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Perceptions of Curriculum Quality Management in a Multicampus Community College District

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Abstract

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by

Cathy Donald-Whitney

MSS, Texas Woman's University, 1987

BS, Panhandle State University, 1984

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Community college systems must create and maintain curriculum quality management processes and mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of curricula as mandated by state accountability measures. This basic qualitative study was employed to understand the perceptions of members of a curriculum quality management team at a multicampus community college district. Senge's learning organization theory and tenets of Gronn's distributive leadership principles guided this study. Semistructured interviews were used as the data collection method to examine perceptions of 8 full-time curriculum team members at a multicampus community college district in the southwestern United States about the organization, collaborative formats, and governing procedures of their curriculum management system. Data analysis employed the use of open coding, reflective journaling, and the formation of themes. Team members perceived that their multicampus structure makes it challenging to maintain a seamless curriculum quality management system. Participants were perplexed while attempting to describe their perceptions of governance. In general, participants described the governance system using the word collaborative with the caveat that final decisions rest with leadership; however, a few participants felt that the governance system lacked structure. Organizing curriculum management teams into functional collaborative units may help multicampus community college districts to be better equipped to maintain quality curricula. Ultimately, the goal is to improve the success of graduates in the workforce, resulting in positive social change regarding a cultural shift on campuses where curriculum quality management is an institutional practice.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The task of improving student outcomes continues to be a challenge for many higher education institutions. In this regard, institutions must provide evidence of the effectiveness of their curricula and various programs to demonstrate their efforts toward improving student outcomes (Stowell, Falahee, & Woolf, 2016). Quality educational programming and management of curriculum are essential for ensuring transfer articulation agreements with colleges and universities. Due to the structure of higher education institutions, it is often difficult to create quality management procedures that are feasible at the institutional level (Stowell et al., 2016). In multicampus community college systems, this is an arduous task (Eddy, 2010, 2014). Community college districts with multiple locations often have added constraints because of the physical distances between campuses. In addition to the physical distance of some locations in a multicampus district, community colleges struggle with balancing the need for high demand workforce programs and maintaining the quality of academic programs (Eddy, 2010, 2014).

Curriculum management is not a new phenomenon. However, the procedures for aligning quality management processes with the strategic goals, vision, and mission of an institution are challenging to define and navigate, particularly in large, multicampus organizations. According to Hordern (2016), institutional culture is a determinant of the success of quality management procedures. Assembling a curriculum management team to function as a collaborative community of practice is a significant aspect of establishing

quality management procedures and iterative processes to review, create, update, and revise curriculum at the program and discipline level.

In this chapter's background section, I analyze the challenging task of maintaining relevant programs in higher education institutions. I discuss how state agencies influence academic programming through state regulations and the responsibilities of higher education institutions to create quality curriculum management processes. Additionally, I describe the conceptual framework that grounded my research problem and question. I also discuss the assumptions, scope, limitations, and delimitations of the study.

Background of the Study

A significant function of higher education institutions is to disseminate knowledge that results in useful societal applications (Romano & Eddy, 2017). Consequently, state governing agencies continuously scrutinize educational programs and curricula for their effectiveness (Stowell et al., 2016). Therefore, it is imperative that institutions develop processes to create, reform effectively, and assess curriculum to improve student learning outcomes and employment success after graduation.

Higher education institutions are autonomous and decentralized entities when compared to other educational sectors; —as such, forming sustainable collaborative regulatory systems is a complicated proposition (Middlehurst, Goreham, & Woodfield, 2009). According to Aiken, Heinze, Meuter, and Chapman (2017), collaborative course or curriculum development is one of the emerging best practices in transformative developmental pedagogies. Collaborations within and among higher education institutions such as community college systems are essential in maintaining relevance in

curricular matters with an emphasis on societal applications (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2014).

Harrill, Lawton, and Fabianke (2015) described faculty and staff collaboration as a significant factor in student success. Harrill et al. conducted a study aimed at examining measures to enhance faculty and staff engagement for student success as a part of the national Achieving the Dream initiative (consisting of a network of 200 community colleges). Study findings indicated that "Silos between departments limit collaboration and the ability to build infrastructures to implement sustainable interventions" (Harrill et al., 2015, p. 12). Harrill et al. suggested that due to the tendency toward decentralization, there is a propensity toward politically motivated stalemates at the departmental level and institutional level. When it comes to decision-making processes related to curriculum review and reform, this type of discord results in silos that work independently rather than interdependently (Harrill et al., 2015).

Khan and Law (2015) asserted that the management of curriculum in higher education is essential for the delivery of quality relevant educational programs and services to scholars in the United States as well as other countries (p. 66). Due to the increasing demand for more direct alignment of collegiate education and societal applications such as workforce skills, academic collaborative teams often assemble to address concerns related to student outcomes (Aiken et al., 2017; Galea et al., 2015). In this context, institutions may respond to the mandates by establishing initiatives such as curriculum reform to improve student academic success and employability after graduation. Curriculum development, review, and reform processes are more proficient

when they are participative and include a collaborative group of individuals with a variety of expertise as opposed to an individualized system (Burke, 2010; Goldfien & Badway, 2014; Khan & Law, 2015).

Collaborative teams, as described by Galea et al. (2015), assemble to address curricular matters that influence the quality of course and program offerings. According to Galea et al. (2015), the criteria for successful program review, revision, and implementation include administrative support, faculty ownership, and faculty buy-in, along with respectful and open communication. Conversely, addressing curricular matters without involving internal and external stakeholders can result in deleterious effects that will reduce the effectiveness and relevance of academic programs (Yarnall, 2014). Reviewing and assessing curriculum development processes is essential in determining whether the procedures are adequate to analyze and address technical and academic programming issues (Albashiry, Voogt, & Pieters, 2015).

The collaborative work of faculty, administrators, and staff in leading an iterative process of curriculum development is also integral to the proficiency of a reform process (Goldfien & Badway, 2014). According to Goldfien and Badway (2014), interdisciplinary membership aids in giving the team more depth and knowledge application skills. The organization and effectiveness of curriculum management teams relate inherently to the perceptions of team members regarding their work and purpose (Roberts, 2015).

Venance, LaDonna, and Watling (2014) asserted that the level of faculty engagement also directly affects the success of a curriculum reform initiative. According

to Venance et al. (2014), the alignment of institutional and individual values is essential. Furthermore, Venance et al. purported that misalignment of vision, purpose, and goals is a significant barrier to the success of a reform initiative. Therefore, the claims presented by Venance et al. suggest that the differences in vision and purpose among team members are counterproductive to the collaborative team approach of the curriculum reform process.

The analysis of the research data by Venance et al. (2014) forms the basis of their premise that institutional culture and the andragogy that informs curricular formats are presumably factors that influence the perceptions and actions of team members. Jewitt et al. (2018) conducted a study to examine chemistry curriculum alignment across five partner community college institutions. Jewitt et al. determined that reflections of shared experiences aided faculty in developing a more enriched understanding of chemistry teaching pedagogy. The findings of Jewitt et al. lend credence to the supposition that understanding variations in curricular changes is essential to the collaborative review process. Additionally, Jewitt et al. surmised that curriculum team members must be receptive to engaging beyond individual departments and institutions or improving the educational experiences for all students will be an unattainable proposition (p. 247).

There is abundant literature related to the methods for addressing curricular matters and student success initiatives to achieve great academic success (Burke, 2014; Jewitt et al., 2018; Jones & Kerrigan, 2015; Jones, Lefoe, Harvey, & Ryland, 2012). However, there is a gap in the literature as it relates to processes and procedures that guide iterative examination and analysis of curriculum as a quality assurance mechanism.

In this study, I examined the perceptions of members of a collaborative curriculum management team at a large multicampus community college system to ascertain how the collaborative team functions to ensure quality management of curricula in a multicampus environment.

