriel, and Gherardi (2009) suggested that storytelling approach to dealing with decision process and organizational change has much to contribute towards promoting better understanding of organizational complexities. For example, stories told such as, “‘Thou shalt not deny my experience, thou shalt not silence my voice,’ challenges the authority of expertise [such as the boards of trustees and administrators] through the authority of personal experience [such as the academic senates and faculty association]” (Brown, Gabriel, & Gherardi, 2009, p. 330). Thus, academic leaders may challenge the trustees and administrators with stories of personal experiences that relate to student needs and successes.

In addition, Barker and Gower (2010) explained that organizations now use storytelling to advance effective decision process and to more effectively leverage human capital. They pointed out that stories are effective in doing the following: a) Introducing

change, [such as shared governance mandate]. b) Conveying complex ideas, [such as institutional planning and budgeting processes]. c) Applying historical and contemporary method of communication, [such as rational, organizational, and political decision models]. and d) Establishing and shifting power, [such as from the boards of trustees and administrators to faculty]. The authors stated, “It has even been used in the government sector to establish dialogue in public administration research” (p. 305), which seemed applicable to my study.

Finally, in my review of the literature, I found that researchers, who use the qualitative method including the four approaches described above, must make commitments to reap the benefits that are inherent in conducting qualitative inquiry (Mohrman & Lawler, 2012). Researches must work collaboratively with organizations to generate useful knowledge that will help organizations to survive and function properly. They must also spend time in the field, to become familiar with the decision processes that are practiced by organizations. Mohrman and Lawler (2012) wrote, “If they make these commitments and effectively disseminate the results of their research, organizations will be more effective and their research will make a difference in people’s lives” (p. 50). A qualitative method of inquiry seems to be appropriate for investigating decision processes used by leaders of a CCC district.

### **Summary**

Within a CCC district, there is need to understand the effectiveness of decision processes, which integrate multiple decision models among four diverse actor groups.

The conceptual framework for my study relied on concepts developed by Allison and Zelikow (1999) involving multiple decision models among competing groups of actors to produce a preferred institutional outcome. My review of literature pertaining to history of faculty governance explained why faculty groups in higher education stubbornly insist on participatory governance and demand changes in the decision processes by local boards of trustees. In contrast, a review of early development of CCCs clearly explained why the local boards of trustees at some college districts persistently resist shared governance with the faculty groups, in the board's decision processes.

The California's Master Plan of 1960, which encouraged shared governance, essentially failed, and student performance declined substantially during the period since the Master Plan. Additionally, California's Proposition 13 of 1978 and associated budget crisis initiated further changes in the boards' decision processes, in which they felt the need to make unilateral decisions outside of consultation with faculty groups. Consequently, in 1988, California legislature introduced AB 1725 (shared governance), which mandated the local boards of trustees to consult collegially with the academic senates over all academic and professional matters, which include eleven provisions of the education code. Furthermore, the need to implement shared governance, especially in the mandated areas of institutional planning and budgeting processes, became more urgent and necessary as means for dealing with the budget and student crises, all of which prompted the need to conduct this research.

Boards of trustees of the local CCC districts were described in the literature as politicized institutions, wherein conflicts between the boards and faculties were normally resolved through bargaining, negotiating, and compromising in the boards' decision processes. The CCC district administrators, for their part, were responsible for the development of board approved policies into workable procedures, in which decision processes are primarily based on bureaucratic structure and standard operating processes. Conversely, the academic senates were accustomed to conducting decision process based on a collegial model, which strives to obtain consensus of the academic community, but which is in sharp contrast to the board's political model. Faculty associations, for their part, conducted their decision processes under the state's labor laws to promote better working conditions for its members, but unions also indirectly influenced the decision processes of the academic senates over shared governance.

For my research method, I leaned toward a qualitative method of inquiry and the narrative approach to analysis to study deeply the decision processes. Accordingly, my research targeted four groups of community college leaders and sought to understand the effectiveness of their decision processes that combined three completing decision models while implementing the shared governance mandate.

My study results should fill a gap in the literature and extend knowledge in the discipline. Chapter 3 provides details about my chosen research method and approach.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

The purpose of my study was to understand the decision processes used by four actor groups while implementing California's shared governance education code. The four diverse actor groups are the board of trustees, administrators, academic senates, and faculty association at the chosen CCC district. I anticipated that these actors would use multiple and combined decision models to create a synergism of actions that leads to collaboration and unity of effort toward implementation of the State's shared governance mandate. In my study, the shared governance mandate of relevance are the institutional planning and budgeting processes provisions of the California education code.

In this chapter, I describe and compare available research methods and approaches. I use this discussion to explain why I selected a qualitative method of inquiry for my research method. As a means for gathering information and qualitative analysis, I compare the uses of narrative analysis to other available approaches, including a phenomenological design. In addition, I introduce the problem-solving style of the narrative analysis to show versatility of using this approach, which is no longer limited to the traditional biographic storytelling.

Chapter 3 reintroduces the three research questions and shows the relevance of and justification for using a qualitative method and narrative analysis. Following this section, I discuss sample selection process, data collection, data analysis, presentation of results, and ethical protection of research participants.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

The primary line of inquiry that I sought to answer in my study was whether the decision processes involving the varied application of rational, organizational, or political decision models ensured successful implementation of the shared governance mandate, in particular the institutional planning and budgeting processes portions of the mandate. The following are my research questions:

RQ1. To what extent are the four groups of actors knowledgeable about California's 1988 shared governance mandate?

RQ2. To what extent are the four groups of actors committed to implementing the mandated provision concerning institutional planning and budgeting processes?

RQ3. To what extent do the four groups of actors apply rational, organizational, or political decision models in their decision processes that relate to the implementation of the shared governance mandate pertaining to institutional planning and budgeting processes?

In the process of answering these research questions, I sought to understand the experiences of the participants concerning their decision processes. I also intended to show that the chosen research method and approach were consistent and appropriate to understand the participants' lived experiences. The following section introduces and explains the qualitative method of inquiry and the narrative analysis applied to the study.

### **Qualitative Method of Inquiry**

In the following paragraphs, I review the qualitative method of inquiry and show that it is appropriate and productive for understanding the effectiveness of decision processes that affected implementation of shared governance mandate. This section closes with statements that reaffirm why other qualitative methods of inquiry were not chosen for my study.

Qualitative research uses words, and its objective is to provide better understanding of people's experiences and of the world in which they live. My study dealt with the world of California community college system and attempted to understand the decision processes practiced by policymakers at the 72 community college districts. Furthermore, my study sought to analyze the competing interactions among members representing the board of trustees, administrators, academic senates, and faculty association in their efforts to deal with problems that relate to implementation of California's mandate on institutional planning and budgeting processes. The adopted qualitative method of inquiry was capable of producing detailed information from a small number of people, and it was able to increase the depth of understanding on the research problem.

With respect to the stated research problem and purpose, Patton (2002) explained that qualitative inquiry is appropriate for studying issues surrounding decision processes for the following reasons: The study of decision processes requires generating detail information that only qualitative methods can provide in an efficient manner. The study



of decision processes recognizes that experiences vary from person to person and that each experience needs to be collected and analyzed using her or his own words. The study of decision processes is also dynamic, making it difficult to capture complex results on measurement scales by using a quantitative method. Therefore, Patton's three reasons suggested that I examine the use of a qualitative method for my study.

Procedurally, interview questions were posed to members from four groups of actors about decision models used to guide their decision processes on the shared governance mandate. Decision models that evolved from the decision processes were the rational actor model, organizational behavior model, and governmental politic model; and I associated each decision model to its influence on implementing the shared governance mandate. The final step was to document and interpret my findings on the effectiveness of decision processes used to implement institutional planning and budgeting processes.

### **Narrative Analysis**

Traditionally, narrative analysis only explored the life experiences of one individual in the form of biographic study (Lawler, 2012). However, as was described earlier, narrative analysis is now used to explore experiences of multiple actors in an organizational setting and to gain understanding of such issues as the decision processes. Specifically, for my study, each participant was interviewed to gather detailed stories about the nature of decision processes used and about the resultant institutional outcome. Furthermore, where necessary, stories that were difficult to understand were restoried to

bring out logic and clarity, while maintaining intent and consistency of the original stories.

The use of narrative analysis, therefore, was appropriate for my study because it has developed into an approach for studying organizations, such as those found in higher education. My study focused on collecting local community college stories, in which members from four groups of actors were interviewed to describe in detail how they applied the decision processes, what decision models were used, and the resulting implementation of the shared governance mandate, all in story like fashion. For the benefit of CCC leaders, the results of the study revealed stories about new ways of looking at decision processes that are practiced at the district level.

For my study, given the focus placed on decision process, the problem solving structural form of narrative analysis was used to answer the research questions and to satisfy the purpose of my study (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). In the problem-solution structure, the narrative involved cognitive activities, in which people narrate while they recall being engaged in activities in a specific setting for a particular purpose. In my study, the cognitive activities of members from four groups of actors focused on decision processes, in which the members narrated which decision models they engaged in while employed at a specific CCC district. They narrated the effect of their decisions for the particular purpose of implementing the shared governance mandate. Procedurally, I (1) collected the raw narrated data; (2) analyzed data for five categories, which are characters, setting, problem, actions, and resolution; (3) organized the categories into

sequential events, and (4) restoried them into a plot structure (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). Thus, the particular methodologists I used are Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002), who provided the operating basis for the narrative analysis.

Regarding the need to restory the events into a plot structure, the rationale for such need was as follows: When individuals tell a story, often, it is not presented in a logical sequence; so, the restorying process, which is initiated by the researcher, provides the needed causal link between and among activities and events. The restorying process was applied only when needed to make clear and useful the original data, while maintaining accuracy and consistency of the original story.

Other approaches to using qualitative method, such as grounded theory, ethnography, and phenomenology, were not selected. Grounded theory was rejected because it is designed to develop a theory to explain why something is happening. Ethnography was not selected because it concentrates on an entire cultural group and on the behaviors of that group. Phenomenology was rejected because its research data are solely focused on the lived experiences of the participants, and because its research data does not allow for the lived experiences of the researcher, whose collaborative effort is solely applied to clarify the findings of the study (Creswell, 2012). In other words, phenomenology does not allow for combining the views of a participant's life with those of a researcher's life in a collaborative narrative, as was shown to be necessary in the restorying process.

In summary, I have shown that the use of qualitative method and narrative analysis were sufficiently appropriate for dealing with and answering all of the stated research questions that were developed for the study.

### **Role of the Researcher**

I reside and work in California, so I have a special attachment to the CCC system and its faculty members and students. My primary role as a researcher was to interact with 10 participants during delivery of questionnaires, recording of responses, and notetaking of non-verbal expressions. I was mindful of biases that might result from decades of full-time employment as an associate professor at a CCC district and as a long-term member of an academic senate. I used particular caution in the selection of participants, as a close colleague who is a senior faculty member recommended many potential participants. However, the use of snowball sampling with its sequential participant acceptances and recommendations should have reduced potential biases.

### **Participant Selection**

Participant selection was especially important because of my narrative approach. In a research study, the term population can refer to a group of people who share a common characteristic that attaches to the core of the developed research problem (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). In general, the relevant population consisted of leaders who influenced and affected shared governance policies at each of the 72 CCC districts. Specifically, my population of interest was leaders who represented the board of trustees, administrators, academic senates, and faculty association at a chosen district.

Those leaders needed to be actively involved in the mandated institutional planning and budgeting decision processes (Title 5, sections 53200-53204). In sum, my research questions, purpose of my study, and use of narrative analysis were the bases for selecting participants to represent the four groups of actors.

### **Purposeful Sampling Strategy**

For the research site, I selected a three-campus community college district that maintained a structure and operating pattern similar to the other 71 CCC districts throughout the state. The chosen district was representative of a functioning part of CCC system, and the choice was not intend to generalize the findings of my study to all districts or community colleges. At the research sites, the members from each of the four groups of actors conducted decision processes at the district level or at the individual campus level, depending on their designated work assignments. The four groups of participants were my relevant population of interest for the following reasons. The board of trustees is the primary policymaking body for the district and is the primary group mandated under the law to implement the shared governance mandate. The administrators, who are the chancellor of the district and presidents of the colleges, are responsible for executing board policies and for developing procedures relative to implementing the shared governance mandate. The academic senates are expected to make policy recommendations to the board of trustees that relate to all eleven provisions of the mandate, including institutional planning and budgeting processes. The faculty association functions mainly to maintain and improve working conditions for its

members, and the mandate allows it to communicate and coordinate with the work of the academic senates to advance the need to implement shared governance.

Thus, for my study, a purposeful sampling strategy was applied as means for selecting required type of participants and optimum number of them (Patton, 2002). I selected participants who possessed following characteristics: a) They must be information-rich with respect to controversies surrounding Title 5 Section 53200-53204. b) They must be experienced and skilled in the practice of decision processes, which involved the use of rational, organizational, and political decision models. c) They must be leaders who represent dominant positions in their groups that are empowered to influence academic and professional issues. Accordingly, the chosen purposeful sampling strategy was consistent with the requirements of my research questions, purpose of my study, and my qualitative narrative approach.

### **Sample Size**

In qualitative inquiry, there are no formal rules for determining sample size. Size depends on such factors as, the purpose of the inquiry, what findings are needed, what processes have credibility, and availability of time and resources (Patton, 2002). As the intent of purposeful sampling in my study was to gain a spectrum of unbiased information, there was no formula for determining an exact sample size. A comfortable sample size would be 10-15 participants. Above this range, I thought it would be unlikely to obtain substantive and unique information on decision processes. In sum, I used a purposeful sampling strategy to maximize my understanding of actual decision processes.

In order to keep my study focused on answering my research questions and to maintain credibility of the findings, I selected participants as follows: Given the availabilities and constraints of senior academic leaders, I selected and interviewed two trustees and three senators, all of whom were current or former leaders of their respective organizations. In order to maintain balance with the numbers of trustees and senators, I selected and interviewed three current administrative leaders and two current leaders of the faculty collective bargaining unit. Thus, based on guidelines described for determining sample size, my 10 participants represented an adequate sample size. In sum, the bases for selecting the participants and for determining the sample size were consistent with the requirements of the qualitative narrative approach.

## **Data Collection**

### **Date Collection Process**

For conducting the data collection process, my general guidelines were as follows. First, I located an appropriate community college district and selected participants based on my purposeful sampling strategy. Second, I gained expressed permission from participants to conduct my study and established rapport with them. Third, as to my collection instrument and required form of data, I chose open-ended questions in my interviews and used audio recordings. Fourth, I used a software application to convert my interview results to a text file for each interviewee. Fifth, I stored and secured my data by way of carefully designed computer files and file folders

(Creswell, 2012). The above description of the five-step process proved essential for my data collection process.

### **Interview Process and Questions**

**Interview overall process.** Foremost, prior to the interview process, participants were required to complete the consent form, which included information as to the purpose of the study, the study procedures, the risks and benefits to the participants, who to contact with questions, confidentiality, and a signed statement of consent by participants (Creswell, 2012). Before the beginning of interviews, participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time, that they could decline responding to any interview question without providing an explanation, and participants were given opportunities to ask questions. The interview guide shown in Appendix A, among other items, suggested that interview session would last less than an hour, and that participants could determine a reasonable location and schedule for their interviews.

Regarding the type of interview, I used a semistructured interview with open-ended questions, recorded answers digitally, and transcribed the responses through the use of software. As means for managing the questions, the interview guide was used during the interview, in which the questions were organized in a specific order (Creswell, 2012). Additionally, the guide ensured that participants clearly understood the interview process, my role in this process, and my procedures and expectations. As the data collection process was open-ended, interviewees responded using their own words and thoughts in answering the questions, even though the wording of questions was



determined ahead of time (Patton, 2002). In addition, the semistructured interview process allowed me to ask additional follow-up questions that were not a part of the interview guide, as a way to fetch useful information that added clarity to the study (Patton, 2002). In sum, the bases for developing and implementing the interview processes were consistent with the requirements of my qualitative narrative approach and with the particulars of my research questions and purpose of the study.

All audio recordings of participants were transcribed using digital transcription technology. Participants had to read a calibration paragraph to support the transcription application. Participants were informed that recorded data would not be shared or published without their prior written consent and that all such data would be destroyed after five years.

**Interview questions: The list.** There was very little research conducted at the CCC concerning the use of decision models, and participants had the opportunity to provide valuable information about their uses of decision processes. Ten interview questions were asked in the same manner and in the same order and sought participants' thoughts and experiences. Some of the questions enticed stories, as participants became more involved with my study. Participants were told they could withdraw from the study at any time, and they could decline responding to any interview question without providing an explanation. As stated earlier, participants' identities and answers remained strictly confidential. The estimated time to complete this interview was less than an hour.

1. When and how were you first informed about California's shared governance mandate, that part of the education code that focuses on relationship between the board of trustees and the academic senate?
2. What do you understand to be the essence of that mandate?
3. What is your opinion about the strengths and weaknesses of the code provision that deals with institutional planning and budgeting processes?
4. How would you describe your experiences (good and bad) when implementing the shared governance mandate pertaining to institutional planning and budgeting processes?
5. Describe how you would apply (or have applied) one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support your proposal pertaining to the educational master plan for the college district?
6. Describe how you would apply (or have applied) one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support your proposal pertaining to the educational facilities master plan for the college district?
7. Describe how you would apply (or have applied) one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support your proposal pertaining to the educational human resources plan for the college district?
8. Describe how you would apply (or have applied) one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support your proposal pertaining to the budget development for the college district?

9. Describe how you would apply (or have applied) one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support your proposal pertaining to the funding priorities and allocation for the college district?

10. Describe how you would apply (or have applied) one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support your proposal pertaining to the discretionary, contingency, and reserved funds for the college district?

**Interview questions: Relationship to research questions.** Note that the list of RQs determined the direction and content of the literature review, and that both RQ and literature were used to develop the IQs. Likewise, it was anticipated that responses to the IQs will generate themes that may provide answers to the research questions. Furthermore, it was anticipated that themes and keyword patterns that could emerge from the IQs might include decision process, rational actions, organizational behaviors, political deals, emergent decision models, synergism of actions, collaboration, unity of effort, implementation processes, shared governance issues, institutional planning events, budgeting process milestones, etc. Finding themes and keyword patterns are consistent with the process of narrative analysis. Conflicting themes of significance that emerged from the IQs were dealt with as discrepant data (Maxwell, 2005) and were commented on in the validity section of my study.

The IQs were related to the RQs as follows: IQ1 and IQ2 attempted to assess participants' knowledge about California's shared governance mandate and were related to RQ1. IQ3 and IQ4 addressed participants' commitments to implementing the

institutional planning and budgeting processes provisions of the state mandate and were related to RQ2. IQ5, IQ6, and IQ7 addressed participants' decision processes about how they applied the three decision models relative to institutional planning and were related to the first half of RQ3. IQ8, IQ9, and IQ10 addressed participants' decision processes about how they applied the three decision models relative to budgeting process and are related to the last half of RQ3. In sum, IQ1 through IQ4 was asked to qualify each participant to answer IQ5 through IQ10, which represented the core purpose of the study.

**Interview questions: Summary.** In the closing interview questions, I gave interviewees opportunity to have the final say. For example, I stated and asked, "That covers questions I wanted to ask. Do you have any you would like to add?" "Do you have any questions?" I collected participants' demographic data that included gender, ethnic identity, education and socioeconomic status. It was important that I stay on the questions during the interviews, complete interviews on time, be respectful of participants, and be a good listener (Creswell, 2012). Accordingly, the usefulness of information obtained during an interview depended on the quality of my work. Additionally, I took field notes during the interviews, without distracting the interviewee, and the notes covered follow up points and the interviewee's body language that clarified and added to the verbal communication of the interviewee (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Finally, I was cognizant that getting valid and reliable information from cross-cultural participants, such as cultural differences found between trustees and faculties, may be challenging. Thus, getting such information required my having sufficient knowledge and sensitivity to

cultural differences. In sum, the bases for developing and delivering the interview questions were consistent with the requirements of the qualitative narrative approach and with the particulars of the research questions and purpose of the study.

### **Credibility and Repeatability**

**Validity or credibility:** In the research literature, validity was referred to as correctness of a description, explanation, interpretation, or conclusion. For my qualitative study, I will use the more appropriate concept of credibility. Maxwell (2005) cautioned that lack of attention to validity or credibility threats is reason for rejecting research findings. Many qualitative researchers make the mistake of talking about credibility only in general terms, such as proposing that “bracketing,” “member checks,” and “triangulation” that will protect their studies from credibility issues (p. 107). The following paragraphs describe steps in which I ensured credibility, to avoid the mistake of talking about it only in general terms.

One type of credibility threat comes from how researcher selects data. For example, this threat may occur when I select interview data that fits my conceptual framework, or when I simply select data that meet my expectations (Maxwell, 2005). In order to avoid criticism to this threat credibility, in Chapter 4, I openly acknowledge and discuss my biases and the biases of a participant facilitator and describe how I dealt with these threats.

Another type of credibility threat is related to the effect of researcher on the participants. For example, what the interviewee reports is always influenced by the

interviewer and the interview situation (Maxwell, 2005). In any case, in order to maintain credibility of my study, in Chapter 4, I acknowledge the importance of knowing how I might influence what the interviewees discuss, and how this influence affects the accuracy of the meanings that I might draw from the interviews.

Miles and Huberman (1994) observed that common strategies to test the validity of conclusions and the existence of potential threats to those conclusions are participant validation (“member checks”), triangulation, and discrepant evidence. Regarding triangulation, they supposed a finding is supported by showing that independent sources agree with it or, at least, do not contradict it. Yet, this strategy to test validity could very well be problematic if sources are expected to offer contradictory explanations.

Regarding member checks, the literature cautioned researchers to not expect participants to always agree with researcher or with one another. Thus, in my study, I may find participants rejecting findings and conclusions of others, because the information conflicts with their basic values or beliefs or that the information threatens their self-interests (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). Finally, regarding discrepant evidence, I need to examine both the supporting and the discrepant data and to decide whether to keep or change my conclusions, while being fully aware of my own desire to ignore the data that do not fit the conclusions of my study.

**Reliability or repeatability:** The literature referred to reliability as a process in which a study’s findings are consistent and reasonably stable over time and across researchers and methods. For my qualitative study, I will use the more appropriate

concept of repeatability. When a majority of participants give consistent party-line responses, Miles and Huberman (1994) advised researchers to “remember that a broken thermometer is 100% reliable, but not very valid” (p. 278). From this syllogism, it appears that reliability is more applicable to satisfying statistical requirements in quantitative studies. For my qualitative study, I must rely upon the responses of the interviewees. To ensure data consistency, I use screening questions to check on the knowledge and experiences of interviewees. Furthermore, during the analysis process, I try to corroborate responses from members of each actor group.

In summary, the critical tasks in addressing credibility were for me to demonstrate that I will allow for competing explanations and will address discrepant data. Accordingly, the bases for addressing credibility issues need to fit in with requirements of the qualitative narrative approach and with the particulars of the research questions. Repeatability is governed by selecting knowledgeable interviewees and by having narrowly tailored interview questions.

### **Data Management Techniques**

Participants in my study were never referred to by name in this document, and their personally identifiable information was removed from any quoted text. All participants were assigned pseudonyms such as Participant 1 (P-1). Thus, I am the only person who has access to the participants’ names and other identifiable information.

All information and data from participants in my study were maintained in organized files, which included digital recordings of interview, hard copies of the

transcripts of the interviews, and field notes. For each participant, the digital data portions of the study were placed in folders in my personal computer and external hard drive. That is, much of the collected data were electronically stored and maintained on a password-protected computer and on external data storage equipment. During the data collection period and on its completion, digital recordings of interviews, digital data stored on the external hard drive, and printed copies that relate to the study were locked in a fireproof file cabinet at my residence. All data that were relevant to the research will be kept and stored for 5 years by me after the conclusion of my study. At the end of the 5-year period, all printed documents will be destroyed, and all digital recordings and electronic files that are relevant to the study will be permanently erased.

### **Data Analysis**

**Analysis within qualitative framework.** Data analysis in qualitative research normally follows a sequence of steps. My first step is organizing and preparing textual data in from transcripts for analysis. The second step is a coding and analysis process to resolve the data into themes and patterns. My final step involves presenting themes and patterns in tables and delivery my interpretations (Creswell, 2007). I started the analytical process with the spoken audio files and finished with an interpretation of the narratives. In the process, I managed the data; read and memoed transcribed data; described, classified (coding), and interpreted my data; and found themes and patterns in the narratives (p. 151). During the describing, classifying and interpreting processes, I developed 12 or so codes and sorted textual data into categories based on my tentative set



of codes. Finally, I worked to reduce and combine codes into five or six themes that were used as findings and to support my interpretations (p. 152). I did not use data that were not pertinent to my research questions unless I considered the discrepant data to be part of a trend. Finally, I analyzed the data by hand, because I believed a manual data analysis approach involving the interviews of just 10 people allowed me to perform at a high level of efficiency and effectiveness.

**Analysis within narrative framework.** Within the narrative framework, I specified the process of data analysis that was followed. During the data management step, I created and organized files for data. During reading and memoing step, I read through the texts, made margin notes, and formed initial codes. During the describing step, I arranged and visualized participants' experiences and placed them in a chronology. During the classifying step, I identified stories, located epiphanies, and fine-tuned the code list. During the interpreting step, I framed the larger meaning of the stories and developed themes. Finally, during representing and visualizing step, I presented my interpretations of stories and patterns, while referencing my conceptual framework as guidance.

In a narrative research, Creswell (2007) implored that the data collected needs to be analyzed for the story the actors have to tell, that is, a “chronology of unfolding events and epiphanies” (p. 155). Thus, based on the problem solving structural form of narrative analysis, I analyzed textual data for five elements of a plot, which were characters, setting, problem, actions, and resolution. All these elements served as applicable codes

and themes in my analytical process. In short, my narrative analysis was able to answer my research questions on decision processes by collecting stories through interviews, organizing the stories based on five elements, and writing my interpretations.

### **Presentation of Results**

Direct quotes from interviews, including story-formatted descriptions and resolution-framed interpretations of the data are presented in Chapter 4. I used six tables to present my themes and used narratives to discuss my findings. Finally, my treatment of discrepant data closes out Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, I interpreted my findings to answer my research questions.

### **Ethical Protection of Research Participants**

Institutional review boards (IRBs) are charged with approving research designs to ensure protection of human subjects. Typically, such boards want to know, in advance of fieldwork, who will be interviewed and the actual questions that will be asked (Patton, 2002, p. 246). As was disclosed earlier, I needed to interview 10 sophisticated college leaders, and expected them to have the capacity to handle any form of undue influence. Additionally, a list of actual interview questions presented in Appendix A was submitted to the Walden IRB. As the topic of my study is physically harmless and the line of questioning is reasonable, the Walden IRB approved my framework of research and my interview questions.

In practice, ethical issues pertaining to participants' protections arise at various stages during a study (Creswell, 2012). For example, during identification of the research

problem, I did not marginalize any of the likely participants from the four groups of actors. During the development of purpose statement and research questions, I avoided any form of deception, which occurs when participants understand one research purpose but the researcher has a different purpose in mind. Throughout the data collection, analysis, and writing processes, participants were informed about how their participation in the study might benefit them, as well as other leaders in the California community college system. One benefit might come from ideas on developing more effective decision processes to satisfy the state's shared governance mandate.

During data collection process, I faithfully respected the participants time and the use of their interview sites. As means for protecting participants, I used an informed consent form for participants to sign before getting into the interview questions. Among other things, my form included notice of risk to participants, guarantee of confidentiality, right to withdraw at any time, and names of official persons to contact for questions (Creswell, 2012). Approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and informed consent from all participants were obtained for my study before data collection started.

During data recording, transcription, coding, and analysis processes, I remained diligent to issues that might and did emerge (Creswell, 2012). For example, I needed to protect the anonymity of participants, to disguise their exact positions, and to attenuate revealing incidents that might be used in my findings and interpretations. To start the protection process, I used pseudonyms for participants and site locations to protect

identities. After my analysis and study dissemination, I will still need to secure the raw data for a period of 5 years, at which date relevant data will be destroyed.

Finally, during writing and dissemination of the report, I applied additional ethical rules. I did not use language that was biased against participants because of gender, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic group, or age (Creswell, 2012). In addition, I carefully monitored and prevented conducting research that may inadvertently result in the appearance of favoring one group over another. The Walden University IRB approval number for this study is 12-09-15-0128909 and the expiration date is December 8, 2016. As the sole researcher, I ensured that the participants were not harmed in any manner and the necessary precautions were taken to assure the safety of the research data.

### **Summary**

I opened this chapter with a restatement of the research questions and my purpose. The list of research questions served to help select and justify the use of a qualitative method of inquiry and a form of narrative analysis. Furthermore, decisions about my method and approach facilitated my sampling strategy to find 10 qualified and knowledgeable participants. The main aspects of the data collection process and data analysis were also explained. Under data collection, the interview process was detailed, which included providing 10 interview questions, matching each of the interview questions to its generating research question. I then detailed issues concerning credibility and repeatability of my qualitative study. Data transcription, codeword development and theme generation processes were introduced and applied within the narrative approach

used in my study. Finally, I end with comments about the critical topic concerning the requirement to protect participants and their data during and after their interviews.

Chapter 4 will present my research results and findings.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

My purpose of the study was to understand whether decision processes that combined the use of rational, organizational, or political decision models produced a synergism of actions among four actor groups, who are required to implement California's shared governance education code. The four diverse actor groups are the board of trustees, administrators, academic senates, and faculty association at the chosen CCC district. I anticipated that these actors would use multiple and combined decision models to create a synergism of actions that leads to collaboration and better unity of effort toward implementing the State's shared governance mandate. In the study, the shared governance mandate of relevance are the institutional planning and budgeting processes provisions of the California education code.

I applied concepts developed by Allison and Zelikow (1999), who introduced the three decision models (rational, organizational, and political). When all three models are integrated and applied in a given decision process, the combined models tend to produce synergisms among decision makers (p. 404). Allison and Zelikow also asserted use of multiple decision processes results in the desired implementation of intended institutional goals. In my study, this conceptual framework was applied through the development of the research questions and interview questions.

The primary inquiry that I sought to answer in the study was whether the decision processes involving the varied application of rational, organizational, or political decision

models ensured successful implementation of the shared governance mandate, in particular the institutional planning and budgeting processes portions of the mandate.

Given the primary inquiry, the following are my research questions for the study:

RQ1. To what extent are the four groups of actors knowledgeable about California's 1988 shared governance mandate?

RQ2. To what extent are the four groups of actors committed to implementing the mandated provision concerning institutional planning and budgeting processes?

RQ3. To what extent do the four groups of actors apply rational, organizational, or political decision models in their decision processes that relate to the implementation of the shared governance mandate pertaining to institutional planning and budgeting processes?

In Chapter 4, I will present the results of the study. Additionally, I will remind the readers about the investigative process used to achieve the research results. Mainly, I will present the description and analysis of collected data, followed by discussion on discrepant data and trustworthiness.

### **Setting and Demographics**

My population of interest consisted of leaders from the board of trustees, the administrators, the academic senates, and the faculty association of a CCC district, all of whom were actively involved in the decision processes relating to institutional planning and budgeting processes portions of the mandate. I selected participants who were knowledgeable about California's shared governance mandate, who were experienced

and skilled in the practice of decision processes, and who were empowered to influence academic and professional issues.

From my population, I drew a sample of 10 participants. I determined that 10 was the optimum size for the study. In terms of benefit versus cost, I estimated that the marginal cost of selecting one more participant beyond 10 would exceed any marginal benefit I may gain from adding one more participant into the sample. To maintain balance, I selected two participants from the board of trustees and three from the administrators to represent one group, and I selected three participants from the academic senates and two from the faculty association to represent the other group. Thus, my decision to draw a sample of 10 participants, who were allocated among the four actor groups as described above, were determined by me to be appropriate for the study.

All 10 participants shared following characteristics: First, all were professional educators and leaders in the field of higher education. Second, all were fully paid employees of the college district, with the exception of the members of the board of trustees, who were elected to that group by the voting citizens of the community. Third, all were skilled in the various phases of communication. Fourth, all were expressive and very vocal about discussing issues pertaining to the study. I will describe characteristics of individual participant, based on the actor group each represented.

The first actor group was the board of trustees. The function of board members is to determine governance policy for the district. Members must be knowledgeable and committed to shared governance as well as skilled in decision processes. One member of



the group was a publicly elected trustee of the district and appeared to be of European-American descent, female, and 50 years of age or older. The other member of the group was also a publicly elected trustee and appeared to be Hispanic, female, and 50 years of age or older.

The second actor group was administrators. The function of administrators is to execute the policies of the board. Members must be knowledgeable and committed to shared governance as well as skilled in decision processes. One member of the group was a senior executive of the college district and appeared to be a European-American male and 50 years of age or older. Another member was a senior executive of a college within a three-college district and appeared to be an African-American male and 50 years of age or older. Another member was a senior executive of one of the college within the district and appeared to be a European-American female and 50 years of age or older.

The third actor group was the academic senates. Members represented faculty at large on all matters relating to academic and professional matters. They are knowledgeable and committed to shared governance as well as skilled in the decision processes. One member of this group was a senior executive of a senate at one college within the district and appeared to be a European-American male and 45 years of age or older. Another member was a senior executive of the senate for the three-college district and appeared to be a European-American female and 40 years of age or older. Another member was a senior executive of a senate at one college within the district and appeared to be a European-American male and 50 years of age or older.

The fourth actor group was the faculty association. Its function, within the framework of the mandate, is to give support to the academic senates. Members must be knowledgeable and committed to shared governance as well as skilled in decision processes. One member of this group was a senior executive of the faculty association within the three-college district and appeared to be a European-American male and 45 years of age or older. Another member was a senior executive of the faculty association within the district and appeared to be a European-American male and 45 years of age or older.

### **Data Collection**

On December 9, 2015, I received notification of approval from the Walden University to proceed to the data gathering process. In general, finding participants for the study was manageable and without undue difficulties. I had developed work relationships with leaders at the research site over many years as an adjunct instructor. My years of experience dealing with shared governance issues, as a fulltime professor, at a neighboring county helped me to maintain confidence while in the process of recruiting participants for the study.