Problem Statement

Creating accessible navigation systems to aid students in achieving success by mastering academic outcomes for programs and courses is a unified mission of higher education institutions (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2014; Romano & Eddy, 2017). Maintaining quality workforce and educational programs in higher education requires strategies that address challenges unique to each higher education institution (Eddy, 2010, 2014). My review of the literature supports the assertion that there is an active response by institutions of higher education to the increased demands of accountability measures (Jenkins, 2015; Kerrigan, 2015; Leveille, 2013; Stowell et al., 2016). Conversely, Jenkins (2015) asserted, in particular, that guided pathways and structured curricula are emerging paradigms for student success initiatives.

Colleges and universities must ensure curricula alignment to maintain state regulatory standards (Stowell et al., 2016). However, there are minimal studies focused on curriculum quality management as an institutional mission. Additionally, there are minimal studies focused on the collaborative formats that guide the organization of curriculum management teams, particularly as it relates to cross campus collaborations in multicampus institutions. Higher education institutions can improve program relevancy with defined iterative processes for curriculum quality management (Albashiry et al.,

2015). Examining such processes and analyzing the work of teams may provide information to help institutions to create or improve curriculum management procedures. Consequently, the continuous review of curricula may aid institutions in maintaining a relevant curriculum designed to cultivate skills and expertise required in the workplace.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine the perceptions of members of a curriculum management team at a multicampus community college district regarding the organization, governing procedures, and collaborative formats of their curriculum management system. Researching curriculum management systems in a multicampus community college district provided me with some insights on how to utilize such teams to maintain academic relevancy, curriculum value, and course rigor.

Research Question

The following question guided the research plan for this study: What are the perceptions of team members in a multicampus community college district regarding the collaborative formats, organization, and governing procedures of their curriculum management system?

Conceptual Framework

Distributive leadership theory and principles, as described by Gronn (2000), and Senge's (2006) learning organization theory formed the conceptual framework for my study. Principles of distributive leadership and learning organization theory both align well with the phenomenon of collaborative groups. According to Senge's theory of learning organizations, people are agents who work collaboratively to accomplish goals.

Emphasis is placed on assembling parts to create the functional unit. I describe here organization theory, distributed leadership theory, and discuss the correlation between both theories.

Learning Organization and Distributed Leadership Principles

Senge (2006) asserted that learning organizations thrive by the collective contributions of individuals in a fluid and dynamic continuum through continuous learning and development processes. Since a defining characteristic of distributive leadership in a learning organization is to amplify the expertise of a variety of individuals, group collaboration, which is a feature of learning communities, is essential in maximizing significant contributions (Gronn, 2000; Senge, 2006). According to Woods and Gronn (2009), distributed leadership as a governance paradigm focuses on collaborative team contributions rather than individual offerings. However, Gronn (2000) cautioned that within a distributive format, a leader's guidance is integral for collaborative success. As the leader’s guidance is essential, a shared governance system facilitates the advancement of distributive principles (Burke, 2010). A shared governance system is one in which various constituencies participate in the decision-making process (Burke, 2010).

In a learning organization, members use their expertise to work in tandem to obtain knowledge about a phenomenon and therefore augmenting the learning environment (Senge, 2006). Learning organizations and distributive leadership theories both highlight the importance of institutional culture as an emergent property. Institutional culture is the collective ethics and standards that guide processes and

procedures at an institution (Zundans-Fraser & Bain, 2016). Organizational learning as characterized by Senge (2006) is an investigative team process in which members of an organization examine a problem or issue of concern in the institution. Within learning organizations, employees work individually and collaboratively to expand their competencies (Senge, 2006). According to Senge, in a learning organization, there are systems to cultivate innovative thinking patterns and views into a collaborative sharing of ideas to improve the future of an organization.

Senge (2006) described five basic principles in his theory of learning organizations: personal mastery, shared vision, team learning, mental models, and system thinking. Senge asserted that it is important that members of learning organizations achieve personal mastery. Personal mastery is a process of cultivating individual proficiencies (Senge, 2006). In addition to personal mastery, Senge asserted that team learning, which involves cultivating collaborative group capacities, aligns with individual mastery. A shared vision is a key principle of a learning organization. Senge claimed employees must understand and support the mission and vision of the institution. In a learning organization there is a focus on improving mental models, which are patterns of individual reasoning based on preconceived notions or deeply internalized thoughts about how the world works (Senge, 2006). Improving mental models is an essential element of learning organizations to reduce distractors that affect the cohesiveness of the institution (Senge, 2006). Personal mastery, shared vision, team learning, and mental models are individually related actions that converge into the phenomenon known as system thinking. In a learning organization, system thinking is an organizational culture shift that

supports the five principles. System thinking is the foundational base of a learning organization (Senge, 2006). Senge asserted that system thinking helps members of the organization understand the strategic goals and vision of the institution. Furthermore, the application of system thinking helps employees understand how to work collaboratively to achieve the plan.

Distributive Leadership and Collaboration

Regarding distributed leadership, higher education institutions exhibit some unique characteristics, such as their propensity toward decentralization, autonomy, and collegiality compared to other educational entities (Middlehurst et al., 2009). Administration in higher education is multilayered and multifaceted with elements of collective and individual leadership (Bolden, Petrov, & Gosling, 2008). A major supposition of distributive leadership is to facilitate collaborative associations with the goal of completing a task, which correlates with the premise of curriculum management teams (Jones et al., 2012). The concept of distributive leadership encompasses shared governance, teamwork, and characteristics of a learning organization such as system thinking and team learning in the curriculum management process (Gronn, 2000; Senge, 2006).

Gronn (2000) described distributive leadership as synergistic by nature as a goal of this leadership model is to disperse ascendency functions across a continuum in specific situations, tasks, and goals. Distributive leadership, according to Gronn, facilitates shared power and cultivates cooperative relationships. The conceptual framework and research question align with the participants' perceptions of the

governing procedures, collaborative associations, and organization of the curriculum management team. In this study, I examined the perception of management team members regarding curriculum related organizational and governing practices. Chapter 2 includes a more comprehensive description of the conceptual framework.

Nature of the Study

For this study, I used a basic qualitative design to ascertain participants' perceptions of the curriculum management system at a multicampus community college district in the southwestern United States. I conducted eight semistructured interviews using open-ended questions with administrators, faculty, and staff of a collaborative curriculum management team and its subcommittees from the district curriculum and planning division, depending on the makeup of the management team. There are six campus curriculum coordinators, and each campus has an academic team chair. Each campus also has campus deans and vice presidents of instruction. The number of team members is fluid and varies per campus. I incorporated journaling simultaneously as I collected and analyzed data to look for reoccurring themes.

Basic qualitative research methodology is appropriate to use when the goal is to understand the perceptions of individuals as they experience a phenomenon (Patton, 2015). My goal was to understand and interpret the events, processes, and perspectives of participants in a collaborative curriculum management system at a multicampus community college district in the southwestern United States. According to Merriam (2009), researchers use basic qualitative paradigms as a method of inquiry to comprehend how participants relate and experience events in their environment (p. 5). Consequently, I

was an instrument to interpret meaning as ascribed by participants. To make sense of the data, I employed an inductive approach. I interacted directly with participants to understand how members perceive and make sense of the management system and their participation in it. Using the information provided and my interpretation of the interview transcripts, I applied thematic analysis and coding to convey an accurate depiction of the data.

Definitions

In this study, I use terms or concepts that have specific meanings. The terms and concepts are relevant to the scope of this study. The descriptions below are based on the specific context and use of the words or concepts.

Ascendency function: Refers to the niche of an individual within an organization in the context of power or dominance (Gronn, 2000).

Curriculum management teams: Collaborative teams that assemble for program and course review, development, and reform (Jenkins, 2015).

Curriculum quality management: Refers to any iterative or periodic review and restructuring of college course materials to maintain program relevancy (Jenkins, 2015).

Distributive leadership: The integration and interplay between leadership and followership as it relates to the environment in which an event is occurring (Gronn, 2000). Distributive leadership is governance that forms the alliance that integrates the roles of leaders and followers.

Followership: In the relationship with distributive leadership, followership refers to direct reports of administrators or anyone serving in a leadership capacity in a specific

situation or context (Gronn, 2000). Since the role of leadership and followership are integrated, there is some interplay between the groups. Distributive leadership aligns the positions of leadership and followership (Gronn, 2000).

Governance: According to Gronn (2000), governance includes the methods for making policy, setting institutional goals, and the organizational authorities charged with overseeing the procedures to enact policy.

Institutional culture: Also known as *organizational cultur*e, is a blueprint of norms or practices shared by a group through internal and external adaptations that guides the values and belief of the institution (Schein, 2010; Zundans-Fraser & Bain, 2016).

Leadership: Leadership practices that exhibit distributive principles is characterized by leaders that operate in a setting that focuses on the situations and actions of others. Leadership in this context is an organizational quality rather than an individual attribute (Gronn, 2000).

Reformative change: Adaptive mechanisms that involve transitions which occur through experimentation and discoveries ((Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009)

Transformational change processes: In relation to curriculum reform, transformational change includes dramatic shifts that impact institutional culture (McClure, 2015). Transformational curriculum changes affect institutional structure, function, and culture.

Assumptions

I assumed that the collaborative curriculum team participants would be open, honest, and factual when answering interview questions, and their recall of previous events and processes would be reliable. Additionally, I assumed that the data collection process spaces would be confidential, quiet, and safe. I tried to create a trusting and intimate setting so that participants were comfortable as they reflected on their experiences. I assumed that my interview questions aligned with my research question and that they were appropriate for ascertaining participant perceptions and experiences. I also assumed that the perspectives of all individuals were significant and that the varied roles of participants impacted their responses.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study included a curriculum management team and its subcommittees at a multicampus community college district in the southwestern United States. The team members were administrators, faculty, and staff from five main campuses within the district. My focus on the curriculum management team allowed me to address the research question, as this was a collaborative group charged with curriculum quality management for the district. A delimitation of the study was the exclusive examination of the perceptions of the participants and not those of other bodies on the campus who might have interacted with the curriculum management team, although there were several groups and subcommittees represented among the interviewees. The interview questions focused on participants' perceptions of the governing procedures, organization, and collaborative format of the management team. I

focused on the process of managing curricular development and not pedagogical choices or disciplinary focus.

Limitations

The findings for my study are limited to one multicampus institution. It is challenging to draw generalizations to other institutions and settings from the findings. However, the goal was to generate thick data that provides context so that individuals can determine if the setting is similar to the organization and structure of their respective institutions. To minimize this limiting factor, I chose a sizeable multicampus community college district with several main campuses. The institution serves 50,000+ students.

Perceptions of the phenomenon guided the response of participants. This is the second limitation of the study. In addition, according to Merriam (2009), it is difficult to analyze such data without integrating my personal beliefs and experiences with similar events. Because I work at a similar institution, there was a potential for personal bias or preconceived ideas concerning the phenomenon. I used various mechanisms to help protect the integrity and trustworthiness of findings. I had more than one data source including interviews and a research journal for reflective thought. Having more than one data source allowed me simultaneously to collect and analyze data to look for reoccurring themes. I adhered to guidelines established by the Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) of both the study site and Walden University throughout the research process.

Significance of the Study

Higher education institutions must create and maintain quality curricula to educate and cultivate students. The end goal is to produce graduates who will become

social and economic assets to their communities. Quality management teams aid in helping institutions keep up with the demands inherent in the overarching charge. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to analyze the perceptions of team members regarding the organization, governance procedures, and collaborative formats of their task-oriented group at a multicampus community college district. Despite active response by institutions of higher education to the increased demands of accountability measures evident in the literature, there is more research needed regarding curriculum management teams at the multicampus community college level.

This study may be of interest to administrators, faculty, and staff involved in curriculum development, review, assessment, and reform. The research results of the study sheds light on how this institution works collaboratively to ensure quality management of curricula. Aspects of the impact on institutional culture are inherent in the data. In the review of the literature, the work of collaborative groups as it relates to curricular matters align well with positive culture shifts in many of the studies (Bandeen, Snyder, & Manier, 2016; Bowen & Tobin, 2015; Creanor, 2014). Oliver and Hyun (2011), based on their study, surmised that understanding the value of collaboration among various entities for curriculum management positively affects institutional culture and cultivates a sense of community.

Conversely, such a shift in perception is essential for organizations to establish institutional management system norms that include the use of collaborative teams charged with assessing curriculum quality. Therefore, findings from my study may provide guidelines for multicampus institutions to restructure or develop curriculum

management teams as a part of their organizational vision, mission, and culture. Forming collaborative networks to address curricular matters promotes worker independence and interdependence, which enhances employee value and morale. Therefore, social engagement could result in a cultural shift that is mutually beneficial for all stakeholders. Based on these claims, it is a feasible assumption that when a cultural shift supports collaborations and distributive principles in curricular matters, the likelihood of an institution utilizing these precepts to guide the work of their management team increases.

Summary and Transition

A challenge faced by higher education institutions is to ensure the quality and relevancy of their programs. Many factors affect the ability of institutions to assess institutional effectiveness. Iterative quality management of curriculum may be an effective strategy to help higher education institutions maintain relevant educational programs. Programs are applicable when the knowledge gained by students results in a positive societal impact.

The process of managing the curriculum is an institutional concern. Cultivating a culture of collaboration and distribution of power as a principle of distributive leadership are integral elements of efficient management at the curricular level (Hordern, 2016). According to Oliver and Hyun (2011), vision, mission, and strategic goals of an institution are easier to implement if aligned across an organization. In this basic qualitative study, I examined the participants' perspectives regarding their management team using open-ended, semistructured interview questions to identify themes that ascribe meaning to participants' experiences. Studying the dynamics of the multicampus

community college district's curriculum management team according to the perceptions of team members aided me in the analysis of elements that support the work of such groups in a similar setting or context.

In Chapter 2, I describe the strategies I used to conduct the literature review. I include a detailed description of the conceptual framework of the study through my analysis of relevant literature. I conclude the chapter with a thematic synopsis of emerging concepts found in my review of the empirical literature related to the collaborative nature of quality curriculum management processes and teams.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Managing curriculum in higher education is not an easy task. Higher education institutions are continuously under pressure to maintain quality indicators of academic success mandated by state governing boards. Due to enhanced scrutiny, institutions must examine their curricula for assessment and alignment with regulatory standards (Stowell et al., 2016). Likewise, because of the increased demand for accountability, there are many formal approaches to assess and define quality. This is problematic for many institutions as external standards are difficult to decipher, or quality indicators may be laborious to apply (Bendermacher, Egbrink, Wolfhagen, & Dolmans, 2017). This is a particular challenge when an institution has multiple campuses offering the same curriculum.

Curriculum management often involves collaborative teams from academic departments when there are multiple campuses sharing the same curriculum. Team members such as faculty and administrators generally have different perspectives regarding curricular matters. These alternative perspectives of curriculum effectiveness influence the quality management processes and procedures at an institution (Hordern, 2016). My focus for this study was to examine and compare the governance, organization, function, and objectives of district curriculum quality management teams at a large multicampus community college district through the lens of the team's participating members.

In this literature review, I describe the strategies used to assemble current research relevant to the question of curriculum management committees and governing processes.

In the review of the empirical literature, I examine curriculum review processes in higher education and explore these methods at universities as well as community and technical colleges. After this synthesis, I summarize the significant themes and perceived gaps in the relevant research literature.