I spent much time and effort in the careful planning of participant selection process, and when ready, I sent letters of invitation to 10 leaders I felt would cooperate in the study. First interview was conducted on February 4, 2016, and I gave the participant a signed copy of the informed consent form, as well as to all subsequent interview participants. Ten interview questions were asked to collect data, which were directed at

answering the three research questions for my study. The interview guide ensured consistency while I performed all of the semi-structured interviews. Last and final interview was conducted on May 11, 2016. All 10 participants answered all 10 interview questions.

For recording participants' responses to the interview, I used Sony ICD-UX533 digital voice recorder, which has the capacity to provide up to 1,073 hours of recording time, and up to 30 hours of battery life via rechargeable battery, and built-in USB for direct connection to my computer. My Android smart phone was available for back up recording. All interviews of participants were conducted face-to-face. The shortest interview was 30 minutes and the longest was over 90 minutes, which was at the request of the participant. Transcriptions were done with Dragon v.14.0 Professional Individual, brand name Nuance. While listening to the voice recording of the participants, time and effort was spent editing the transcribed material; however, I discovered that using Dragon was comparatively more effective and efficient than resorting to manual transcription.

Between the dates of February 4 and May 11, when interviews were first conducted and ended, I experienced difficulties and delays, sometimes very long delays, in getting participants scheduled for dates, times, and locations for the interviews. However, no participants withdrew from the study, refrained, or refused to answer questions. At the end of the interviews, I thanked all participants and told them that they would be provided a copy of the study's summary upon its completion.

## Data Findings

### Research Question 1 Data and Analysis

In RQ1, I inquired to what extent are the four groups of actors knowledgeable about California's 1988 shared governance mandate? Answers to RQ1 came from IQ1 and IQ2. In IQ1, I asked, when and how were you first *informed about California's shared governance mandate*, that part of the education code that focuses on relationship between the board of trustees and the academic senate? In IQ2, I asked, what do you understand to be the *essence of that mandate*? Responses to IQ1 by all 10 participants are presented below, sorted by the four actor groups.

**Within the board of trustees group.** As representatives for the board, both P1 and P2 declared with clarity that they were informed about California's shared governance mandate. For example, P1 stated, "I understand education code that deals with the relationship between the board and the faculty. I learned what it meant and how it should be applied." In addition, P2 stated, "I attended the orientation session for the California Community College League for new trustee. They specifically dealt with shared governance and how it works. I understood the role and the responsibility." Thus, through their declarations, they, in effect, confirmed that the board of trustees, as one of four groups of actors, is knowledgeable about the State mandate.

Both P1 and P2 were first informed about the mandate after they were elected to the board, and it was necessary that they be fully informed about California's shared governance code because the law mandated the board of trustees to collegially confer

with the academic senates on all issues relating to academic and professional matters. Since being elected to the board, data appeared to indicate that both participants became enthusiastic supporters of implementing the shared governance mandate. I also noted that P1 and P2 in effect answered IQ2, when responding to IQ1, by demonstrating that they understand the essence of the mandate. For example, when asked about IQ2, P1 stated, “Essence of the mandate gives faculty the right to participate on issues relating to academic matters,” which is knowledge that is invariably embedded in the answers to IQ1. I did not report separately participants’ answers to IQ2 because all answers were inextricably tied to IQ1, as was described above.

**Within the administrator group.** As representatives for administration, P3, P4, and P5 pronounced that they were informed about California’s shared governance mandate. P3 stated, “When AB 1725 was passed I was working in Texas community college. I became knowledgeable with the mandate because California was the bellwether of community college education.” P4 added, “[college name deleted] board policy 4005 made it clear to all administrators and board of trustees that the academic senate of the [college name deleted] represents the faculty in the formation of district policy on academic and professional matters.” Interestingly, P5 replied, “When I first came to work for the community college, a faculty member explained AB 1725 and how that worked. I joined the academic senate, and became its president within a year. Now I am the president of the college.” Thus, through their pronouncements, they, in effect, confirmed

that administrators, as one of four groups of actors, are knowledgeable about the State mandate.

Participants P3, P4, and P5 were first informed about the mandate before they were hired into administration. I observed that they maintained their enthusiasm and support for the implementation of the shared governance mandate while employed as administrators for the district. P3 was first informed of California's mandate while employed as educator in Texas, which was indicative that educators in Texas and in other states considered the concept of shared governance as a very important legislation. It should be noted that all three participants in effect answered IQ2, when responding to IQ1, because they inferred that they understood the essence of the mandate. For example, when asked about IQ2, P5 said, "Essence of the mandate requires communication between the administration and faculty and gives the faculty the right to participate in the decision-making process," which is knowledge that is invariably embedded in the answers to IQ1.

**Within the academic senate group.** As representatives for the academic senates, P6, P7, and P8 reported that they were informed about California's shared governance mandate. P6 said, "I was first exposed to AB 1725 when I was elected to the academic senate back in 2008. I wanted to know what the expectations were and how it has been implemented here at [College name deleted]. I researched it and read position papers." P7 stated, "I first learned of the shared governance mandate when I first became a senator, and the senate president at that time explained AB 1725 and its responsibilities." In

addition, P8 proudly said, “I was informed about California’s shared governance mandate back in 1992 and I loved it. I promptly joined the academic senate, despite the fact that I wasn't tenured yet.” Thus, through their reports, they, in effect, confirmed that all three academic senates of the district are knowledgeable about the State mandate.

P6 and P7 were first informed about the mandate after they joined the academic senates; P8 was first informed before becoming a member of the senate. P8 stated, “I loved it,” referring to the mandate, before joining the senate. All three members were thus informed about the mandate and all were driven to implement the education code. Again, note that all three participants in effect answered IQ2, when responding to IQ1, by demonstrating that they understood the essence of the mandate. For example, when asked about IQ2, P7 stated, “Essence of the shared governance mandate is that the board relies on the senate’s knowledge in all areas pertaining to academic and professional matters,” which is knowledge that is invariably embedded in the answers to IQ1.

**Within the faculty association group.** As representatives for the faculty association, P9 and P10 declared that they were fully informed about California’s shared governance mandate. P9 emphasized, “I was first informed about AB 1725 10 years ago when I was recruited as treasurer for the faculty association, and it was important that I know the code well.” On the other hand, P10 stated, “Since 2006, I’ve served on hiring committees, interviewed prospective chancellors and presidents, and had to develop expertise about AB 1725 because I have to question candidates about shared

governance.” Thus, through their declaration, they, in effect, confirmed that the association, as one of four groups of actors, is knowledgeable about the State mandate.

Both participants, P9 and P10, were first informed about the mandate after they became members of the faculty association union. Of relevance, the mandate made clear that there are overlaps in the law between the labor code and the shared governance mandate, and that communication and interactions among the four actor groups was required to avoid confusion (Garfield, 2008). It is also interesting to note that a member of the association serves on the hiring committee to interview prospective executive for the district; so, when officers are successfully hired, there are possibilities of loyalty generated towards the individuals representing the association and academic senates. Again, note that both participants in effect answered IQ2, when responding to IQ1, by demonstrating that they understand the essence of the mandate. For example, when asked about IQ2, P9 replied, “Essence of that mandate is that the academic senate has to be at the table and be consulted whenever the district makes decisions about issues concerning academic and professional matters,” which is knowledge that is invariably embedded in the answers to IQ1.

**Conclusion for RQ1.** Through analysis of the data gathered by IQ1 and IQ2, I determined that all four groups of actors, through all 10 participants, were fully knowledgeable about the pertinent education code. As such, RQ1 was answered that all four groups of actors were sufficiently knowledgeable about California’s 1988 shared governance mandate. Worthy of notice was that, whereas IQ1 is descriptive in only



asking when participants were first informed about the mandate, all 10 participants displayed enthusiasm over the question that resulted in giving an expanded response that overlapped into IQ2, which asked about the essence of the mandate. Of special interest, P3 was first informed of California's mandate while employed as educator in Texas, which meant that educators in Texas, and perhaps in other states, considered the concept of a shared governance mandate as being a very important piece of legislation. Finally, as all four groups of actors were knowledgeable about the mandate, participants 1 through 10 were fully capable of participating in the research study. In terms of identifying a theme for RQ1, given the patterns of IQ1 and IQ2 answers, the dominant and salient theme was: This is a law that must be understood and followed.

### **Research Question 2 Data and Analysis**

In RQ2, I inquired to what extent are the four groups of actors committed to implementing the mandated provision concerning institutional planning and budgeting processes? Answers to RQ2 came from participants who answered IQ3 and IQ4. In IQ3, I asked, what is your *opinion about the strengths and weaknesses* of the code provision that deals with institutional planning and budgeting processes? If a participant provided balanced opinions showing both strengths and weaknesses of the code, I took these as signs of balanced support for implementing the code. If a participant provided opinions mainly on the strengths or the weaknesses in the code, I took these as signs of biased support for implementing the code. In IQ4, I asked, how would you describe your *experiences (good and bad)* when implementing the shared governance mandate

pertaining to institutional planning and budgeting processes? Answers to this question were taken to be indicative of a practical commitment to implement the mandate when a participant described, on balance, both good and bad experiences. When a participant described mainly good or mainly bad experiences, I took these as signs of having unrealistic expectations.

Regarding the relationship between IQ3 and IQ4, I expected an alignment between balanced support and realistic expectations of the mandate. Furthermore, I expected this alignment to contribute towards creating unity of action among the four divergent actor groups to support the implementation of the shared governance mandate. A lack of alignment would suggest that participants had prejudice opinions and irrational expectations of the mandate, which would not contribute towards creating unity of action to support the mandate. The alignments between opinions and expectations were analyzed below for each actor group.

**Within the board of trustees group.** As representatives for the board, both P1 and P2 have indicated that they are committed to supporting the shared governance mandate. For example, when asked IQ3, P1's opinion was, "For all stakeholders, it's the opportunity to participate and to put forth their input that is truly the strength of the mandate. Its weakness is the misinterpretations by many stakeholders that shared governance gives them right to make the decision." When the respondent stated, "The opportunity to participate is truly the strength of the mandate," I observed P1's opinion to have evoked good experience, as it was information that was confirmed through my

interaction with the participant. Conversely, when the respondent mentioned, “Its weakness is the misinterpretations by many stakeholders that shared governance gives them right to make the decision,” I observed P1’s opinion to have evoked a bad experience, based on the respondent’s body language. Thus, overall, P1 showed a balanced support for the mandate.

When asked IQ4, P1 replied, “I had various experiences both good and bad.” Concerning the work of planning, the respondent stated, “I found institutional planning, which deals with theory of shared governance, easier to work with,” and I found P1’s statement as indicating good experience, based on my observation of seeing the respondent smile at the same time. On the other hand, concerning the work of budgeting, the respondent stated, “whereas budgeting, which deals with the putting the plan into operation, much more difficult,” and I found this statement to be P1’s bad experience, based on my observation of seeing the respondent frown at the same time. Furthermore, when the respondent stated, “institutional planning was . . . easier to work with,” I observed P1’s good experience to have evoked an opinion showing strength of the mandate. Conversely, when the respondent continued with the statement, “but budgeting was . . . much more difficult,” I observed P1’s bad experience as having evoked an opinion to show weakness in the mandate, as it was information in both instances that was confirmed through my interaction with the participant. Thus, overall, P1 showed a realistic expectation.

In conclusion, answers to IQ3 showing balanced support corresponded to answers to IQ4 showing realistic expectations. Together these answers suggested unity of effort and showed commitment to the mandate. P1, as a member of the board of trustees group, did not show biased support or unrealistic expectations. P1, along with P2, confirmed that the board of trustees, as one of four groups of actors, was committed to implementing the mandated provision concerning institutional planning and budgeting processes. The next group dealt with administrator, whose representatives answered IQ3 and IQ4, and how this group supported RQ2.

**Within the administrator group.** As representatives for administrator group, P3, P4, and P5, indicated that they were committed to supporting the shared governance mandate. For example, when asked about IQ3, P5 stated, “One strength of the code provision is that it gets people on the same page and gets them working together; the weakness is that that is an incredibly time-consuming process and sometimes frankly it feels like you are pushing this gigantic ball uphill.” When the respondent stated, “One strength of the code provision is that it gets people on the same page and gets them working together,” I observed P5’s opinion to have evoked good experience, as it was information that was confirmed through my interaction with the participant. Conversely, when the respondent mentioned, “the weakness is that is an incredibly time-consuming process and sometimes frankly it feels like you are pushing this gigantic ball uphill,” I observed P5’s opinion to have evoked a bad experience, based on the respondent’s body language. Thus, overall, P5 also showed a balanced support for the mandate.

When asked about IQ4, P5 stated, “In an effort to develop a viable institutional plan and budgeting process . . .” at which point I noticed the respondent’s partial statement was said with a smile. However, the respondent continued with the statement, “We have a process where one or two people can interfere and really derail amazing work that’s being done because they want something for themselves, and that’s really bad.” In other words, when the respondent stated, “In an effort to develop a viable institutional plan and budgeting process,” I observed in P5 an expression of good experience that evoked an opinion showing strength of the mandate. Conversely, when the respondent continued with the statement, “We have a process where one or two people can interfere and really derail amazing work that’s being done because they want something for themselves, and that’s really bad,” I observed P5’s bad experience as having evoked an opinion to show weakness in the mandate. In both instances, my observations showing good and bad experiences were confirmed through my interaction with the participant. Thus, overall, P5 also showed a realistic expectation.

In conclusion, answers to IQ3 showing balanced support corresponded to answers to IQ4 showing realistic expectations. Together these answers suggested unity of effort and showed commitment to the mandate. P5, as a member of the administrator group, did not show biased support or an unrealistic expectation. P5, along with P3 and P4, confirmed that administrators, as one of four groups of actors, was committed to implementing the mandated provision concerning institutional planning and budgeting

processes. Next group dealt with academic senate, whose representatives answered IQ3 and IQ4, and how this group supported RQ2.

**Within the academic senate group.** As representatives for the academic senates, P6, P7, and P8 declared that they were committed to supporting the shared governance mandate. For example, when asked about IQ3, P7 stated, “Strength of shared governance mandate is that it forces the board to listen to us. Weakness is those faculties don’t understand that it only guarantees participatory governance and that the board doesn’t have to take the voice of faculty.” When the respondent stated, “Strength of shared governance mandate is that it forces the board to listen to us,” I observed P7’s opinion to have evoked good experience, as it was information that was confirmed through my interaction with the participant. Conversely, when the respondent mentioned, “The weakness is those faculties don’t understand that it only guarantees participatory governance and that the board doesn’t have to take the voice of faculty,” I observed P7’s opinion to have evoked a bad experience, based on the respondent’s body language. Thus, overall, P7 also showed a balanced support for the mandate.

When asked about IQ4, P7 stated, “The good is, generally speaking, participatory form of communication that takes place between the senate and administration. The bad is, from time to time, things at the District have been done in a way without consulting the senate, as when planning and budgeting take place in small offices with important people.” In other words, when the respondent stated, “The good is, generally speaking, participatory form of communication that takes place between the senate and

administration,” I observed in P7 an expression of good experience that evoked an opinion showing strength of the mandate. Conversely, when the respondent continued with the statement, “The bad is, from time to time, things at the District have been done in a way without consulting the senate, as when planning and budgeting take place in small offices with important people,” I observed P7’s bad experience as having evoked an opinion to show weakness in the mandate. In both instances, my observations showing good and bad experiences were confirmed through my interaction with the participant. Thus, overall, P7 also showed realistic expectation.

In conclusion, answers to IQ3 showing balanced support corresponded to answers to IQ4 showing realistic expectations. Together these answers suggested unity of effort and showed commitment to the mandate. P7, as a member of the academic senate group, did not show biased support or unrealistic expectations. P7, along with P6 and P8, confirmed that academic senates, as one of four groups of actors, were committed to implementing the mandated provision concerning institutional planning and budgeting processes. Next group dealt with faculty association, whose representatives answered IQ3 and IQ4, and how this group supported RQ2.

**Within the faculty association group.** As representatives for the faculty association, both P9 and P10 indicated that they were committed to supporting the shared governance mandate. For example, when asked about IQ3, P9 stated, “The strength of the mandated is that the senate has to be consulted, but the weakness is that academic senate does not have enforcement powers to hold the district accountable.” When the respondent

stated, “The strength of the mandated is that the senate has to be consulted,” I observed P9’s opinion to have evoked good experience, as it was information that was confirmed through my interaction with the participant. Conversely, when the respondent mentioned, “but the weakness is that academic senate does not have enforcement powers to hold the district accountable,” I observed P9’s opinion to have evoked a bad experience, based on the respondent’s body language. Thus, overall, P9 also showed a balanced support for the mandate.

When asked about IQ4, P9 stated, “The good is the faculty association has track record of successes at holding the district accountable. The bad is, as soon as faculty falls asleep behind the wheel, the District finds ways to manipulate the state mandate.” In other words, when the respondent stated, “The good is, faculty association has track record of successes at holding the district accountable,” I observed in P9 an expression of good experience that evoked an opinion showing strength of the mandate. Conversely, when the respondent continued with the statement, “The bad is, as soon as faculty falls asleep behind the wheel, the District finds ways to manipulate the state mandate,” I observed P9’s bad experience as having evoked an opinion to show weakness in the mandate. In both instances, my observations showing good and bad experiences were confirmed through my interaction with the participant. Thus, overall, P9 also showed realistic expectation.

In conclusion, answers to IQ3 showing balanced support corresponded to answers to IQ4 showing realistic expectations. Together these answers suggested unity of effort



and showed commitment to the mandate. P9, as a member of the faculty association group, did not show biased support or unrealistic expectations. P9, along with P10, confirmed that the association, as one of four groups of actors, was committed to implementing the mandated provision concerning institutional planning and budgeting processes.

**Conclusion for RQ2.** Through data generated out of IQ3 and IQ4, I determined that actors in all four groups were firmly committed to implementing the mandated provisions concerning institutional planning and budgeting processes. Through IQ3 and IQ4, I asked participants about strengths and weaknesses of and about their good and bad experiences with the mandate. Worthy of notice, all 10 participants' strong expression of enthusiasm for the California mandate confirmed their commitment towards supporting the relevant education code. The education code mandated the boards of trustees to collegially consult with the academic senates on issues relating to institutional planning and budgeting processes, but the code also inferred that administrators and association perform an important role in the shared governance processes. Therefore, all 10 participants in the study were required to show knowledge of and commitment to the shared governance mandate.

All 10 participants were shown to be qualified to participate in the research study, as data showed that all participants possessed knowledge of and maintained commitment to California's shared governance mandate. Given the patterns of IQ3 and IQ4 answers, the appropriate theme for RQ2 was, balanced support and realistic expectations

established a foundation for creating synergism of actions and contributed to promoting collaboration and unity of effort for the shared governance.

### **Research Question 3: Data and Analysis per Institutional Planning**

In RQ3, I inquired to what extent do the four groups of actors apply the rational, organizational, and political decision models in the decision processes as means to implement shared governance mandate that deals with institutional planning and budgeting processes. Answers to RQ3 came from participants who answered IQ5 through IQ10. Findings appeared to show that participants on the whole acted more cooperatively with other diverse groups on issues pertaining to *planning* portion of the mandate, which was shown through IQ5, IQ6, and IQ7. On the other hand, most participants appeared to have acted more contentiously on issues dealing with *budgeting* part of the mandate, which was shown through IQ8, IQ9, and IQ10. Therefore, to make the analytic process meaningful, RQ3 was divided and treated separately, beginning with three sets of questions on institutional planning, followed by the other three sets of questions pertaining to budgeting process.

**Interview question 5.** In IQ5, I asked, describe how you would apply or have applied one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support your proposal pertaining to the *educational master plan* for the college district? Responses to IQ5 by all 10 participants were presented below, based on the four actor groups.

*Within the board of trustees group.* P1 was challenged to balance the needs of the stakeholders, the faculty, and the three-college system. The respondent stated, “We have lot of diverse groups in our District, groups who seek educational service and about which I propose to serve when communicating with all stakeholders.” When developing an educational master plan for the District, the respondent relied on faculty, who are rationally effective in developing proposals based on data. However, when developing specialty type programs, P1 found that it become very political among the three competing colleges.

P2 was skilled at looking after the needs of her political base. The respondent indicated that the educational master plan for the District requires that it make education accessible and affordable to everyone, including to people of color, and the majority in the District are Hispanic. P2 added, “Fuentes is a program that is extremely successful providing optimum payoff to the Hispanic community; however, when we run into budget problems like we did just recently, the categorical programs are, by regulation, the first ones to get cut.” With a smile, P2 pointed out that the ability to save this program came through by way of political influence.

*Within the administrator group.* P3 claimed to have often used all three decision models simultaneously, and to have always worked in an organizational and political environment that affected respondent’s work as the chancellor of the District. P3 emphasized the point, “When developing the educational master plan, I always use the

rational approach, wherein I try to find alternative solutions that optimizes District's educational mission, while facing financial constraints.”

P4 was strongly geared to using the organizational model when dealing with stakeholders. Respondent explained that, at P4's college, strategic planning functions are performed by four major councils, and the respondent claimed that these councils allow full participation by all stakeholders, which does all of the necessary planning. P4 added, “We rationalized hundreds of committees that are assigned to the four councils. So, our development of educational master plan is owed to our use of the organizational decision model, and less to the political model.”

P5 appeared well balanced in the respondent's use of the three decision models. For example, respondent emphasized that P5 makes rational data-driven decisions, but the respondent also recognizes the importance of standard operating procedures within the organization and historic practices when making decision. However, P5 confessed, “When deciding the educational master plan, I was forced to use political means against the academic senate, because they failed to participate in the planning process, when they had the chance to do so.”

***Within the academic senate group.*** P6 clearly was skilled at using all three decision models. For example, the respondent explained that P6 looks at many different alternatives and seeks a plan that rationally optimizes benefits for students when discussing educational master plan. However, P6 added that the leadership councils within the organization are the decision-making bodies, which are in charge of

developing the strategic plan for the educational master plan. Then respondent pointed out that the academic senate wanted to make certain that the faculty is politically the driving force within those Councils. P6 summarized thoughts by saying, “So, the process as described is very rational, but making certain that we want faculty input through the councils can become very political when interacting with the board and the administration.”

P7 also applied the three decision models. When developing educational master plan, P7 stated, “I have reminded stakeholders that our mission and culture is to serve the students. When communicating with stakeholders and making proposals about the plan, I made sure that my proposals were rationally developed, based on relevant data.” P7 then followed with the statement, “Even then, situations have turned political, for example, as when I negotiated that our departments compromise with each other for sake of implementing the plan.”

P8 replied that the mission statement guides the development of educational master plan, which is to serve the students’ educational needs. Respondent used all three of the decision models to persuade stakeholders. For example, in response to IQ5, P8 made the following statements. a) “My proposal is always grounded on realistic alternatives.” b) “My proposal is always aligned with the college and to its existing resources and programs.” c) “To get the necessary stakeholder buy-in for the plan, I’ve negotiated and made compromises.”

*Within the faculty association group.* Many people in the organization have claimed that P9 is a master realist and politician. P9 emphasized that, when the respondent is proposing ideas about educational master plan, the respondent always use the rational decision model, by emphasizing alternatives and choosing the ones that offer optimum benefit to the district and to the students. Then, P9 said, “But at times, I’ve also used a political decision model, but I never compromise on key principles. I would show flexibility in those areas where I am willing to compromise, as long as I get the main issues placed on the table.”

P10 explained that respondent used combination of rational, organizational, and political decision models to persuade stakeholders when developing the educational master plan for the college. P10 gave an example, in which the college expressed an interest in creating a nursing program based on its student enrollment data and on the respondent’s argument that the existing healthcare programs within the college make such proposal appropriate. P10 then explained, “However, our sister college, which already has a nursing program, pressured us politically not to have it, even though we countered with a strong political argument.”

Table 1 for IQ5 showed assignments of varying degree from strong (3), to intermediate (2), to weak (1) for each rational, organizational, and political decision model that were mentioned or implied by each participant within the four actor groups. This table revealed the following: a) All 10 participants applied all three decision models to varying degrees. b) Board and administrators were consistent and strong (3) in using

the organizational decision model. c) Senate and faculty association members were consistent and strong (3) in using the rational decision model. d) Board and association members were consistent and strong (3) in using the political decision model.

Interpretations about each of the above-mentioned findings will be given in Chapter 5.

Table 1

*Educational Master Plan for the College District*

Actor group	Participant	Decision model		
		Rational	Organizational	Political
Board of trustees	P1	2	3	3
	P2	2	3	3
Administrators	P3	2	3	3
	P4	2	3	2
	P5	2	3	3
Academic senators	P6	3	2	3
	P7	3	2	1
	P8	3	2	2
Faculty association	P9	3	2	3
	P10	3	2	3

*Note.* The following scale was used to assign decision models used by participants: 3 = strong, 2 = intermediate, and 1 = weak.

**Interview question 6.** In IQ6, I asked, describe how you would apply or have applied one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support your proposal pertaining to the *educational facilities master plan* for the college district? Responses to that question by each participant were presented below, divided among four actor groups.

***Within the board of trustees group.*** P1 stated, “Facilities master plan is a problem area because perception is ‘they’re getting it and we’re not,’ which is quite irrational, instead of focusing on what is good for the district.” On the other hand, the

respondent pointed out that the District, politically, got a big plus when it built a new building, outside any of the three colleges that housed the Culinary Arts Academy, which generated 100% employment of those graduating students.

P2 informed that the law required the District to up-to-date the nursing educational facilities for the students, but it ended up building a new building, after rationally analyzing the best course of action. However, the respondent added that the nurse and the math science departments had to share that building space with each other, based on the existing facility structure. Furthermore, P2 explained that the board, administration, and the senate discussed the dynamics of what it takes to operate a nursing building, and negotiated the kind of facility needed.

*Within the administrator group.* P3 stated, “I’ve always looked at educational facilities master planning as a process of exploration, rationally looking at alternatives given the organization’s mission statement and the financial constraints.” The respondent reminisced and explained that, when P3 was involved with developing facility master plan at another college, P3 found it necessary to attend every committee meeting and to sit down with architects and builders. The respondent added that P3’s job was to stay within certain boundaries, including missions and financial constraints, and sometimes P3 would use political pressures to get the job done.

P4 wanted a facilities master plan that was responsive to the organization’s education master plan and structure and that was rationally designed specifically for the demands of the education. However, the respondent also expressed frustration, saying



that sometimes there is a need to apply political pressure to faculty members to fully participate in the development of the facility plan to make it work effectively and efficiently. P4 stated, “As my college is the largest and the oldest of the three colleges, we’re responsible for supporting our sister colleges within the district when developing the facilities master plan.”

P5 was able to move the discussion towards developing the facilities master plan for the respondent’s college by rationally using data from the educational master plan. The respondent offered an example, “Regarding the Ben Clark project, as part of developing our facility plan, we brought in the community business partners together, to discuss the building space issues.” P5 described the project as being complex, saying, “When dealing with these partners, because each side was being asked to give up something, we were into negotiation and give-and-take, when developing the Ben Clark part of the facility plan.”

*Within the academic senate group.* P6 replied that the facilities master plan is developed to facilitate educational master plan and to rationally and logically create the physical resources that are needed. With visible animation, the respondent remarked, “What becomes a problem for me is when the district becomes involved in the facilities plan here at the college, and when district personnel oversees college issues to a degree that it becomes problematic.” The respondent gave an example, saying, “At the Center for Social Justice and Civil Liberties building, our director resigned in protest over the meddling by the district office into the affairs of that building.” The respondent then

indicated that the college's academic senate passed a resolution and moved politically to make clear to the board that P6's college considered the Center to be its own educational facility.

P7 informed that the District received large fund from the state that allowed it to construct many buildings throughout the three colleges. The respondent also indicated that P7's college was able to logically plan and build this student success building. With slight smile, P7 stated, "The three college presidents got the feedback from the faculty, and it was amongst them that they got into politics and fought over the funding."

P8 stated, "[name deleted] College is designated as health-related campus, so we asked to build facility for a nursing program, but we didn't get it because the other college in the District got political and successfully argued against it." The respondent admitted that P8's college is a liberal arts college, so facilities are planned and built accordingly.

*Within the faculty association group.* Concerning educational facilities master plan, P9 indicated that the respondent most often used the rational decision model, seeking to optimize proposals to benefit the District and students. However, the respondent pointed out, "Because we have a lot of shortcomings in the district, I have politically push and push and push the District to remain true to the institutional mission, which is to provide affordable and accessible education to our students."

Because his college has a well-established health related program, P10 used the organizational decision model to argue for facilities for a proposed nursing program, but

the other sister college successfully used the political model, even though the respondent countered with a strong political strategy as well. P10 emphasized the general use of the rational approach to resolve any facility issues. The respondent offered an example, saying, “When we built the SAS building, faculty leaders, including myself, decided that new offices should go to junior faculty members, who were then using sub-standard offices, even though I am the senior faculty member.”

Table 2 for IQ6 showed assignments of varying degrees from strong (3), to intermediate (2), to weak (1) for each rational, organizational, and political decision model that were mentioned or implied by each participant within the four actor groups. This table revealed the following: a) All 10 participants applied all three decision models to varying degrees. b) Board and administrators were consistent and strong (3) in using the organizational decision model. c) Senate and association were mainly strong (3) in using the rational decision model, except for P8 who measured (2) using the rational decision model. d) Board and association were consistent and strong (3) in using the political decision model. Interpretations about each of the above-mentioned findings will be given in Chapter 5.

Table 2

*Educational Facilities Master Plan for the College District*

Actor group	Participant	Decision model		
		Rational	Organizational	Political
Board of trustees	P1	2	3	3
	P2	2	3	3
Administrators	P3	2	3	3
	P4	2	3	2
	P5	2	3	3
Academic senators	P6	3	3	3
	P7	3	2	1
	P8	2	2	1
Faculty association	P9	3	3	3
	P10	3	2	3

*Note.* The following scale was used to assign decision models used by participants: 3 = strong, 2 = intermediate, and 1 = weak.

**Interview question 7.** In IQ7, I asked, describe how you would apply (or have applied) one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support your proposal pertaining to the *educational human resources plan* for the college district? Responses to that question by each participant were presented below, divided among four actor groups.

***Within the board of trustees group.*** P1 responded, “We've had battles in this area over positions, and it goes back to faculty not liking administrators. This is an area where I probably use all three decision-making models, especially the political model because the board has to make the final decision.” To illustrate, the respondent cited the case of where the District hired a compliance officer for the HR department, but faculty demanded that they get rid of her because they were not included in the process of hiring her. Regarding this resource issue, P1 said with resolve, “I will not get rid of someone

who was honestly hired, no matter the political pressure; in the meantime, I will set up a rational board policy, which identifies hiring positions that requires faculty involvement.”

P2 opened with, “An issue at our District is the lack of faculty diversity where our faculty population is predominantly white, and they do not look anything like the student population.” The respondent expressed concerns that an all-white faculty department will put together an all-white screening process, which is likely to result in furthering the hiring of white faculty. The respondent then predicted that any attempt to rationally increase diversify will require the board to use the political decision model because faculty will feel threatened. P2 faced reality with the comment, “Ultimately, an organizational decision model must be applied because if we don't get buy-in from the faculty of the district into that process it's not going to happen.”

*Within the administrator group.* Regarding human resource plan, P3 said, “With the great recession of 2008-09, we had evolved to where majority of our classes were being taught by part-time faculty. But, we need a critical mass of full-time faculty to run the department, to develop curricula, to serve on a curriculum committee [organizational].” To resolve this problem, the respondent is committed to achieving a required level of full-time faculty within the district, and that the respondent is looking to apply the rational model of choices, given the constraints of the organization's budget and the mission. So as to assure success, P3 needs to have conversations with stakeholders about getting to that outcome, and politically, without undermining the uncompromising principles.

As a leader of the college, P4 described the college as having four major councils, including the resource council, and within that council, the college has three sub-councils, including the human resource group [organizational], which relies on industry-wide standard for planning purposes. In addition to using industry standard, the respondent emphasized as always having used logic based on data when developing human resource plan, which is usually acceptable to all stakeholders. Ultimately, P4 confessed, “Between administration and faculty, politics comes in during the hiring process to achieve the 75/25 ratio, 75% full-time faculty to 25% part-time faculty, because of financial and other constraints.”

P5 made it clear by stating that the respondent’s college exists as a service organization to bring students in, get them processed, get them into classes, help them to learn, and process them out. Regarding human resource operation, the respondent emphasized that P5 endeavors to make rational data-driven decisions that make sense to stakeholder and that is sustainable. P5 went on to say, “I probably use a little bit of all three decision models. For example, I’ve used political model to get people to understand what we’re trying to accomplish in the controversial area of human resources, and I’ve shown willingness to negotiate to resolve such issues.”

***Within the academic senate group.*** P6 explained that the educational human resources plan was formulated according to rational standards and processes, in which 50% of resources should be allocated at a minimum to instruction and 75% of the instruction should be done by full-time faculty. Furthermore, when it comes to how

faculty position should be allocated, the respondent pointed out that the college is connected to its comprehensive program review and to its councils, the Academic Program council and the Resource Development council, for prioritization and recommendations. With respect to the college's administrative positions, the respondent stressed, "It needs to be supple, it needs to be lean, and it needs to be effective." At the district level, P6 said that there are problems. "The district continues to decide faculty resources for all three colleges, in direct contrast with what the colleges need in terms of their own personnel. So now, there is political pushback from the colleges."

P7 explained that every year the college hires new faculty, but that it is done by a static formula, in which the main college gets 50% of the new faculty hires, and the other two colleges, including hers, get 25% each. Furthermore, the respondent explained that the base and actual numbers are 180 full-time faculties at the main college, 90 full-time faculty at the other college, and 72 at the respondent's college, so the 25% formula cited above is very unfair. P7 approached the District politically by saying, "I argued that we cannot continue with the 50/25/25 formula, as is, because our college needs to catch up on the numbers, proportionately, for the formula to be fair."

P8 focused on a problem and mentioned that the respondent's college is rationally lacking in number of full-time faculty. The respondent explained that this deficiency is adversely affecting students, who need to know that faculty is looking after their educational and career needs, which are not coming from the large number of existing part-time faculty. P8 also stated, "Part-time faculties need the assurance that they don't

have to worry about being politically correct, as full-time faculties don't have that fear based on tenure, and that they have the time and energy to participate in committees and in shared governance activities of the district.”