Literature Search Strategy

For this review, I utilized the Walden University databases to access peer-reviewed resources. I also used Google Scholar, Education Source, Education Full Text, JSTOR, EBSCOhost, ERIC, Sage Premier, and Thoreau databases and search engines. I perused the reference lists included in the articles I reviewed to locate additional empirical studies and resources.

I used several search terms to find current research studies relevant to curriculum review processes in higher education and the groups or teams assembled to navigate this process. Some of the terms and combined phrases in this review included *quality, assurance, academic planning teams, curriculum review processes, higher education, curriculum review, procedures, community colleges, curriculum review, 2-year colleges, technical colleges, curriculum quality, distributive leadership, dispersed leadership, collaborative teams, approaches to curriculum planning, higher education curriculum review, curriculum approval, curriculum approval in higher education, curriculum approval process in higher education, curriculum transformations, decision making in community colleges, decision making in higher education, curriculum, curriculum approval process, decision making and decision making and technical colleges, decision making and junior colleges, community college curriculum, discipline review, curriculum*

overhaul and higher education, *learning organizations*, *organizational learning*, and *teacher teams*.

I focused my search on studies related to higher education institutions in general, as curriculum review processes in community colleges, colleges, and universities can be similar. I combined terms and phrases with categories of higher education institutions such as 2-year, technical, and community colleges to find more relevant articles. In the next section, I describe the conceptual framework that guided my study.

Conceptual Framework

In this section, I analyze the role, organization, function, and objectives of distributive leadership in collaborative team formats. Distributed leadership and learning organization theoretical principles comprised the conceptual framework of my study, drawn largely from the work of Gronn (2000) and Senge (2006). The focus on distributed leadership and learning organizations corresponds with the philosophical principles of collaborative team formats.

Distributed administrative formats, as described by Woods and Gronn (2009), represent the significant contributions of an assembled task-oriented group as opposed to the contributions of individuals within the organization. In this description, the task-oriented group works through a collaborative process, and in this context, shared governance is essential (Woods & Gronn, 2009). In an organization where employees work together to amalgamate new learning paradigms, such as revised curricula, collaborative processes are essential (Senge, 2006). According to Senge (2006), a learning organization is an institution with a defined learning capacity, an innate ability to

adapt, and the ability to flourish in the new environmental conditions created by the altered state. Senge asserted that there are five major principles: personal mastery, achieving proficiency, shared vision, team learning, and system thinking that govern the success of a learning organization. Individuals in a learning organization work to achieve proficiency in their areas of expertise. Learning organizations exhibit a propensity to cultivate team learning, reflective practices to reduce bias, and system thinking buy-in at the organizational level. The concept of systems thinking is not new. According to Checkland (1999), the human element of problems and situations should not be ignored. To navigate complex systems, investigation and consensus are required for improvement (Checkland, 1999). Systems thinking requires a shared view and acceptance of the vision, mission, and strategic goals of the institution. Organizations are complex systems and problem situations involve reactions and actions of various constituents (Checkland, 1999) Consequently, I considered the integration of four related paradigms—distributive leadership, shared governance, learning organizations, and group work—involving collaborative team formats.

Gronn (2000) asserted that the leader often directs the distributive process. According to Gronn, the strengths and leadership skills of any individual assuming the role of a leader in a distributive leadership format contribute to the success of the process. The goal of distributive leadership is to cultivate collaborative associations. Growing cooperative relationships may be essential in maintaining quality assurance in curricular matters. However, Senge (2006) cautioned that the hierarchical leader format presents a challenge when employee commitment is the goal to create and sustain change overtime.

Compliance and commitment are not synonymous (Senge, 2006). For instance, Jones et al. (2012) found in a study on establishing protocols to build capacity in teaching and learning in four Australian universities that cultivating collaborative relationships among faculty, professional staff, and administrators assisted them in their analysis of teaching and learning. Jones et al. noted that shared distributed leadership enhanced the work of the collaborative team and enhanced the capacity to learn and flourish overtime, although this was not the initial focus of the research project.

Elmore (2000) described distributive leadership as leadership that utilizes a variety of human resources. The goal is to complete the task by maximizing various levels of expertise exhibited within the collaborative group (Elmore, 2000). Senge's (2006) principle of team learning is significant in this regard. A lack of leadership is not a characteristic of a distributive leadership format or a learning organization. There is an inherent administrative leadership function in both formats. Leaders aid in cultivating individual responsibility, shared expertise, and collaborative teamwork within the distributive leadership and learning organization frameworks (Elmore, 2000; Senge, 2006). In addition to the essential attributes of leaders, Gronn (2000) emphasized that the contexts of situations, environments, and contingencies in which leadership occurs are crucial aspects of distributive leadership formats.

Collaborative processes in academic affairs propose an inclusive team approach that involves individuals who have direct and indirect roles (Jones et al., 2012). Additionally, an important aspect of a collaborative process is the proficiency of individuals involved in student development at the institution, employees charged with

enhancing the educational environment via the implementation of student success initiatives. Jones et al. (2012) asserted that the success of distributive leadership formats depends on how administrators navigate the process. The success of distributive leadership formats may be partially due to the response by those who serve in traditional leadership roles. A shared vision and mission are integral to the long-term success of change processes, such as curriculum reform (Senge, 2006). In a learning organization, leaders facilitate the continuous development, alignment, and management of change to ensure adaptive success (Senge, 2006). Jones et al. concluded that leadership team members, such as the senior vice president of academic affairs, play a pivotal role in the success of collaborative curricular team processes.

Distributed leadership is governance that integrates the roles of leaders and followers. In the midst of a team project, the roles of team members can change where a leader assumes the role of follower, and the follower becomes the leader for a particular aspect of the project (Gronn, 2000). According to Bolden and Petrov (2014), an analysis of the principles of teamwork through various leadership constructs provides an expansive view of collaborative teams. Shared governance in distributive leadership includes a system of collaborative perspectives, which involves tapping in on the expertise of group members (Bowen & Tobin, 2015). Team member expertise reflects Senge's (2006) principle of personal mastery, which is a key attribute of a learning organization. The goal is to improve relationships, trust, team learning alignment, and team depth or capacity within the institutional culture of curriculum management teams.

In this study, I focused on the function of distributive leadership and learning organizational principles in curriculum planning as the primary role of a curriculum planning team. I examined curriculum planning of routine quality curriculum management processes and periodic curriculum review procedures in collaborative team formats that encompass distributive leadership ideologies. Several studies lend support to the benefits or validity of leadership principles that utilize a team collaboration format with a distributive leadership framework to achieve a common goal

Literature Review

For this literature review, I analyzed empirical literature on collaborative strategies and team processes. In this context, I also reviewed aspects of distributive leadership principles. I examined current research related to curriculum planning and compared perceptions of curriculum review processes and the role of distributive leadership.

Integration of Distributive Leadership and Collaborative Processes

Distributive leadership is inherently collaborative. Group dynamics, rather than individual contributions, are important aspects of distributive leadership (Woods & Gronn, 2009). Jones et al. (2012) asserted that the premise of distributive leadership is to facilitate cooperative associations that align with the ideology of curriculum management teams. Distributive leadership as a collaborative process, while applied in a variety of workplace settings, cultivates shared governance (Burke, 2010). Thus, within the distributive leadership model, group dynamics, cooperative associations, and collaboration are the cornerstones.

Several studies identified the importance of distributive leadership and the collaborative process. For example, according to a study conducted by Slantcheva-Durst (2014), collaborative team processes work best when the environment facilitates a culture of trust, civil discourse, and mutual respect. Similarly, Oliver and Hyun's (2011) study identified a shared vision of curriculum reform and collaborative team effort as an essential attribute that contributed to a sustainable-shared leadership model at the institutional level. While Slantcheva-Durst's study was conducted in a midwestern community college district and Oliver and Hyun conducted theirs at a theological seminary, the differing collegiate institutions provide an example of some of the commonalities among higher education institutions related to collaborative team processes. In both studies, the participants indicated that a shared vision and collaborative team processes were significant contributing factors to the achievement of team-oriented, task-related goals. These studies also correspond with Senge's (2006) principles of shared vision and team learning, which focuses on developing the capacity of team members.

Slantcheva-Durst (2014) found that cultural socialization, team governance, sense-making, and shared responsibility were the four significant themes that emerged from the data analysis in their case study. The researcher analyzed the experiences of 13 members of the leadership development team, the guiding coalition group. Themes emerged from semistructured interviews, on-site visits, artifacts (including 21 sets of meeting minutes), and frequent meetings with individuals designated as group facilitators. During collaborative sessions, team members participated in reflective activities, emphasizing external and internal factors that affected the work of the team.

The goal of the externalization and internalization reflection process was to transfer tacit personal knowledge to operational knowledge (Slantcheva-Durst, 2014). The findings of this study also indicated that the participants considered a shared vision and strong teamwork as essential attributes that contributed to a sustainable-shared leadership model at the institutional level.

Findings of a large-scale study conducted by Bandeen et al. (2016) at four sister community colleges support the assertion that distributive leadership, team processes, and shared governance are essential for maintaining long-term success in programmatic offerings. In this study, the purpose of the assembled, four-campus collaborative team was to compare and analyze program offerings at these various institutions. Bandeen et al. suggested that collaborations across community colleges could be useful in strengthening program quality and management. Based on the data collected from the qualitative reflection process, there was a perception that the strength of the collaborative network was partially due to a shared vision that aligned with the principles of distributive leadership. The participants described this as a factor that contributed to the effectiveness of the collaborative team format (Bandeen et al., 2016). Each institution led efforts that involved administrative governance for specific programs aimed at supporting the shared goals of the organizations (Bandeen et al., 2016). In both Bandeen et al. and Slantcheva-Durst's (2014) studies, the participants described that a shared vision and collaborative team processes were important factors for the achievement of team-oriented, task-related goals.

Creanor (2014) focused on distributive leadership at the institutional level. Bandeen et al. (2016) and Creanor's studies support the importance of establishing long-term collaborative processes for innovative change. Creanor analyzed the collaborative process in institutional culture when collaborative teams form to participate in curriculum-related action research projects. The goal was to integrate scholarship and innovation through distributive leadership principles to maximize resources and shared expertise. Some of the innovation projects of the scholarship initiative included action research projects related to assessment and the role of technology in pedagogy.

Creanor (2014) conducted in-depth interviews with faculty and examined program viability artifacts such as student success data in this case study. Approximately 70% of the initial innovation projects resulted in enhanced learning and better student outcomes. According to an internal assurance agency review, the program was exemplary. The participants overwhelmingly described the program as having a positive impact. The application of distributive principles, such as the sharing of knowledge, expertise, and experience, encouraged buy-in and a willingness to try novel techniques and practices (Creanor, 2014). The distributive leadership format resulted in a positive cultural change at the institution. Findings from the data collected by Creanor and Bandeen et al. (2016) suggest that establishing and maintaining a collaborative system aids in cultivating a positive shift in institutional culture that helps the organization thrive in the altered environment.

The significance of collaborative associations in higher education institutions expands beyond academic affairs. Student affairs and academic affairs share an important

common goal: to assist students in achieving academic success (Arguelles, 2015; Gulley & Mullendore, 2014; Jones et al., 2012). According to Gulley and Mullendore (2014), traditionally, there is discourse between student affairs and academic affairs at the institutional level. Gulley and Mullendore conducted a basic qualitative study to assess the perceptions of team members from academic and student affairs regarding the inherent aspects of collaborations between these two areas in a community college setting. An analysis of the perceptions of the chief of student affairs and the chief of academic affairs regarding their roles in student success and the extent of collaborations between the two units was the focus of the study. Gulley and Mullendore conducted the study at three community colleges and used semistructured interviews to obtain data. Analysis of the data resulted in themes related to definitions of collaborations, an understanding, and respect of the significant role of each entity by the other, a focus on student learning, and the inherent barriers to the collaborative process.

Gulley and Mullendore's (2014) findings suggest that it is important to establish a clearly defined vision and purpose for collaborative processes within distributive leadership models and learning organization focus, which is consistent with other studies that examined the value of collaborative culture in shared leadership formats. For example, Bandeen et al. (2016) and Creanor (2014) supported the assertion that a collaborative team process enhances the success of strategic initiatives such as curriculum review. Understanding how and why strategic distributive approaches of leadership start and sustain over time in higher education aids in the understanding of the value or validity of distributive leadership in team processes such as curriculum review

and development. The principles of shared vision and team alignment are also applicable in this context as a shared vision requires a clearly defined strategic goal, and collaborative team alignment is a mental aspect that promotes team focus and purpose.

In Creanor's (2014) study, the data showed that distributive leadership practices encouraged staff and faculty to be actively involved in innovative scholarly initiatives. The distributive inclusive approach resulted in a cultural shift at the institutional level in the importance of integrating research and academic pedagogy. The participants indicated that the extended collaborative method strengthened their collective work. Similarly, in the Bandeen et al. (2016) study, the community colleges conducted review processes individually but continued collaborations during their respective reviews. Data analysis in the Bandeen et al. study indicated that distributive principles provided a forum for multiple views and insights from shared expertise and functional roles of participants during the process at various stages. In a study conducted by Gulley and Mullendore (2014), application of distributive leadership principles was integral in the collaborative process involved in addressing student affairs issues such as discipline, which was a responsibility of the divisions of academic and student affairs. Gulley and Mullendore emphasized the importance of both groups taking responsibility, carrying out their duties, and supporting the collaborative process.

Collaborative Cultures

Research highlights the importance of a collaborative culture in a professional, shared expert context. There are variations of distributive leadership involving collaborative frameworks. Herbert, Joyce, and Hassall (2014) examined communities of

practice team formats as a unit of analysis. The purpose of creating communities of practice in this study was to explore the effectiveness of using curriculum review markers. Marking procedures, in this study, were the guidelines established for grading and evaluating the survey assessments. The purpose of the communities of practice standardization is to assess whether various curricula aligned with institutional student outcome goals. Herbert et al. asserted that community of practice collaborative approaches aided in establishing validity in the marking process (grading process). The community of practice teams consisted of individuals with technical and vocational expertise. Herbert et al. described the benefits of integrating a community of practice system as a quality assurance mechanism for curriculum alignment marking procedures, iterative review, and assessment. Similarly, in a study conducted by Mestre, Herman, Tomkin, and West (2019), communities of practice were described as the driving force for the successful implementation of evidence-based instructional practices for introductory level STEM courses. Curriculum focused collaborations resulted in a cultural shift as it relates to curriculum reform. According to Mestre et al., (2019), several departments have adopted the evidenced-based instructional practices paradigm at the University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign campus. Collaborative curriculum focused networks led to the shift from research-based teaching modalities to evidence-based teaching of best practices.

Studies support the assertion that facilitating collaboration between formal and informal leaders at all levels of an institution is an integral component of the collaborative framework for establishing and maintaining a collaborative culture (Herbert

et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2012). In this context, leadership is distributive. Letassy, Medina, Britton, Dennis, and Draugalis (2015) reported on the strengths of a collaborative outcome and assessment group in implementing a quality improvement process. The findings suggest that a progressive, collaborative review of the curriculum by a team of faculty and staff enhanced the iterative, continuous quality improvement process (Letassy et al., 2015). Letassy et al. emphasized strategic collaborative planning involving internal and peer-related auditing of programs and courses to assess effectiveness at the program level.