*Within the faculty association group.* P9 claimed that the District has a lot of shortcoming in the existing programs that relate to human resource areas. Therefore, the respondent stressed always having pushed hard politically for human resource plans that emphasize rationally optimizing benefits to the District and students. In particular, P9 said, “Even though I've pushed hard for effective human resource plan, I learned never to compromise in this policy area, and keep pushing for optimization of benefit for the district and students, otherwise heavy price is paid later.”

Similarly, P10 explained having used all three decision models when arguing for hiring full-time faculty. As a chairperson, the respondent requires each discipline and department to put forward a rationale, and the rationale has to be based on data, such as how many part-time sections are now being offered. To serve as an example, P10 stated, “We don't have a full-time economist in our department, so that has to take precedent, even though I have the political power to get it my way.”

Table 3 for IQ7 showed assignments of varying degrees from strong (3), to intermediate (2), to weak (1) for each rational, organizational, and political decision model that were mentioned or implied by each participant within the four actor groups. This table revealed the following: a) All 10 participants applied all three decision models to varying degrees. b) Board and administrators were consistent and strong (3) in using



the organizational decision model. c) Senate and association were consistent and strong (3) in using the rational decision model. d) Board and association were consistent and strong (3) in using the political decision model. Interpretations about each of the above-mentioned findings will be given in Chapter 5.

Table 3

*Educational Human Resource Plan for the College District*

Actor group	Participant	Decision model		
		Rational	Organizational	Political
Board of trustees	P1	2	3	3
	P2	2	3	3
Administrators	P3	2	3	3
	P4	3	3	2
	P5	3	3	3
Academic senators	P6	3	3	3
	P7	3	2	1
	P8	3	2	1
Faculty association	P9	3	3	3
	P10	3	2	3

*Note.* The following scale was used to assign decision models used by participants: 3 = strong, 2 = intermediate, and 1 = weak.

### **Research Question 3: Data and Analysis per Budgeting Process**

In RQ3, I inquired to what extent do the four groups of actors apply the rational, organizational, and political decision models in the decision processes as means to implement shared governance mandate that deals with institutional planning and budgeting processes. Answers to RQ3 came from interview questions IQ5 through IQ10. Findings showed that participants acted more cooperatively with other diverse groups on issues pertaining to *planning* portion of the mandate covered by IQ5 through IQ7; whereas, they acted more contentiously on issues dealing with *budgeting* part of the

mandate covered by IQ8 through IQ10. Therefore, to make the analytic process meaningful, I divided RQ3 into two parts, beginning with three sets of questions dealing with institutional planning. In this section, I will introduce data from three sets of questions pertaining to budgeting process, and from each of the four actor groups.

**Interview question 8.** In IQ8, I asked, describe how you would apply (or have applied) one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support your proposal pertaining to the *budget development* for the college district? Responses to IQ8 by all 10 participants were presented below, based on the four actor groups.

***Within the board of trustees group.*** P1 emphatically stated, “We cannot adopt a budget that goes into the red, even if in reality it would not. Those are organizational budget rules, and you cannot violate them.” The respondent went on to describe having difficulty with faculty and having to persuade them politically, which P1 said was an educational process. The respondent added, “Board is liable for problems arising from the budget development process, and when rationally explained that way, the board and faculty can work things out.”

Regarding budget development, P2 stated the following, “When we get a certain amount of money from the state, all relevant stakeholders have to sit down and decide how we going to spend this money.” The respondent offered two examples of successful programs that had problems getting started. First example was the Ben Clark training center, which is the law-enforcement and fire training facility, and which today provides the District great success, but which is considered a high cost program. The second

example was the nursing program, which today shows substantial payoff that exceeded the high cost of operation, and which demonstrates the value of evaluating programs rationally. P2 pointed out, “When both programs were being proposed, many faculties opposed these two programs because they didn’t understand it. To resolve the impasse, the board resorted to the political model and made its decision.”

*Within the administrator group.* P3 thoughtfully reflected and stated that P3’s college district is not succeeding with its fastest-growing demographic, who are Latino students not being provided equity. The respondent followed by saying that P3 needs to have that demographic conversation with faculty as the District develops a budget grounded in rational process. With emphasis, P3 stated, “We are going to address equity and negotiate whatever it takes to implement plans.”

P4 explained that the District has a budget allocation model that apportions money to the three colleges [organizational]. The respondent described the allocation as being, “driven usually by the full-time equivalent (FTE) students designated to each of the colleges; so, 54% of the FTS comes to my college, 23% each goes to two other colleges.” As a caveat, the respondent pointed out that adjustments are rationally made in a form of weighted allocation to give colleges that offer high cost technical education programs. Furthermore, P4 stressed that the District and all three colleges try every year to refine and improve the budget development process, be it politically when necessary, to make it more responsive to the needs and demands of students and community.

P5 implored having said, “We want budget development process to be data and logic driven. But, the reality is, we need to educate people about what they can and cannot do with the money, and this process entails getting into a sort of negotiation.” However, the respondent acknowledged being fortunate in that P5 has an organization of people who will sit down and work together as a team.

*Within the academic senate group.* P6 insisted that there are systemic problems with the District budget development process, that there are needs for proper allocation of funds across the three colleges, and that the District needs to develop and apply a realistic budget development process. P6 stated the following:

At the district level, we have to, in a sense, teach members of the board and administration that our purpose is educating and that its budget development process needs to realistically allocate funds across the three colleges, realizing that each college serves a diverse demographic community. At my college, we have primarily Latino community that is growing in size. If you drive east to the other college, you’ll find very different community there, and the same is true for the third college to the west. What the District should be doing is, having its budget devoted to developing a plan [rational] that is going to address these divergent interests and prioritize them, and allocate accordingly. Presently, we don't have that at the District. This is a problem. Until we have a district plan, the three colleges will continue to fight over the budget. Presently, money

is allocated 54% to the first college, and 23% each goes to the other two colleges, even though all three colleges are fully accredited. Is that allocation correct? How can anybody possibly know that without a proper analysis?

P7 acknowledged that faculty hires are not allotted strategically at the respondent's college, but rather in a very rigid way, for example 54/23/23. P7 admitted that the other two colleges have expensive programs, which require more funds paying for the nursing and the dental hygiene programs. The respondent claimed to have tried the rational and the organizational approach to get the budget changed, and, in a tone of exasperation, P7 stated, "I've spoken quite vocally, but we have not gotten the change. I'm becoming a bit more savvy with the political but that's difficult because it seems a lot goes on behind the scenes."

On budget development, P8 was fairly effective in the use of the rational decision model of convincing stakeholders when P8 proposed a more fluid allocation budget plan. The respondent referred to the current budget allocation model as the "damn" model, because it is static based on the 50/25/25 formula. However, P8 confessed, "I was not effective in the implementation of my proposal, that is, how do we get organized for it and how do we implement it without upsetting folks along the way? We have yet to figure out, how to implement a more equitable plan."

*Within the faculty association group.* P9 replied that, for budget development, the respondent used rational decision model as well as political decision model,

depending on areas of budget being considered. The respondent declared, “I push the rational decision model, working to develop a budget that best serves the interest of both the District and students, and I never compromise on the mission,” which P9 explained is to provide affordable and accessible education to our students and community. When it comes to the work of the faculty association, the respondent stated with confidence, “On my watch, I’ve never accepted salary cut, and have never accepted cuts to our healthcare and benefits.”

P10 sadly acknowledged that, given the district is the one that has the resources, all three colleges essentially battle for as many of the resources as they can get. The respondent also explained that the budget development process, given the competition of the colleges for limited resources, is complicated because different programs are offered at the different colleges. “It seems to me, to the extent that people argue politically and effectively, is why the bigger college gets its way. But, it also seems to me, overwhelmingly, there is an attempt to use the rational model to make cases that are compelling.”

Table 4 for IQ8 showed assignments of varying degrees from strong (3), to intermediate (2), to weak (1) for the rational, organizational, and political decision models that were mentioned or implied by each participant within the four actor groups. This table revealed the following: a) All 10 participants applied all three decision models to varying degrees. b) Board and administrators were consistent and strong (3) in using the organizational decision model. c) Senate and association were consistent and strong

(3) in using the rational decision model. d) Board and association were consistent and strong (3) in using the political decision model. Interpretations about each of the above-mentioned findings will be given in Chapter 5.

Table 4

*Budget Development for the College District*

Actor group	Participant	Decision model		
		Rational	Organizational	Political
Board of trustees	P1	2	3	3
	P2	2	3	3
Administrators	P3	2	3	3
	P4	2	3	2
	P5	3	3	3
Academic senators	P6	3	3	3
	P7	3	2	2
	P8	3	2	2
Faculty association	P9	3	3	3
	P10	3	2	3

*Note.* The following scale was used to assign decision models used by participants: 3 = strong, 2 = intermediate, and 1 = weak.

**Interview question 9.** In IQ9, I asked, describe how you would apply (or have applied) one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support your proposal pertaining to the *funding priorities and allocation* for the college district? Responses to that question by each participant were presented below, divided among four actor groups.

***Within the board of trustees group.*** P1 claimed that the board has had heated discussions with stakeholders over priorities and allocations. The respondent offered an example involving the United Nations program, which is very expensive, flying 20 kids

and two faculty members to Europe. However, the respondent pointed out, the payoff to the District is great, as it is number one in the nation, competing against likes of Boston University. Unfortunately, the respondent confessed, the UN program, in terms of tradeoff, prevents the District from offering more classes to more students because these programs are being paid through discretionary state fund. In an effort to find a solution, the respondent has been trying to reach a compromise with faculty groups by suggesting alternative financing. P1 stated, “For example, we have the forensics group who donated \$5000 to that program. We can apply for grants later on through our successful fundraising record, and it makes it easier for us to get federal money.”

P2 immediately mentioned that the very first funding priority is for the students, providing them with classes they need. The respondent indicated the urgency of this matter by describing the District as having just come out of eight years of painful downsizing, at which time the colleges were cutting back on classes and turning away almost 1200 students. Since the recession, P2 explained with relief, that the District has become very good at acquiring federal and state grant funding, whereby at one point, the District got close to 40 million dollars of federal grant money. “Even then, the board had to invoke political decision model because we had to negotiate, based on the district mission, where the fund were going to go, resulting in one entity getting more money than another entity, contrary to what it thought it deserved.”

*Within the administrator group.* P3 explained that the budget development process is being vetted through the district strategic planning group, which is a broad-



based representative group of people [organizational]. Regarding funding priorities and allocation, the respondent stressed that they are driven by the District mission, which is stated as goals, and that those goals make the funding decisions that drive those priorities. “I listen to the stakeholder options but eventually, because of the contentious nature of funding priorities and allocations, I end up making the decision. When priorities have been decided on, we have to quit doing other things.”

P4 talked about the integrated planning process, in which integration takes place both vertically and horizontally within the respondent’s college [organizational]. The respondent explained that vertical means planning of the academic discipline is integrated as it moves through the departments, division, and deans, and that those priorities are determined throughout this planning process. Furthermore, the respondent described the horizontal process to means integration takes place to assure that necessary resources are attached to the academics, that student services support the academic side, and that administrative and business support both the academic and student sides. “So, in this vertical and horizontal integrated planning process, the highest fund priorities and allocation go to the faculty.”

P5 described frustration with the policies and practices of the District as to the funding priorities and allocation system. The respondent explained that six years ago the two sibling colleges, P5’s college and the other one, became fully accredited colleges. But the funds allocation model within the district, across all three colleges, remained unchanged, based on FTE (full-time equivalent) student model, as opposed to rationally

factoring in the special cost of programs being offered. The respondent continued to explain that P5's college features the Ben Clark Training Center (BCTC) and Allied Health Science program, both of which are very expensive in terms of cost per student. The cost of offering BCTC averages \$8000 per FTE student, whereby the district is reimbursed \$4700 per FTE student from the State, and in turn, the district reimburses the respondent's college only \$2,700 per FTE student. The deficit between \$8000 and \$2,700 means that the respondent is hampered in not being able to offer other courses and doing other educationally worthy things. P5 concluded, "We're constantly fighting this battle of trying to get the district to rethink how to equitably allocate funding."

*Within the academic senate group.* With visible emotion, P6 stated, "For me, there is fundamental disconnect between our colleges and District office." Regarding the question, the respondent replied, "At my college, we apply logical budget development process, and we align funding priorities and allocations along the college mission and plan; I would like to see the District do the same." Additionally, the respondent spoke for his sister college to the West by indicating that it has vigorously argued, based on rational data, for more resources. P6 explained that the District's funding priorities and allocations have to be done more logically to connect the three colleges, by understanding the respective demographics that each college serves. "This is a fundamental problem for me, that the District has not formulated a plan, like the college has, that tries to create a rational foundation that takes personalities and pet interests and politics out of the equation."

P7 explained that about 80% of all the money that comes into the District is already fixed, which pays salaries to faculty, staff, and administrators, including healthcare and benefits. The respondent added that, of the remaining 20%, even in that case, it cannot be argued when they come under categorical funding that goes toward specific programs. “So, when we’re talking about funding priorities and allocation, the remaining, say, 15% is the one that we politically fight over [rationally].”

Concerning issues about funding priorities and allocation of the District, P8 mentioned that the respondent has not been very good at persuading stakeholders on the implementation using the organizational and the political decision models. For example, if P8 were to propose for the three colleges a 45-30-25 allocation plan [rational], the respondent claimed the mindset would be that the proposal is set permanently in place, and therefore, nobody would agree to it. “Implementation of making changes in funding priorities and allocations are always extremely difficult, so much so that, I hear people saying, “A known devil is better than an unknown God.”

*Within the faculty association group.* P9 explained that the respondent uses the organizational decision model because P9 must look carefully at the existing programs to make sure that proposed programs are going to be funded properly. After that, P9 described focus on using the rational decision model to propose new programs, showing alternative and persuading how the new programs benefit the district and students. For example, the respondent stated, “I don’t use the political decision model as expected to pressure the district at the negotiating table. Rather, I rely on the rational model by

presenting proposals in a reasonable manner.” The respondent offered an example, having said, “In the previous negotiation with the District, I proposed a faculty salary raise of only 2%, a demand that is considered to be very modest, but in exchange, I asked for an increase in faculty hires. P9 then stated, “I explained to the District that approval of my proposal would save face for both the District and the union; my proposal was approved.”

P10 remarked, “District is the one that distributes the goodies. For instance, when the District gets new money for remediation and for stem research, which of the three colleges get the money?” The respondent continued to ask, “How do we get as much money as needed, when the other two colleges are clamoring for more?” To answer his rhetorical question, the respondent said that diversity is really important, because each college organization is distinct and has discrete needs. However, the respondent claimed that, because P10’s college has more minorities and a higher African-American mix in the community, P10’s college is the last in priorities. With a smile, the respondent immediately said, of course that is not true, “but, the perception persists.” In the end, P10 stated, “I would say, because of shared governance, in terms of prioritizing and allocation of funding, the board and association does its level best to be rational. Through politics, the winning strategy has been for the district to deliver to the communities kinds of programs that are best needed.”

Table 5 for IQ9 showed assignments of varying degrees from strong (3), to intermediate (2), to weak (1) for each rational, organizational, and political decision

model that were mentioned or implied by each participant within the four actor groups. This table revealed the following: a) All 10 participants applied all three decision models to varying degrees. b) Board and administrators were consistent and strong (3) in using the organizational decision model. c) Senate and association were mainly strong (3) in using the rational decision model, except for P7 who measured (2) using the rational decision model. d) Board and association were consistent and strong (3) in using the political decision model. Interpretations about each of the above-mentioned findings will be given in Chapter 5.

Table 5

*Funding Priorities and Allocation for the College District*

Actor group	Participant	Decision model		
		Rational	Organizational	Political
Board of trustees	P1	2	3	3
	P2	2	3	3
Administrators	P3	2	3	3
	P4	2	3	2
	P5	3	3	3
Academic senators	P6	3	3	3
	P7	2	2	2
	P8	3	2	2
Faculty association	P9	3	3	3
	P10	3	3	3

*Note.* The following scale was used to assign decision models used by participants: 3 = strong, 2 = intermediate, and 1 = weak.

**Interview question 10.** In IQ10, I asked, describe how you would apply (or have applied) one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support your proposal pertaining to the *discretionary, contingency, and reserved funds* for the

college district? Responses to that question by each participant were presented below, divided among four actor groups.

***Within the board of trustees group.*** With stern voice, P1 stated, “Reserve funding is always, it seems, a point of contention. The board is unified against reducing the reserve. We keep the reserve at 5% for sudden emergencies and for tragedies that happened unexpectedly.” The respondent added that P1 always gives logical reasons for protecting the reserve, and the respondent said with confidence, P1 knows how to say no nicely. Through skillful budget practice, the respondent claimed that the District came out of the great recession as one of the fiscally strongest districts in the entire state. P1 stated the following:

In fact, our District went through accreditation recently and, from among 57 colleges - half of the total 113 California community colleges - that were assessed, only seven were given full accreditation with no probation and no issues, and that included all of our three colleges. That is amazing! You don't get that if you don't have a board that knows how to communicate and work together through shared governance mandate.