A basic qualitative study conducted by Raneri and Young (2016) focused on the role of leadership and faculty collaboration in maintaining quality curriculum while exploring the use of open education resources to reduce student costs. One of the goals of the study was to determine the function of leadership in the open education resources project. Data from interviews and reports indicated that the role of leadership was significant. Administrators served as agents of change to address the high cost of educational materials as a significant institutional crisis. According to Senge (2006), although there are local leadership limitations, the function of leadership is essential. Senge classified leadership as executive and local line leaders (leaders with significant organization responsibilities, with a focus on the bottom line). Executive leaders are in positions to provide support for local line leaders and cultivate collaborations among team members in a collaborative task-oriented project. According to Raneri and Young, devising a solution to a problem such as evaluating open education resource materials should include a collaborative approach that involves faculty. Study findings

demonstrated that the leadership provided a forum for faculty collaboration from the inception of the project. This systematic strategic approach improved faculty buy-in. Having a shared vision of how the project benefits students and faculty resulted in a more positive collaborative culture, as shown by increased participation in the project by faculty. Similar undertakings involving curricular matters at the campus and institutional levels could involve collaboration between administrators, faculty, and staff to create a more comprehensive plan that addresses all the needs of stakeholders.

In comparable research, Voogt et al. (2015) analyzed the importance of faculty collaboration in curriculum review processes in professional development. Voogt et al. examined collaborative curriculum related processes at three institutions. Data analysis demonstrated that at all three institutions, collaborative learning communities aided in facilitating knowledge distribution. Similarly, Herbert et al. (2014) described the importance of using a community of practice collaborative teams as a quality assurance mechanism for curriculum alignment marking procedures. In the Voogt et al. study, collaborations between experts improved the quality of curriculum artifacts, which contributed to the successful application and use of curricular materials. The collaborative professional development process was iterative. Data identified pervasive, systematic approaches for knowledge transfer among participants through team collaborations as a contributing factor of reform success. The Voogt et al. and Herbert et al. studies integrated collaborative curriculum design processes and the professional development of team members as the participants learned from each other and shared

their expertise. In the literature, leadership processes with team collaboration was a central theme.

Burke (2014) described a reciprocity model in which administrators and faculty work collaboratively to achieve effective instructional practices. Creating such models may not always be a priority for community colleges (Burke, 2014). The model described in Burke's study builds instructional leadership capacity through empowerment. This model aligns well with Senge's (2006) principle of personal mastery, which emphasizes the importance of team member proficiency and the essential role of personal mastery in team learning to build capacity. According to Burke, the model enhanced individualized learning and promoted a sense of agency and ownership. The study findings indicated that the teachers invested in serving as innovative leaders. Teachers also wanted to encourage more participation in the collaborative curriculum design process after experiencing the reciprocity model of leadership collaboration (Burke, 2014).

Organizations like the Carnegie Foundation have supported and recommended that community colleges make student success a collaborative institutional core responsibility (Burke, 2014). Burke (2014) asserted that incorporating a plan for improving curriculum and instruction through action research supports the rationale for advancing a collaborative collective practice. According to Burke, the primary goal of a reciprocity model of leadership is to empower all individuals within the institution as the collaborative team takes action. This ideology aligns with principles of distributive leadership and corresponds with other research findings such as the studies conducted by Creanor (2014) and Purcell (2014).

The move toward a more collaborative or team leadership approach is on the agenda or part of the discussion of administrative teams in higher education (Burke, 2014; Grasmick, Davies, & Harbour, 2012; Purcell, 2014). In a study conducted by Grasmick et al., (2012), nationally recognized community college presidents were interviewed to ascertain their stance on participative leadership. The presidents discussed how they utilized participative leadership to garner global involvement in decision-making processes. Data analysis from interviews revealed that vision alignment was a central theme to the success of achieving a participative leadership culture. Vision alignment in collaborative team formats, while applying distributive principles and Senge's (2006) principle of a shared sense of institutional mission and purpose was a reoccurring theme in the literature (Bandeen et al., 2016; Oliver & Hyun, 2011; Slantcheva-Durst, 2014). Grasmick et al. found that establishing vision alignment was a significant factor in creating successful collaborative outcomes at the institutional level.

Similarly, a study conducted by Kerrigan (2015) focused on social capital and the use of data to align goals of accountability policies to daily processes and procedures. Kerrigan noted that the data informed and fostered interactions that promoted effective communication networks among collaborative teams. Each member of the academic community shared the responsibility to examine and use data to promote student success initiatives as outlined in the institutional strategic plan. The responsibility of each entity was distributive and worked in tandem with collaborations across departments. Individuals shared responsibility for the success of the academic communication network to achieve accountability measures for student success (Kerrigan, 2015).

The Function of Distributive Leadership Within Collaborative Groups

Researchers have also examined distributive leadership and the integration of theory with practice. For example, Purcell (2014) described how distributive leadership was applied across the district to advance community engagement practice in higher education. Purcell asserted that collaborative action inquiry is a significant methodology that promotes professional organizational development. Collaborative action in this context aligns with the principle of system's thinking, which an essential attribute of a learning organization. Data from Purcell's research, similar to Kerrigan's (2015) study, showed that the shared expertise of college employees and team members strengthened internal networks and supported community engagement initiatives. Shared expertise promotes team learning, alignment, and builds capacity (Kerrigan, 2015; Senge, 2006). Before the study, there was no integration between community engagement practices and college leadership throughout the institution (Purcell, 2014). According to Purcell, a more unified mission creates a more sustainable collaborative system. Through action inquiry interventions, such as community of practice collaborations, administrators at the institution no longer functioned in isolation but as collaborative partners to cultivate community engagement at the institutional level (Purcell, 2014). The community of practice interventions described in the Purcell study yielded similar findings to the Herbert et al. (2014) study as community of practice interventions were determined to be an effective way to apply checks and balances for curriculum quality assurance. Longhurst and Long (2018) asserted the importance of establishing communication networks for their Curriculum Enhancement Program. The program involved multiple

initiatives that were implemented simultaneously. The program was a district initiative and involved multiple stakeholders including students. According to Lonhurst and Long (2018), email, open forums, news columns, and websites aided in facilitating open channels of communication about curricular reform projects. Longhurst and Long (2018) found that it is essential for all stakeholders (faculty, administrators, staff) to work through the curricular reform process to ensure maximum benefits.

Distributive leadership and learning organizations as conceptual frameworks of this study address the collaborative nature of curriculum teams, individuals, and groups. In addition to the collaborative networks, the ongoing processes and procedures that guide the work of individuals and assembled teams in curriculum quality management is of interest in this study. The next section of the literature review addresses curriculum management approaches, processes, and teams.

Curriculum Management Approaches, Teams, and Processes

According to Zundans-Fraser and Bain (2016), higher education institutions are under pressure to assess continuously the effectiveness of curricula and methodologies utilized for teaching and learning success. External pressure, institutional structure, institutional culture, and daily procedures are often in conflict and can be counter-productive to quality curriculum management processes at the course and program levels (Zundans-Fraser & Bain, 2016). Zundans-Fraser and Bain investigated the integration of all protocols involved in the curriculum approval process. They reviewed course and program accreditation documents, relevant institutional policies, draft course approval documents, course review checklists, and educational course committee minutes. The

university office of academic governance oversaw all things related to the curricula. A course director navigated the process and submitted the required course, and the subject information management system paperwork (Zundans-Fraser & Bain, 2016).

In Zundans-Fraser and Bain's (2016) study, thematic analysis of course review and design documents were applied to find key aspects of best practices in curricular matters is applied. Analysis of data indicated that constructive theoretical alignment was often lacking in the approval process documentation. The approval process did not require the directors to be proficient in course design. The process also did require them to understand how to align theory to practice, which may have accounted for the lack of theoretical applications. Regarding curriculum review and design, Zundans-Fraser and Bain discussed the importance of examining the synergy between theory and practice as well as addressing any theory to practice gaps. A core component for assessing the curriculum review and design process in this study was the extent to which the collaborative process was a part of the institutional culture (Zundans-Fraser & Bain, 2016).

Mcleod and Steinert (2015) focused on curriculum review and renewal in health sciences and described attentive evaluation, continuous revision, and student learning outcome alignment as essential attributes of the curriculum management process. In their literature review, Mcleod and Steinert asserted that healthcare curriculum requires continuous revision, which is a feature of curriculum quality management. Some studies that focused on curriculum management processes and procedures also describe the role of leadership in curricular matters such as curriculum review and reform (Albashiry,

Voogt, & Pieters, 2016; Yarnall, 2014). For example, in the Yarnall (2014) study, the focus was on what theoretical models enhanced communications between community colleges and their corporate partners in workforce education. According to Yarnall, distributive and centralized collaborations are the two forms of team-oriented communications. Centralized collaborations generally focus on analyzing a specific aspect of instructional programming, and the discussions involved program advisory committee members with administrative leadership from the institution. Yarnall asserted that distributive collaborations involve informal discussions regarding curriculum that include a variety of leadership stakeholders.

Yarnall (2014) described the integration between institutional curricular teams in community colleges and external industry partners in curriculum review and development processes. Yarnall conducted an end-to-end case study and focused on science, technology, engineering, and math. The study examined a subset of technical education centers and four community colleges with active collaborative industry partnerships. Yarnall selected two colleges as the focus of the instructional aspects of the study. The study revealed that there were two important forms of collaboration: distributive and centralized. An informal conversation between professional stakeholders represents a type of distributive collaboration while formal collaborations such as an advisory meeting is a form of centralized collaboration (Yarnall, 2014). One of the major findings was that there was a lack of student-led problem solving and reflective practices inherent in the current curricula (Yarnall, 2014).

Yarnall's (2014) study highlighted the importance of curriculum leadership expertise as a significant criterion for curriculum management. Curriculum leader expertise requires personal mastery as described by Senge (2006) as a principle of a learning organization. Other studies support the assertion that there are essential principles that govern curriculum management practices. In a grounded theory study conducted by Al-Eraky (2012), the use of a navigator system to view curriculum practices provided the research framework. This method is a useful application for approaches aimed at analyzing the effectiveness of curriculum development plans. For example, individuals who did very little curriculum planning and analysis (birds-eye-view) exhibited a planner approach and were described as individuals who believe they have superior curriculum development expertise. These individuals are not as detailed oriented. These individuals also spent more time using nonhuman resources as opposed to human resources for curricular matters. Upper administration individuals frequently made curriculum decisions as communication to stakeholders was lacking or nonexistent. Data from this study suggest that establishing a clear conceptual framework supports action inquiry and collaborative work; however, the system does not replace having individuals with curricular expertise and academic knowledge (Al-Eraky, 2012). Studies that emphasize the importance of team member expertise adhere to the principle of system's thinking, which provides the lens in which employees can visualize how the organization functions (Senge, 2006). This allows employees to plan effectively, develop proficiency, and collaborative teams to achieve their goals.

Similarly, Guerrero, Bravo, and López (2015) conducted a basic qualitative study with 198 participants from 23 Spanish universities to determine the procedures used to assess the quality of teacher innovation projects. The administrators and faculty were all involved with various phases of the academic teaching innovation projects. One of the purposes of the study was to ascertain how the Delphi technique was applied to the decision-making process as a quality assurance mechanism. According to Guerrero et al., the Delphi technique is a process that involves collaborative group decision making through detailed analysis and review of expert opinions. In the study, the researchers used quality indicators to evaluate curriculum related innovation projects. Using the Delphi technique to assess curriculum quality enhanced the collaborative process. Similar to the findings in the Al-Eraky (2012) study, Guerrero et al. described collaborative knowledge-based discussions as integral to the curriculum review process.

Albashiry et al. (2016) described the roles of four college department heads in facilitating the work of collaborative teams in a professional development project. A central role of the department heads in this study was to build and foster collaborative teams. In this study, the department heads indicated that leadership training in curricular matters resulted in better applications of theory and practice (Albashiry et al., 2016). In a community college with a technical focus, the goal was to create procedures that would change the culture from a curriculum upgrade mindset, which involved individuals, to a more systematic curriculum management process. The study by Albashiry et al. highlighted the importance of leadership training in curriculum development. This study exhibits alignment with the basic tenets of a learning organization as the leaders went

through training to ensure personal mastery and the ability to cultivate team learning. Although this study took place in a developing country, it applies to community colleges in general as the roles of the dean or middle managers in academic affairs align with the functions of the department heads. The success of quality management as an ongoing improvement process logically begins with leadership and management expertise.

In another basic qualitative study conducted by Roberts (2015), an analysis of decision-making processes regarding how faculty members approached curricular issues, their perceptions, and factors that shaped the decision-making process resulted in useful data. Curriculum decision making was the primary theoretical framework for this study. Roberts gathered data through in-depth interviews with 20 academics representing various disciplines at a research-intensive university. The participants conducted research but also engaged in teaching faculty members. Roberts's study was an analysis of a more extensive review of curriculum orientations. Roberts's findings suggest that the instructor processes had philosophical roots related to subject type, professional goals, personal relevance, social relevance, and system design orientations. Professional development opportunities are possibly a significant factor in shaping the way faculty transform their teaching and learning practices. According to Senge (2006), the ability to hone skills and improve individual mastery of essential concepts is an important attribute of a learning organization. Consequently, professional development initiatives not only address personal mastery but team learning takes place as members learn from each other.

Levesque-Bristol, Maybee, Zywicki, Conner, and Flierl (2019) described the benefits of their Instructions Matters: Purdue Academic Course Transformation

(IMPACT) program at the University. The program sponsored a 13-week faculty learning community. The program is a multi-year collaborative campus initiative focused on creating student-centered learning environments with an emphasis on active learning and collaborative learning modalities. Focus groups were assembled to access the efficacy of the IMPACT initiative and the faculty learning community training program. Study findings indicate that faculty benefited from the IMPACT program and perceived the professional development component as essential. Results suggest that the IMPACT redesigned courses enhanced faculty teaching, cultivated faculty collaboration, and improved student outcomes.

The Voogt et al. (2015) study, previously discussed in this chapter, found similar views from research participants regarding the significant role of professional development opportunities for successful curriculum transformations and applications. Niehaus and Williams (2016) conducted a case study to analyze the incentives that governed how faculty approached curriculum transformations. The primary purpose of the study was to examine the work of the global faculty development program for the college of education at a large public university. There were 22 participants in the study, which explored the role of professional development in assisting faculty in the curriculum transformation process. Data came from interviews, participant observations, and document analysis. Niehaus and Williams's findings demonstrated that professional development initiatives aided in stimulating collaborative engagement. Studies such as those by Albashiry et al. (2016), Niehaus, and Williams's are of significance because they address faculty perceptions as curriculum quality managers.

Roberts's (2015) study focused on individual approaches to curriculum reform, referred to as curriculum orientations in the study. Comparably, Aiken et al. (2017) conducted a research project focused on collaborative course development while examining individual contributions outside the collective thought process. Both studies share a unique approach because these researchers applied a curriculum development technique that allowed for personal choice in conjunction with collaborative integrations. Findings indicated that this method engaged professional contributions with collaborative input results for a better product than traditional processes (Aiken et al., 2017; Roberts, 2015). The results align with Senge's (2006) view that traditional leadership hierarchical approaches are limited, as those approaches do not necessarily facilitate commitment when compliance is mandated. For example, in Roberts's study, providing professional development opportunities for faculty resulted in greater buy-in. Participants recognized the value of curriculum reform as employees felt that the training enabled them individually and collaboratively to apply the new technologies more effectively to enhance learning.