In the case of the reserve funds, with slight disdain, P2 indicated that stakeholders and vested interest groups see the reserve fund like a savings account, from which funds are pulled out when they want to use some of it. With a determined voice, the respondent said that the board is adamant that reserve funds, currently at 5%, are there only to be used for emergency. The respondent informed that some districts did not have reserve

funds available to them during emergency, but P2's District did have reserve, at least 5%. With an air of pride, P2 stated, "Decisions to use the discretionary contingency and reserve funds have been handled [political] extremely well in the District."

*Within the administrator group.* P3 opened with the remark, "When I was a college president, I came into a meeting of faculty, at which time they asked me about the slush fund." Regarding question about reserve funds, the respondent indicated that faculty often asks about the reserve as slush fund, and P3 would repeatedly explain to them that it is there to be used to meet emergencies and cash flow short falls [organizational]. The respondent offered an example to make a point. "Our payroll - cash outflow - is a steady \$20 million a month, but our revenue - cash inflow - from the State during the year looks like feast to famine. So, during months of famine, we go to the reserve fund balance to meet the emergency payroll." P3 concluded his remarks with, "That is how I explain the use of discretionary, contingency, and reserved fund. They are not slush fund, and they cannot be touched."

P4 formed a foundation with the statement, "District has a budgeting philosophy, which says, don't do things outside the plan [SOP]." The respondent explained that the District has a plan, obviously, to cover all foreseeable events, but we also have a plan to meet any unforeseeable events in the form of emergency. With that said, the respondent stated that, by following this rule, the District avoids making funding decisions that are haphazard and crisis driven. In summary, P4 reemphasized the point that the uses of discretionary, contingency, and reserve fund are driven by a rational plan, whether the

plan deals with foreseeable event, such as to meet shortfall in payroll, or with unforeseen events, such as equipment breakdown that is not covered in the current budget. “In any case, no one is to disrupt these special funds.”

With a smile, P5 stated, “I’m going to answer your question by saying it’s been a challenge applying the decision models regarding discretionary funding, because I saw a need to reconfirm prioritization of how to allocate the fund among stakeholders.” The respondent explained that P5 has been using the organizational decision model to bring stakeholders together, who were parties to developing the original set of priorities. With consternation, the respondent conveyed that P5 discovered when the priority processes were being made that there were some stakeholders who lacked complete understanding of the processes. Seemingly, the respondent insisted that P5 needed assurances from everyone, that everyone agreed, and that these are everyone’s priorities. “I’m trying to train people to think in terms of priorities and to worry about the money later. If money fell from heaven, I want to be able to say this is the list of our priorities.”

***Within the academic senate group.*** With an expression of disappointment, P6 stated, “Without consulting with faculty, the District finance people moved to increase our reserve from 5% to 10%, whereas 5% is the state mandate.” The respondent explained that the District finance people, as a general rule, are conservative budgeters, so they always underestimate revenue, and they always overestimate expenditures. “For someone who has done budgeting, I would say that this move comes close to CYA budget. Nonetheless, I find such budgeting practice troubling.” The respondent continued



to explain that proposal to move the budget from 5% to 10% would keep the colleges from being able to fund educational initiatives, from hiring faculty, and from doing number of educationally worthwhile projects. With exasperation, P6 implored that the correct process should be, bring such budget proposals to the colleges, have a serious discussion about what works and what doesn't, and know why the District want to pursue a particular path or another [rational]. "But, that didn't happen. The faculty association and the academic senate spoke out against this."

Regarding discretionary and contingency funds, P7 answered that there is need to ensure that the money is spent as mandated, which means for emergency purposes. As for reserve funds, the respondent indicated that the board of trustees is considering making changes to how it is going to be established. The respondent informed that this came about through the district strategic planning council, which made a presentation at P7's college to the board of trustees about increasing the reserve funds from 5% to 10%. The respondent presumed that, in a couple of weeks, all three senate presidents, faculty association, administrators and staff will meet to discuss this proposed change to the reserve fund. "When all sides meet, we will see how shared governance work and how this controversial issue is discussed and resolved, most likely through the political process."

P8 opened with a claim that the District's La Siera Fund had \$12 million, which maintained a sacrosanct status that the fund could not be spent and that was when the District was in the middle of budget crunch in 2008. The respondent explained that, with

effort, the senate and the association got the board of trustees to listen, telling them that those funds cannot just sit there while students are being turned away [rational], simply because somebody in the district wanted to protect that money for the arts or for a building somewhere. “Finally, we got access to the 12 million, by getting the board to agree to allow us to borrow that money, on a proviso that it will be paid back.” P8 added, “We also got the reserve fund reduced from 5 to 3%, with the understanding that the reserve will be rebuilt during subsequent years.”

*Within the faculty association group.* P9 conveyed an interesting experience, in which board members and chancellor told him that there is no money in the District. To that, the respondent remarked, “The money is there; the question is, knowing where to look for that money.” The respondent explained that P9 has access to faculty members who are experts on budgeting process, and who would analyze and prepare the budget [rational] for P9. The respondent continued to explain that, with the prepared budget, P9 went to the District and showed them the money in the budget, contrary to their claim that the District is short on money. “In other words, the District resorts to all kinds of creative budgeting, but I know how to call them on that.” The respondent added that P9 relied heavily on the rational decision model, basing his arguments on irrefutable data and what is best for the District and students. The respondent proudly claimed that, because P9’s proposals are rational and reasonable, P9 never compromised [political pressure] on key programs and issues. “Incidentally, regarding board’s effort to increase reserve funds from 5% to 10%, I reached an agreement with the District, that during the

six years period, they would be under a contract to increase full-time hiring by 46%, and that's a huge number that will benefit a lot of students.”

P10 recollected and explained that, since the 2009 recession and until very recently, all three colleges cut sections after sections as a result of cuts in State monies, whereupon the colleges cut 1000 sections in one academic year. In desperation, at that time, the respondent recalled that the colleges focused on reserve fund of the District, but the District did not want to touch the 5%. To resolve this dire situation, P10 indicated that the faculty association was able to pressure [political] the district to spend the reserve, so that the colleges got them down to 3% reserve [rational].

Table 6 for IQ10 showed assignments of varying degrees from strong (3), to intermediate (2), to weak (1) for each rational, organizational, and political decision model that were mentioned or implied by each participant within the four actor groups. This table revealed the following: a) All 10 participants applied all three decision models to varying degrees. b) Board and administrators were consistent and strong (3) in using the organizational decision model. c) Senate and association were consistent and strong (3) in using the rational decision model. d) Board and association were consistent and strong (3) in using the political decision model. Interpretations about each of the above-mentioned findings will be given in Chapter 5.

Table 6

*Discretionary, Contingency, and Reserved Funds for College District*

Actor group	Participant	Decision model		
		Rational	Organizational	Political
Board of trustees	P1	3	3	3
	P2	2	3	3
Administrators	P3	2	3	3
	P4	2	3	2
	P5	2	3	2
Academic senators	P6	3	3	3
	P7	3	2	2
	P8	3	2	3
Faculty association	P9	3	3	3
	P10	3	3	3

*Note.* The following scale was used to assign decision models used by participants: 3 = strong, 2 = intermediate, and 1 = weak.

**Discrepant data for RQ 3.** RQ3 was answered through IQ5 through IQ10, in which IQ5 through IQ7 asked about issues pertaining to institutional planning, whereas, IQ8 through IQ10 asked about issues dealing with budgeting process. Data showed that relationship among participants were more contentious when dealing with budgeting issues, and were less so when dealing with institutional planning matters. Notwithstanding those differences in participant relationships, I expected results to show consistencies in the use of decision models within each actor groups. Instead, in Table 1, one member (P7) within the academic senate was strong (3) with the use of the rational decision model, but was weak (1) with the use of the political decision model. Also in Table 2, two members (P7 and P8) within the academic senate were weak (1) with the use of the political decision model, while one member (P7) was strong (3) with the use of the rational decision model. Finally, in Table 3, again, two members (P7 and P8) within

the academic senate were strong (3) with the use of the rational decision model, but were weak (1) with the use of the political decision model. Variations in data, such as those mentioned above, are referred to as discrepant cases (Creswell, 2007).

Determining the causes of variations in the data are complex. One contributing factor to the variation may be that dealing with planning activities is less contentious among participants in the same group, in comparison to dealing with budgeting issues. Thus, the use of the political decision model may be less urgent in the case of planning. As variations in data mentioned above are linked to the same respondents, another contributing factor may be personalities. Some respondents may not be comfortable in using the political decision model when they are dealing with budgeting issues. Thus, these respondents from the academic senate group were shown to use the political decision model at the intermediate level when they dealt with budgeting issues. See Table 4 through Table 6, in which relationships among participants are less cooperative and more resistant to resolution.

**Conclusion for RQ3.** RQ3 asked, to what extent do the four groups of actors apply the rational, organizational, and political decision models in the decision processes as means to implement shared governance mandate that deals with institutional planning and budgeting processes. Answers to RQ3 came from IQ5 through IQ10, which were asked of all 10 participants in the study. RQ3 was divided and treated separately, beginning with IQ5, IQ6, and IQ7 pertaining to institutional planning, followed by IQ8, IQ9, and IQ10 about the budgeting processes. The reason for presenting RQ3 in two parts

was, findings showed that participants acted more cooperatively with other diverse groups on issues pertaining to *planning* portion of the mandate; whereas, they acted more contentiously on issues dealing with *budgeting* part of the mandate. The contentious nature of dealing with budgeting issues is evident in Tables 4, 5, and 6, where all participants, who represented their respective groups, aggressively applied all three decision models, which resulted in showing assignments that scored no less than (2) in the above mentioned tables.

In general, Tables 1 through 6 revealed the following about participant behavior concerning use of decision models: a) All 10 participants applied all three decision models (DM) to varying degrees. b) Board and administrators were consistent and strong (3) in using the organizational DM. (c) Senate and association were consistent and strong (3) in using the rational DM. (d) Board and association were consistent and strong (3) in using the political DM. As I mentioned earlier, interpretations of the above-mentioned findings will be given in Chapter 5.

In terms of identifying a theme for RQ3, given the patterns of IQ5 through IQ10 answers, the dominant and salient theme was: “The use of all three decision models creates collaboration.”

### **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness, within the context of Chapter 4, was established when I demonstrated that the results of the study are sound and when I argued that results are

strong. Here, trustworthiness was determined through addressing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability concerns.

As means for maintaining credibility, I used a triangulation technique, in which three independent sources, interviews, observation, and document review, were applied to monitor accuracy of findings. I also used member checks to confirm the accuracy of data collection and analytic processes.

Regarding triangulation and member check, which are common strategies to test the credibility of findings, I used them cautiously because overuse can negate their intended purposes. For example, triangulation supposes that all independent sources will agree with each other or, at least, will not contradict themselves. Overuse may cause pairwise confirmations that are illogical when all pairs are integrated. As for member checking, it is done on the supposition that participants may agree with researcher or with one another instead of supplying information that conflicts with their basic values or beliefs or with information that threatens their self-interests.

As means for establish transferability, I applied thick description technique towards data analysis, a technique that explains not only human behavior but also its context, such that the behavior became more meaningful to an outsider. This nexus between behavior and context was clearly demonstrated in my field research and writings of Chapter 4. As means for achieving dependability, I practiced self-audit of the research process to maintain consistency of how data was collected, how data was kept, and how data was analyzed, as I have demonstrated that process in my field research and writings

of Chapter 4. As means for maintaining confirmability, I practiced self-audit of the research process to attest that the findings and interpretations are supported by data, again, as I have clearly demonstrated in my field research and writings of Chapter 4.

In conclusion, I have shown that my study was trustworthy by having explained to the readers that my research procedures as described gave assurance that its methods are reliable and that its findings are valid. In order to avoid criticism for failing to give attention to a common validity threat, that the interviewee reports are inherently, and always, influenced by the interviewer and the interview situation (Maxwell, 2005), I have openly acknowledged that phenomenon and have stated how I dealt with such threat while preserving the integrity and the outcome of the study.

### **Summary**

The primary purpose of Chapter 4 was to address the three research questions by presenting the data provided by the 10 participants and by determining the findings for the study. I gave the findings both relevance and meaning through the application of the following study elements: a) the purpose of the study, which was to understand how the mixing of all three decision models promoted synergism of actions among the four diverging actor groups to implement shared governance mandate; b) the theoretical framework, which was to understand why the combined application of rational, organizational, and political decision models resulted in implementation of the mandate pertaining to institutional planning and budgeting processes; c) the three research questions, including the 10 interview questions, which were logically described and



asked; and d) the participant profile, in which each participant was identified using a pseudonym.

Regarding RQ1, which was asked through IQ1 and IQ2, the responses by all participants showed that they have sufficient knowledge of the California's shared governance mandate; and therefore, they were qualified as participants for the study. Regarding RQ2, which was asked through IQ3 and IQ4, the responses by all participants showed an alignment between balanced support and reasonable expectations, which indicated that there were sufficient commitment towards the mandate. This commitment, in turn, contributed towards promoting unity of effort among all actor groups for the implementation of the California's shared governance mandate, in particular that part of the code that deals with institutional planning and budgeting processes. Under the RQ2 test, all 10 participants were qualified to complete the study.

Regarding RQ3, which was asked through IQ5 through IQ10, the problem was to determine to what extent all participants applied all three decision models when confronting other diverse groups on issues relating to the institutional planning and to the budgeting process provisions of the shared governance mandate. Tables 1 through 6 revealed, in general, the following about participant behavior concerning use of decision models: a) All 10 participants applied all three decision models (DM) to varying degrees. b) Board and administrators were consistent and strong (3) in using the organizational DM. c) Senate and association were consistent and strong (3) in using the rational DM. d) Board and association were consistent and strong (3) in using the political DM.

In Chapter 5, I continue with analysis of the findings of the study. Specifically, I will conduct and present analyses, interpretation of the findings, implications for social change, and recommendations for action and for further study.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

A brief review of the problem that initiated my study is necessary to ground my interpretations of the findings. Many leaders of CCC districts continue to struggle when implementing California's shared mandate law even though the law was enacted more than two decades ago (Potter, & Phelan, 2008). However, based on reputation, which was reported to me by a former CCC colleague, I purposefully chose for my study a successful community college district. In confirmation, contrary to the struggles reported in the literature, a leader representing the board of trustees claimed in the interview that all of the district's three colleges were given full accreditation with no probations and no issues by the accreditation commission. In other words, of the 57 community colleges assessed, seven CCCs were given full accreditation, which included the district's three colleges that were covered in my study. This trustee leader explained that the board and the administration collaborate with the academic senates and the faculty association to implement the mandated provisions described as institutional planning and budgeting processes. I deemed that it was not warranted to add less successful community colleges to my study.

I was motivated to conduct my study when I observed the failure of so many CCC districts in comparison to the success of one district, relative to the shared governance mandate. My intent was to understand the decision processes as they are practiced by the four actor groups, with respect to the rational, organizational, and political decision

models at the chosen research site. Furthermore, I sought to understand how these decision processes created synergism of actions and unity of effort among board members, administrators, faculty members, and faculty association leaders.

In Chapter 5, I present my interpretations of the findings derived from a narrative analysis of the data, and I discuss how the findings matched the conceptual framework and literature. Additionally, I provide an interpretation of each finding that were derived from the research questions. Thus, interview data and findings are discussed to show how they are aligned with the purpose of the study, the research questions, the chosen conceptual framework, and the literature reviewed. Finally, I cover the limitations of the study, the implications for social change, and the recommendations for action and future study. A dominant theme throughout Chapter 5 reflects how members from each of the four actor groups worked for student success at the three California community colleges of the district.

### **Interpretations of the Findings**

My findings and interpretations dealt mainly with four areas, based on research questions. The four areas were: a) RQ1 pertaining to knowledge of the mandate, b) RQ2 pertaining to commitment to the mandate, c) first half of the RQ3 pertaining to institutional planning, and d) second half of the RQ3 pertaining to budgeting process. Additionally, my interpretations were based on a conceptual framework of three decision models. Ultimately, my interpretations of the findings suggest how members from each of the four actor groups worked for student success at the chosen CCC district.

### **Research Question 1 per Knowledge of Mandate**

In RQ1, I inquired as to what extent participants knew about California's 1988 shared governance mandate. Through IQ1 and IQ2, all participants indicated that they were more than sufficiently knowledgeable about the State mandate. The intent of seeking answers to RQ1 was to determine whether participants were qualified to participate in a diligent manner with the subsequent sections of my study. In support of RQ1, P2, as a member of the board of trustees, stated "In essence, faculty have an innate knowledge which the trustees don't always have, so in shared governance all stakeholders come to the table where knowledge is shared and the decision benefits the community at large." Analysis of remaining data pertaining to RQ1 showed that all 10 participants have sufficient knowledge of the State mandate. I expected to see this result in my study because my interpretation of the findings confirmed that all members from the four actor groups are sufficiently knowledgeable about the mandate and because leaders who manage a successful college district tend to be highly educated and articulate.

Regarding RQ1, the finding and its interpretation are aligned with reports of the ACCJC (2013) whose focus was about the relationship between faculty members and their governing boards concerning the shared governance mandate. The Commission reported that active participation by faculties, which includes academic senates and faculty associations, provides needed academic information and support for development and delivery of key educational programs. This level of academic expertise is lacking

among trustees and administrators (ACCJC, 2013; Kezar & Lester, 2009). The Commission inferred that all leaders representing the four actor groups were sufficiently knowledgeable about the mandate.

Additionally, Crellin (2010) mentioned, for example, that “someone who worked in a faculty union and was then sent to management not only would have keen insight on how each group works, but would likely experience a shift of allegiance, values, and group identity” (p. 78). Kezar and Lester (2009) commented that knowledge of shared governance by boards of trustees, administrators, academic senates, and faculty associations, along with academic expertise by faculties, assured the best means by which to successfully develop and deliver educational programs to meet student needs and to achieve student success at institutions of higher learning. Thus, in RQ1, my interpretation of the findings showed that all participants from all four actor groups have more than sufficient knowledge about California’s 1988 shared governance mandate, as such findings were shown to be aligned with and supported by the literature.

### **Research Question 2 per Commitment to Mandate**

In RQ2, I inquired as to what extent participants are committed to implementing the mandated provisions concerning institutional planning and budgeting processes. Through IQ3 and IQ4, all participants indicated that they were very committed to implementing California’s shared governance mandate. My intent for asking RQ2 was to determine whether participants were qualified to participate in answering RQ3. P8, a member of the academic senate group, stated, “I was informed about California’s shared

governance mandate back in 1992 and I loved it. I promptly joined the academic senate, even though I wasn't tenured yet." I concluded that all participants were committed to the mandate and were uniquely qualified to participate in the study. Furthermore, my interpretation of the findings is that all leaders within the four actor groups are similarly committed to the shared governance mandate.

As all 10 participants showed enthusiastic support for the mandate, I expected that answers to IQ3 would show balanced support and that answers to IQ4 would show realistic expectations for the mandate. I interpreted balanced support and realistic expectations as an indication of their sustainable commitment to the shared governance mandate. These commitments suggest to me that there is a strong foundation for using decision processes that create synergism of actions and a unity of effort among all the leaders in the four actor groups.

My support of RQ2 is aligned with the views of the WASC (2009). Representative for that Association reported that the shared governance work of the board of trustees and administrators was made more effective and efficient through the participatory commitments by faculty members. Melguizo, Hagedorn, and Cypers (2008) commented that leaders in higher education, through their commitment to shared governance, could find ways to help promote student success. The three authors defined student success as increased college attendance rates, transfer rates from community colleges to four-year universities, and graduation rates from universities. Again, findings of commitment were shown to be aligned with and supported by the literature.

### **Research Question 3 per Institutional Planning**

In RQ3, I inquired as to what extent did participants applied the rational, organizational, and political decision models in the decision processes necessary to implement shared governance mandate dealing with institutional planning and budgeting processes. The first half of RQ3 covered the educational master plan using IQ5, facilities master plan using IQ6, and human resource plan using IQ7. All three plans are components to the institutional planning aspect of the mandate. In the following section, I discuss my interpretations of the findings on decision processes used for the educational master plan, facility master plan, and human resource plan.

#### **Findings and interpretations.**

*Educational master plan.* In IQ5, I asked all participants to describe how they would apply (or have applied) one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support their proposals relating to educational master plan. Analyses of data from IQ5 were summarized in Table 1 of Chapter 4, and my findings showed that all 10 participants combined and applied the rational, organizational, and political decision models. For example, as a member of the academic senate group, P7 stated, “I have reminded stakeholders that our mission and culture is to serve the students, and when communicating with stakeholders and making proposals about the plan, I made sure that my proposals were rationally developed.”

Whereas I found that members from the four actor groups generally used a mix of all three decision models for educational master plan, my interpretations based on Table 1



are threefold. First, I learned that participants from the senates and faculty association favored rational decision process. Second, participants from the board of trustees and administrators favored the organizational decision process. Third, participants from the board of trustees and faculty association favored the use of the political decision process.

In the educational master plan case, the mixing of all three decision models along with the synergizing effects of rational, organizational, and political decision processes, worked to unify the efforts of the four groups of actors. This synergism of actions was reflected in a media statement by President Morse of the ASCCC: “ASCCC supports AB 288, which would authorize the governing board of a community college district to develop and enter into a partnership with the governing board of a school district to establish seamless pathways from high school to community college or preparation for transfer” (Academic Senate of California Community Colleges, April 16, 2015). The operative phrase “to develop and enter into a partnership” suggested that the institutional planning process is a team effort. Additionally, my interpretation is consistent with Miller and Miles (2008), who commented that faculty members at the California’s community college districts are progressive because of their use of a collaborative approach to governance.

***Facility master plan.*** In IQ6, I asked all participants to describe how they would apply (or have applied) one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support their proposals relating to facility master plan. Analyses of data from IQ6 were summarized in Table 2 of Chapter 4, and my findings showed that all 10

participants combined and applied the rational, organizational, and political decision models to varying degrees. For example, P4, as a member of the administrator group, commented that the district needed to persuade faculty members to participate fully in the development of the facility plan and that the largest of the three colleges needed to support the smaller colleges when developing the facilities master plan. P4 implied that these needs were achieved through the combined use of the three decision models.

I found that members from the four actor groups preferred to use the organizational and political decision processes when implementing the facility master plan. My interpretations based on Table 2 are twofold. First, I learned that participants from the board of trustees and administrators favored the organizational decision process. Second, participants from the board of trustees and the faculty association consistently favor the use of the political decision process, in which they manage to exert effective influence over the resolutions of mandates.

In the facility master plan case, the favoring of the organizational and political decision processes worked towards unifying the efforts of the four groups of actors, but did not create a synergism of actions. This perseverance toward a unity of effort was reflected in a media statement by President Beno of the ACCJC: “ACCJC hopes through its own practices to support improved higher education practice at the [CCC] and is committed to working with member institutions in their ongoing work to improve student success” (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Spring/Summer 2015). The operative phrase “hopes through its own practices” suggested that the

institutional planning process is an ongoing effort at most community colleges. The facility master plan in the studied community college district was successfully implemented through the combined use of two decision models. However, with less reliance on the rational model, the hoped for longevity of the plan may be in question. Nonetheless, findings of unity of effort were shown to be aligned with and supported by the literature.

*Human resource plan.* In IQ7, I asked all participants to describe how they would apply (or have applied) one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support their proposals relating to human resource plan. Analyses of data from IQ7 were summarized in Table 3 of Chapter 4, and my findings showed that all 10 participants combined and applied the rational, organizational, and political decision models to varying degree. Issues pertaining to human resource plans were not difficult to resolve, but the processes used were less amicable. When faced with issues relating to human resources, striving for complete cooperation among all members of the four actor groups sometimes suffered, but the combined use of the three decision models can produce satisfactory results (Vieth, 2007). For example, a member of the board of trustees group, P1 stated, “We've had battles in this area over positions, and it goes back to faculty not liking administrators. This is an area where I probably use all three decision-making models, especially the political model because the board has to make the final decision.” Note that the respondent indicated using all three decision models,

showing by implication that processes from each model were used to gain unity of effort by the four actor groups.

As I found that members from the four actor groups used a mix of all three decision models for human resources planning, my interpretations based on Table 3 are threefold. First, I learned that participants from the senates and faculty association favored rational decision process. Second, participants from the board of trustees and administrators favored the organizational decision process. Third, participants from the board of trustees and faculty association favored the use of the political decision process.

In the human resource plan case, the mixing of all three decision models along with the synergizing effects of rational, organizational, and political decision processes worked to unify the efforts of the four groups of actors. This synergism of actions was reflected in a media statement by President Douglas Otto of the CCLC : He explained that the recommendations were to “a) strengthen requirements for students to create education plans, b) standardize student equity data, c) implement a three-year student success scorecard, d) promote evidence-based practices in student success and equity, and e) ensure the Chancellor’s Office monitors how course offerings align with student goals” (Community College League of California, November 2016). The operative terms “carry out five recommendations” suggested that the institutional planning process is a team effort; and by extension, the mandate pertaining to the current human resource plan within the district is a four-actor group effort. The human resource plan, including the

mission to achieve student success, were successfully implemented through the combined use of three decision models.

My interpretation is consistent with Twombly and Townsend (2008), who observed that issues pertaining to human resources are a challenging task for the senate leaders because there are many groups with different goals and priorities, and the authors implied that collaboration among all four actor groups are achieved through the combined use of all three decision models.

**Summary themes and patterns.** Regarding first half of RQ3, in which educational master plan, facilities master plan, and human resource plan were considered together, my findings and interpretations revealed following themes and patterns:

a) All participants within the four actor groups combined and used all three decision models to varying extents when presenting their proposals to the other actor groups. This finding is consistent with the literature, in which Vieth (2007) suggested that each decision model is applied from a different frame of reference, and that all three models together may produce a more effective decision. Thus, the integrated use of three decision models appeals to gain the cooperation of actor groups whose backgrounds and interests are diverse.

b) All participants, who represented the board of trustees and administrator groups, consistently applied the organizational decision model, as the use of this model served to maintain organizational stability that is preferred by these two governing actor groups. This finding is consistent with the literature, in which Allison and Zelikow

(1999) stated that the “existing organizational structures, procedure, and repertoires” (p. 6) result in producing regular and predictable patterns of decision making behavior, a favored practice of administration.

c) In addition, all participants who represented the academic senates and faculty association consistently applied the rational decision model, as the use of this model served to propose new programs or to make program changes. This finding is consistent with the literature in which Gilboa (2009) observed that faculties choose utility maximizing decisions and action in response to strategic threats. An example of a current strategic threat is the California budget crisis, and an example of a strategic opportunity is increasing the number of successful students.

d) Regarding the use of the political decision model, all participants of the four actor groups were found to have used it to varying degrees to assert their influences upon other groups. Board members were found to favor the political decision model, but only when they were the final arbiter in cases when proposals reached an impasse. These findings are consistent with the literature in which Kater and Levin (2005) observed that there are many diverse groups in the political decision model who bargain and compromise among themselves to influence the institutional outcome. These authors implied that the diverse groups are the boards of trustees, the administrators, the academic senates, and the faculty association, all of whom politically bargain and compromise over issues pertaining to institutional planning process.

e) I found that members from the four actor groups worked to create a synergism of actions. This was reflected in a media statement by Chancellor Harris of the CCCCO: “The Associate Degree for Transfer program provides community college students with guaranteed admission to the CSU system and priority admission to a CSU campus” (California Community College Chancellor’s Office, December 10, 2015). The operative phrase "provides community college students guaranteed admission" suggested that the institutional planning process should not only achieve the goals of community colleges but also to service the goals of the state college system. The three institutional planning areas, including the mission to achieve continued student success, were successfully implemented through the combined use of three decision models.

### **Research Question 3 per Budgeting Process**

In RQ3, I inquired as to what extent did participants applied the rational, organizational, and political decision models in the decision processes necessary to implement shared governance mandate dealing with institutional planning and budgeting processes. The second half of RQ3 covered the budget development using IQ8; funding priorities and allocations using IQ9; and contingency, discretionary, and reserve funding using IQ10, which are components to the budgeting process aspect of the mandate. The following section on findings and their interpretations will present and cover budget development; funding priorities and allocations; and contingency, discretionary, and reserve funding.

### **Findings and interpretations.**

*Budget development.* In IQ8, I asked all participants to describe how they would apply (or have applied) one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support their proposals relating to budget development. Analyses of data from IQ8 were summarized in Table 4 of Chapter 4. The findings showed that greater emphasis was placed on the use of the political decision model by board members. For example, as a member of the board of trustees, P2 stated, “When we get a certain amount of money from the state, all relevant stakeholders have to sit down and decide how we’re going to spend this money. . . . To resolve any impasse, the board resorted to the political model and made its decision.” Additionally, my interpretation is consistent with Jenkins and Jenson (2010), who described the institution of higher education, including the California community colleges, as being a politicized institution, in which conflict situations that manifest between the boards and faculties are assumed to be normal.

Other findings from IQ8 showed that other participants used all three decision models in a more even manner to resolve budgeting issues. Thus, my interpretations based on Table 4 are threefold. First, I learned that participants from the senates and faculty association favored a rational decision process. Second, participants from the board of trustees and administrators favored the organizational decision process. Third, participants from the board of trustees and faculty association favored the use of the political decision process.

In the budget development case, the mixing of all three decision models along with the synergizing effects of rational, organizational, and political decision processes



worked to unify the efforts of the four groups of actors. For example, as a member of the academic senate group, P6 stated, “At the district level, we have to, in a sense, teach members of the board and administration that our purpose is educating and that its budget development process needs to realistically allocate funds across the three colleges, realizing that each college serves a diverse demographic community.” Notwithstanding the expectation that the board of trustees and administrators would control the budget development process, the shared governance mandate allowed the other actor groups to create a synergism of actions among all four groups of actors.

This synergism of actions was reflected in a media statement by President Morse of the ASCCC: “ASCCC supports AB 626, which would require expenditures of Student Success and Support Program Funds to increase the ratio of full-time to part time faculty and to fund part-time faculty office hours.” He added, “Full-time faculty are necessary for curriculum and program development and for participation in college governance and budget planning” (Academic Senate of California Community Colleges, April 13, 2015). The operative terms “participation in college governance” suggested that the budgeting process is a team effort; and by extension, the mandate pertaining to the current budget development within the district is a four-actor group effort. The budget development, including the mission to achieve student success, were successfully implemented through the combined use of three decision models.

In addition to the above cited article, my interpretations of the findings are consistent with Twombly and Townsend (2008), who observed that the academic senates

need to constantly keep the pressure on the boards and administration through its communicative skills, to ensure themselves that they are participating in all of the local planning and budget policy discussions. My interpretation is consistent with Beno (2007), who reminded readers that the accreditation of the colleges requires that the academic senates be provided opportunities to participate in the process of budget development.

*Funding priorities and allocations.* In IQ9, I asked all participants to describe how they would apply (or have applied) one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support their proposals relating to funding priorities and allocations. Analyses of data from IQ9 were summarized in Table 5 of Chapter 4, and their findings showed that all 10 participants combined and applied the rational, organizational, and political decision models to varying degrees. Findings in RQ3 showed that the contentious issues relating to funding priorities and allocations were resolved using all three decision models, along with the consistent use of the political model, and such findings were representative of the experiences of all 10 participants.

Regarding the funding priorities and allocations, most of the contentious relationships were between groups, but some were within the group, such as between the board and administration. For example, as a member of the administration, P5 commented that the cost of offering a special program, called Ben Clark Training Center, averaged \$8000 per full-time equivalent (FTE) student at the respondent's college, whereby the district was reimbursed \$4700 per FTE student from the State. In turn, the district reimbursed P5's college only \$2,700 per FTE student, based on a historical

across-the-board method. The deficit between \$8000 and \$2,700 hampered P5's college of offering other courses and doing other educationally worthy things. However, P5 implied that the deficit was eventually resolved through perseverance.

I found that members from the four actor groups used a mix of all three decision models for funding priorities and allocations, but some groups had preferred certain decision process. My interpretations based on Table 5 are twofold. First, I learned that participants from the board of trustees and administrators favored the organizational decision process. Second, participants from the board of trustees and the faculty association consistently favored the use of the political decision process, in which they manage to exert effect influence over the resolutions of mandates.

In the funding priorities and allocations case, favored organizational and political decision processes worked toward unifying the efforts of the four groups, but did not create synergism of actions. The perseverance toward a goal was reflected in a media statement by Executive Director Lightman of the FACCC: "FACCC is extremely pleased that the Governor has acknowledged the direct connection between full-time faculty and student success." Lightman added, "Still, more needs to be done at the state level to ensure that our talented corps of 40,000 part-time faculty professionals are supported through office hours, pay equity, and health benefits" (Faculty Association for California Community Colleges, May 14, 2015). The operative term "Still, more needs to be done" suggested that the budgeting process is an ongoing effort. The funding priorities and allocations in the studied community college district were successfully implemented

through the combined use of two decision models. However, with less reliance on the rational model, the hoped for progress in hiring new faculty members may be in question.

My interpretations of the findings on funding priorities and allocations are consistent with those of other researchers. Gallos (2008) observed that the boards and administrators have hesitated working with the academic senates about shared governance, when the senates are perceived to be deeply involved in the efforts of the unions. However, increasing the use of the rational decisions process may lead to a synergism of actions. P9 stated, "I don't use the political decision model as expected to pressure the district at the negotiating table. Rather, I rely on the rational model by presenting proposals in a reasonable manner, while recognizing the constraints of the organization." I hope that decisions on funding priorities and allocations will move beyond perseverance toward a goal and forward to create a synergism of actions between hiring new faculty members and increasing student successes.

*Discretionary, contingency, and reserved funds.* In IQ10, I asked all participants to describe how they would apply (or have applied) one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support their proposals relating to discretionary, contingency, and reserved funds. Analyses of data from IQ10 were summarized in Table 6 of Chapter 4, and their findings showed that all 10 participants combined and applied the rational, organizational, and political decision models.

Findings from IQ10 showed that the contentious issues relating to discretionary, contingency, and reserved funds were resolved using all three decision models, along

with the consistent use of the political model, but that there were instances of difficulties. For example, as a member of the board of trustees, P1 stated, “Reserve funding is always, it seems, a point of contention. The board is rationally, organizationally, and politically unified against reducing the reserve. We keep the reserve at 5% for sudden emergencies and for tragedies that happened unexpectedly.” On the other hand, finding from IQ10 showed that faculties and boards did collaborate and mutually agree on reserve funding issues, as that was the findings of experiences of the 10 participants. For example, as a member of the faculty association, P10 explained how the faculty association could get the board to spend the reserve. Using the political model, the association could pressure the district to spend the reserve, which brought the reserve down to three percent.

I found that members from the four actor groups generally used a mix of all three decision models for dealing with the discretionary, contingency, and reserved funds. My interpretations based on Table 6 are threefold. First, I learned that participants from the senates and faculty association favored rational decision process. Second, participants from the board of trustees and administrators favored the organizational decision process. Third, participants from the board of trustees and faculty association favored the use of the political decision process.

In the discretionary, contingency, and reserved funds case, the mixing of all three decision models along with the synergizing effects of rational, organizational, and political decision processes worked to unify the efforts of the four groups of actors. This synergism of actions was reflected in a media statement by Executive Director Lightman

of the FACCC: “FACCC is appreciative of the Governor’s continued commitment to strengthening the California Community Colleges.” He cautioned, “Still, there are many substantial issues facing our colleges that must be addressed and FACCC looks forward to working with the Governor and Legislature in these areas as the budget process concludes” (Faculty Association for California Community Colleges, May 13, 2016). The operative terms “there are many issues facing our colleges that must be addressed” suggested that the budgeting process is a team effort; and by extension, the mandate pertaining to the current discretionary, contingency, and reserved funds within the district is a four-actor group effort. The discretionary, contingency, and reserved funds, including the mission to achieve student success, were successfully implemented through the combined use of three decision models.

Additionally, my interpretations of the findings are consistent with Twombly and Townsend (2008), who suggested that, at a time when community colleges face challenges from the external environment, such as California’s continuing budget and student crises, faculties and boards need to collaborate, to combine their diverse skills, and to mutually agree on reserve funding issues.

**Themes and patterns.** Regarding the second half of RQ3, in which budget development; funding priorities and allocations; and contingency, discretionary, and reserve funding were considered together, my interpretations is the findings resulted in producing expected and unexpected themes and patterns.

My interpretation is the findings from RQ3 confirmed the following themes and patterns: a) Foremost, the interpretations of the finding from RQ3 are that all participants, who represented their respective groups, combined and used all three decision models when they made proposals pertaining to all three phases of the budgeting process. b) Participants who represented the board of trustees and administration consistently applied the organizational decision model, since the use of this model served to support the status quo. However, these two groups also consistently applied the rational decision model to propose changes to the Reserve Funds account. c) Participants who represented the academic senates and faculty association consistently applied the rational decision model to justify new proposals or making changes. Additionally, these two groups also consistently applied the organizational model to resolve issues that relate to priorities and allocations affecting the three colleges in the district. d) Regarding the use of the political decision model, all four actor groups were found to have used it to one degree or another to assert their influence upon other groups. However, the board of trustees was found to be most forceful in using it as final arbiter in cases when proposals reached an impasse. My interpretations of the above described themes and patterns are described below.

As was mentioned above, I found that members from the four actor groups used a mix of all three decision models for budgeting processes. My interpretations of the findings are twofold: a) I expected the consistent use of the organizational, the rational, and the political decision models by the administration, the faculties, and the board of trustees, respectively. b) Notwithstanding that expectation, the shared governance

mandate, along with the mixed use of rational, organizational, and political decision models, worked to create synergism of actions among all four groups of actors. This synergism of actions was reflected in a media statement by Chancellor Oakley of the CCCCCO: “The budget signed by the California Governor Brown provides slots for 50,000 additional students at the CCC. It also provides resources to expand the delivery of career technical education programs, leading students to good paying jobs that support families and communities.” He stated with pride, “And the budget provides resources to improve transfer to four-year institutions and help close achievement gaps at our colleges” (California Community College Chancellor’s Office, June 27, 2016). The operative terms “provides resources” suggested that the budgeting process is a team effort; and by extension, the mandate pertaining to the three areas of the budgeting process within the district is a four-actor group effort. The three budgeting process areas, including the mission to achieve student success, were successfully implemented through the combined use of three decision models.

### **Support for the Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for my study was based on the analytical concepts developed by Allison and Zelikow (1999), whose precept involved decision processes that combined and applied the rational actor, organizational behavior, and governmental political decision models. My findings and interpretations supported the conceptual framework. Allison and Zelikow (1999) postulated that, when all three decision models are integrated and applied to a given decision the combined models are prone to produce



synergism among groups of diverse policymakers. The preferred outcomes, in particular, were the code provisions that dealt with institutional planning and budgeting processes at a CCC district. My findings and interpretations from IQ5 through IQ10 are that all leaders representing the four actor groups at the research site combined and applied decision processes from all three decision models. Yet, there were instances of favored decision process among groups.

The core concept of the rational model is that various goals are considered in the decision process and that the rational actor explores all of the alternatives and selects the one that provides the highest payoff (Vieth, 2007, p. 25). P9, who represented the faculty association group, stated, “I pushed the rational decision model, working the various alternatives to develop a budget that best serves the interest of both the District and students, which is to provide affordable and accessible education to our students and community.” My interpretation of the findings in Tables 1-6 confirmed that the faculty association group consistently preferred the rational decision model.

Prominent features of the organizational decision model are that much of the operation is culturally and programmatically driven (Miller & Miles, 2008) and that most of the operational tasks are decided through “preestablished routines” (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, p. 168). As such, the decisions and actions were those that have often been previously made and taken. P2, who represented the board of trustees, commented, “Ultimately, an organizational decision model must be applied because if we don't get buy-in from the faculty of the district into that process it's not going to happen.”

Additionally, P4, who represented the administrator group, noted that the District had a budgeting philosophy of “don’t do things outside the plan or standard operating procedures (SOP).” My interpretation of the findings in Tables 1-6 confirmed that the board of trustee groups and the administrator group consistently preferred the organizational decision model.

Under the political model, the decisions and actions of the organization are seen as political resultants (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, p. 294): Political mean that actors are prone to form coalitions to influence and produce the desired institutional outcome (Kater & Levin, 2005). The word resultants mean that the decisions and actions result from negotiation, bargaining, and compromise (Vieth, 2007). P1, who represented the board of trustees group, stated, “In an effort to find a solution, the Board has been trying to negotiate and to reach a compromise with faculty groups by suggesting alternative financing.” Additionally, P10, who represented the faculty association group, stated, “Through politics, the winning strategy has been for the district to deliver to the community kinds of programs that are best needed.” My interpretations of the findings in Tables 1-6 confirmed that the board of trustees group and the faculty association group consistently preferred the political decision model when implementing California’s shared governance mandate.

The identification of consistently preferred decisions models by actor groups qualifies support for using all three decision models to created synergism of actions. Sometimes the use of favored decision models allows a weaker form of unity of effort to

persevere. Yet, my finding and interpretations that support RQ3 are not diminished because all members from the four actor groups modulated their uses of all three decision models. This was reflected in a statement provided by P8, a representative for the academic senate group: “My proposal is always grounded on realistic alternatives, and it is always aligned with the college and to its existing resources and programs, and I’ve negotiated and made compromises to get the necessary stakeholder buy-in for the plan.” Observe that P8 managed to squeeze in the use of the rational, the organizational, and the political decision models in a one-sentence statement.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There are updates to the assumptions, the limitations, the delimitations, and the significance of the study. Regarding my assumptions, my findings confirmed that all 10 purposefully selected participants had three important characteristics: They were highly educated, informed, and articulate leaders. They were informed about and committed to California’s shared governance mandate pertaining to institutional planning and budgeting processes. They were knowledgeable about and skilled at applying decision processes involving the use of the rational, organizational, and political decision models.

Regarding the limitations to my qualitative study, I refrained from making inferences on a causal relationship between the use of decision models and shared governance outcomes. In addition, I did not generalize the findings of my research. Regarding the purposeful sampling of the participants, there was minor deviation from the original plan as approved by IRB. The original plan called for selecting three

participants from the board of trustees, two from administrators, three from academic senates, and two from faculty association. Due to availability concerns, only two participants were selected from the board; however, the number of administrators was increased to three. No changes were made to the senate group or faculty association group. I believe that these changes did not affect the results of the study, because board members and administrators work in tandem, just as senate members and faculty association members communicate and coordinate with each other about issues pertaining to the shared governance mandate.

Regarding delimitations, the scope and boundaries for my study remained intact. The study was delimited by focusing on the decision processes and not necessarily to their implementation outcomes. In addition, the study was delimited to one exemplary community college district, but occasionally references were made to the state level CCC system when necessary. The study was also delimited to the mandated shared governance relationship that existed primarily between the board and the senates, while that relationship also necessitated participation by the administrators and the faculty associations under the mandate.

Finally, regarding the significance of the study, my findings should fill a gap in the community college shared governance literature and should provide useful knowledge on decision processes to professionals in higher education. As to filling a gap in the literature, the results of my study should project Allison and Zelikow's (1999) conceptual framework into decisions that are taking place at California's community college. As to

providing useful knowledge, the results of my study may increase the acceptance on using three decision models to create synergism of actions in the optimal case and to foster a unity of effort among the four diverse actor groups in the general case.

Furthermore, my finding support Vieth (2007) who suggested the need for the rational, organizational, and political decision models to resolve issues in California's higher education system.

### **Recommendations**

I have the following recommendations for action and for further research.

#### **Recommendations for Action**

For action, my study produced two changes of significance. First, my research fills a gap in the literature and furthers the understanding of the decision processes being practiced at the California community districts where boards of trustees, academic senates, administrators, and faculty associations are mandated to implement California's shared governance law. Furthermore, my study demonstrates a broader application of Allison and Zelikow's (1999) rational, organizational, and political decision models.

Second, my findings may inform leaders throughout the CCC districts about the merits of combining and applying all three decision models during planning and budgeting processes. Integrated decision processes may create synergism of actions and unity of effort among academic leaders while a favored decision process may allow diverse leaders to use a weaker form of unity of effort. Ultimately, my recommendation

for action is to help leaders throughout the CCCs to solve California's twin crises, which are lack of adequate student success and lack of adequate financial resources.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The literature review suggested a worrisome trend among CCCs that have failed or are failing to meet legal or accreditation standards. In addition, the literature review identified difficulties in implementing the State's shared governance mandate partly because of weaknesses in the decision processes used. I selected a qualitative methodology and a single research site and found the following themes and patterns: a) There was perceived value in combining and applying the three common decision models. b) Some actor groups did have consistently preferred decision models. c) The integrated use of three decision models created a synergism of actions and unity of effort for the community college district. The shared governance mandate may have been both a causative force for the synergism of actions and a beneficiary of the unity of effort.

Whereas my study was aimed at producing understanding of a researchable phenomenon, data and findings from my study can be used to design and conduct quantitative research involving all 72 CCC districts. The resulting quantitative research may result in generalizable findings to confirm causal relationships among application of multiple decision models, synergism of actions, and unity of effort. For the CCC districts that have received warnings about improving their decision-making process, quantitative findings may help with additional policies to correct their accreditation statuses.

### **Implications**

Regarding the implications for social change, my findings and interpretations suggested that the four groups of leaders in one CCC district strengthened their decision processes to create synergism of actions and unity of effort when implementing the shared governance mandate. Currently, there is sense of urgency that leaders of all the CCC districts will need to strengthen in a substantial manner their decision processes because, in year 2025, California may have one million fewer college graduates than are needed in the workforce. To that end, my findings supported those of Duglass (2012) and Melguizo, Hagedorn, and Cypers (2008). They anticipated that through more efficient and effective shared governance practices involving the boards of trustees, academic senates, administrators, and faculty associations ways can be found to advance student success. California community college students are helped by increasing college attendance rates, by increasing transfer rates from community colleges to four-year universities, and by increasing graduation rates from universities.

Additionally, my findings and interpretations supported Mellow and Heelan (2014), who prescribed that shared governance will help to produce higher levels of student success, which means more students will gain associate, baccalaureate, and eventually higher-level college degrees. Furthermore, my findings and interpretations support my hope that positive social change occurs by increasing higher education opportunities for disadvantaged minorities and marginalized students. Chancellor Harris stated, "This proposal (Governor's 2016 budget) wisely builds on the foundation that we

have lain with our Student Success Initiative, which seeks to help more students enter our colleges and achieve their educational goals" (California Community College Chancellor's Office, January 7, 2016). The implication of my study for social change is that diverse academic leaders who use three decision models will foster better political, economic, social, and cultural lives of everyone in the community.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of my study was to understand the decision processes used to implement parts of California's shared governance mandate. Synergizing use of all three decisions models and favored use of one or two decision models were found during my investigation of institutional planning and budgeting processes. The driving motivation for my study was the alarming reports on accreditation issues concerning CCCs. These reports involving breaches of the shared governance mandate necessitated my qualitative research into the decision processes at a chosen CCC district. My study was conducted at a three-college district that I believed to be one of the fiscally strongest in California.

I found that all 10 of the participants from the chosen CCC district understood the mandate, that they were committed to supporting the mandate pertaining to institutional planning and budgeting processes, and that they were skilled in using appropriate decision processes. My findings and interpretations suggested that participants representing the board of trustees, administrators, academic senates, or faculty associations combined and used the rational, organizational, and political decision models. The mixed use of the three decision models often created synergism of actions



and unity of effort among members to support and implement the planning and budgeting provisions of the mandate.

Furthermore, my findings and interpretations revealed that budget related issues for all 10 participants were contentious. My interpretation of those findings confirmed the literature that showed the CCC system continues to be challenged with number of financial constraints and budget actions that are affecting each of the 72 CCC districts (Porchea, Allen, Robbins, & Phelps, 2010). At times, some participants preferred to use the political decision model to handle contentions issues such as the budgets. Yet, most of my findings showed that all 10 participants tended to combine and apply all three decision models. Participants mixed and applied the three decision models when asked about California's shared governance mandate pertaining the institutional planning and budgeting processes. My interpretations of the findings confirmed the literature, in which Allison and Zelikow (1999) postulated that the combined models are prone to produce synergisms among groups of divergent policymakers, resulting in the smooth implementation of the preferred institutional outcome.

In terms of recommended action, it is hoped that the results of my study will inform leaders throughout the 72 CCC districts about the merits of applying all three decision models when implementing difficult policy issues. Furthermore, it is hoped that the study will inform leaders about how the integrated use of decision processes may create synergism of actions and unity of effort among four diverse actor groups that manage the 72 CCC districts. Finally, I hope that the results of my study will persuade

leaders on the merits of synergism of actions and unity of effort required for implementing the shared governance mandate and the code provisions dealing with institutional planning and budgeting processes.

In terms of implications for social change, my findings and interpretations added to the literature on uses of specialized processes to support uniquely American community colleges (Mellow & Heelan, 2014). These authors implied that the results of studies such as my study should be examined for possible adoption by leaders of the CCC districts. Furthermore, they implied that adoption and use by the CCC leaders would help to produce higher level of student successes. Achieving such successes means more students will be provided with opportunities to earn college degrees and perhaps baccalaureate degrees and higher degrees. Additionally, my hope for positive social change is that my study will contribute towards increasing higher educational opportunities for the under-represented minority students and marginalized students. These student groups are critical to the future success of the California Community College system. Ultimately, my hope for positive social change is that the result of my study will contribute towards fostering better political, economic, social, and cultural lives for all.

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## Appendix A: Interview Guide

Leaders use various decision models with the three dominant ones being the rational actor model, organizational behavior model, and governmental politic model when making professional decisions. The primary purpose of this study is to understand to what extent district leaders apply decision models when deciding the implementation of shared governance mandate. There is currently no research conducted in this area of study, and participants have opportunity to provide valuable information to better the decision processes practiced at each of the 72 CCC districts. The 10 interview questions will be asked in the same manner and in the same order, and will seek participants' thoughts and experiences, some of which will entice stories as they relate to the study. Participants may withdraw from the study at any time, and they may decline responding to any interview question without providing an explanation. As stated earlier, participants' identity and answers will remain strictly confidential. The estimated time to complete this interview is less than an hour.

1. When and how were you first informed about California's shared governance mandate, that part of the education code that focuses on relationship between the board of trustees and the academic senate?
2. What do you understand to be the essence of that mandate?
3. What is your opinion about the strengths and weaknesses of the code provision that deals with institutional planning and budgeting processes?

4. How would you describe your experiences (good and bad) when implementing the shared governance mandate pertaining to institutional planning and budgeting processes?

5. Describe how you would apply (or have applied) one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support your proposal pertaining to the educational master plan for the college district?

6. Describe how you would apply (or have applied) one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support your proposal pertaining to the educational facilities master plan for the college district?

7. Describe how you would apply (or have applied) one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support your proposal pertaining to the educational human resources plan for the college district?

8. Describe how you would apply (or have applied) one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support your proposal pertaining to the budget development for the college district?

9. Describe how you would apply (or have applied) one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support your proposal pertaining to the funding priorities and allocation for the college district?

10. Describe how you would apply (or have applied) one or more decision models when persuading other diverse groups to support your proposal pertaining to the discretionary, contingency, and reserved funds for the college district?

## Appendix B: Certificate of Completion for NIH Human Subjects Training