Langendyk, Mason, and Shaoyu (2016) conducted a designed based research study to analyze their curriculum management process. The findings from the 3-year study led to the development of an iterative process for curriculum review. Activity theory as it relates to collaborative teams was the theoretical lens that guided the curriculum change project. The objective of the study was to examine learning outcomes in the revised generic skills curriculum that served to establish essential base knowledge

for subsequent courses for first-year students. The findings indicated that the participants perceived the review process as dynamic, fluid, and unpredictable.

Curriculum mapping as a tool for curriculum development and review is prevalent in the literature (Arafeh, 2016; Bair & Mader, 2013). Arafeh (2016) described curriculum as a fluid continuum of materials, processes, and interactions designed to impart knowledge and develop skills in a course or program. Arafeh's study focused on the curriculum review process to ascertain the appropriateness and effectiveness of an outcome mapping assessment tool as an evaluation instrument. While the mapping tool is of value to the process, it was insufficient for evaluating the course and program scope and sequence decisions. The integration of a content focus-mapping tool made the process more fluid and holistic.

In a study conducted by Letassy et al. (2015), the focus is the use of a curriculum mapping technique. In this study, a curriculum team assembled to revise the University of Oklahoma Professional Pharmacy program curriculum. An examination of previous curricular peer-review processes and mapping of professional courses and curriculum streams of knowledge, skills, and attitudes as part of the curriculum review process resulted in the creation of an assessment map. The team utilized the mapping technique to consolidate program outcomes, restructure outcome statements, and create more defined measurable knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The committee was able to identify program deficits and inconsistencies. The study resulted in a more iterative process for curriculum management at the program level.

Often maintaining viable institutional processes for creating curricula is a daunting task in higher education (Raska, Keller, & Shaw, 2014). Raska et al. (2014) asserted that curriculum review processes are necessary for the livelihood of the institutions given the strident outcome-oriented mandates that are the cornerstone of accrediting agencies. Many studies focus on curriculum alignment across disciplines. According to Peterson, Chester, Attiwill, and Bateman (2015), there must be a systematic process for quality curriculum management to address the issue of alignment. Peterson et al. described an iterative process that involves collegial networks based on an integrated scholarship approach. This method facilitates collaborative learning through practice and research. The integrative approach includes reflection and discovery and spans academic disciplines (Peterson et al., 2015). In this study, elements of a learning organization are evident. Scholarship requires personal mastery. Personal mastery is the foundation of collegial networks. Personal mastery involves experts sharing their knowledge to create strong academic networks within the organization.

Similarly, Jeffcoat et al. (2014), in a mixed-methods study, described the curriculum review process aimed at examining student-learning outcomes for necessary skills courses at a community college district in California. Analysis of course sequencing artifacts indicated that there were discrepancies between faculty planning of educational materials and institutional practices for core concept alignment. Jeffcoat et al. asserted that collaboration across districts in curricular issues is essential for achieving the goals outlined in the institutional strategic plan. The purpose of aligning courses in a logical sequence is to cultivate integrative learning from class to class. Students did not

follow the sequential alignment patterns, which indicated that the institution did not entirely support the alignment system.

To standardize the alignment of essential skills courses to support student learning and success in community college districts, Jeffcoat et al. (2014) proposed a 5-step alignment model. The model included (a) articulation of clear, expected student learning outcomes; (b) integration of student learning outcomes with the learning objectives of previous and subsequent courses; (c) incorporation of various assessment protocols and alignment with expected course entrance skills for English and math; (d) establishment of an iterative process that involves alignment of student learning outcomes, a course of record syllabus, and the placement process; and (e) navigation of institutional processes to include careful examination of course sequencing and faculty course design (p. 18). A descriptive word is used for steps a-e to emphasize the activity requirement for each phase of the model.

Sellheim and Weddle (2015) described reflective processes as a valuable tool for enriching, informing, and cultivating the curriculum development process. The focus of this basic qualitative study was a method for course reflection in a 3-year doctorate curriculum in a clinical physical therapy program. The primary goal was to discover the perceptions of the reflection process. The development of this process is to enhance teaching reflection to improve instructor skills and provide support for curriculum management procedures. Sellheim and Weddle administered a survey that included open-ended, Likert scale type questions; 10 participants returned the questionnaires for a 91% return rate. Findings indicated that academic cultures that do not support a faculty

reflective process as an institutional practice, and that poorly constructed reflective methods could hinder this exercise (Sellheim & Weddle, 2015). The data also suggested that reflection, if done well, becomes part of the institutional culture as a nonhierarchical collaborative process, which aligns with distributive leadership practices. It is important to note that due to the small size of the participant pool, data analysis assertions are tentative

In a qualitative study conducted at a multicampus community college district, Coltrain (2015) described a management process focused on establishing a collaborative team of faculty and librarians to improve curricula. The goal was to integrate information literacy into curricula across six campus communities in North Carolina. The team worked collaboratively to create an English course to serve as a pilot during the fall 2015 semester. The goal of the pilot study was the successful implementation of an iterative process to integrate scalable literacy components in all courses across the district. The process started with a review of the current course curriculum and a vision of the integrated curriculum from the perspective of librarians and faculty. The librarians created the framework of the course, and it is flexible by design so that it is applicable to many curriculum models. According to Coltrain, trust, along with a common goal and vision for curricular change, were significant factors in the success of these collaborative groups.

Comparably, Arguelles (2015) conducted a study focused on integrating information literacy into a health sciences course. Arguelles's study examined collaborations between library staff and faculty to align learning literacy concepts within

the rubric of course assignments. According to Arguelles, collaborations between librarians and faculty are important to the integration and alignment process. Coltrain's (2015) study focused on creating faculty and librarian collaborative teams for instructional curriculum reform. In Arguelles' study, the Association of College and Research Libraries for Information Literacy in Higher Education served as the framework for group collaborations in this curriculum management focused process.

Bair and Mader (2013) described a form of reflective practice in their collaborative self-study aimed at improving an academic writing program at the graduate level. The collaborative curriculum review team consisted of 10 faculty members in the department of education who worked together to define the problem. Support for their assertions stems from data retrieved from various sources such as course assignments and course assessments. The primary concern from the perspective of faculty and students was a lack of understanding regarding the process of synthesizing theory and research. The participants found curriculum mapping to be a useful tool for ascertaining the strengths and weaknesses of their education program throughout the university (Bair & Mader, 2013).

In another study involving course design and alignment, Griffin and Burns-Ardolino (2013) asserted that administrative support, faculty development, and collaboration were essential components of their design process. The goal of the curriculum design process was to align student-learning outcomes across general education capstone courses by incorporating integrative skills. The institution established a general education governance committee, which consisted of individuals charged with

administering the curriculum. The design process in this study was governed by the institutional strategic plan and formulated collaboratively to include all stakeholders (Griffin & Burns-Ardolino, 2013).

Schrand (2016) described a similar scenario in which the general education curriculum was the focus of the curriculum review process. The collaborative team assembled consisted of faculty appointed by the academic provost. The committee was charged with revisioning the general education curriculum. The committee in Schrand's study also worked collaboratively with an external review team. The goal was to find innovative ways to integrate general education as a function and responsibility of the core curriculum, academic majors, and cocurricular programs such as study abroad as opposed to the current educational model of a stand-alone general education curriculum. In response to perceived gaps, the curriculum change process began. According to Schrand, because most of the educational focus related to professional education programs, many students did not see value in the general education courses.

The collaborative team in Schrand's (2016) research utilized different techniques to develop the revision curriculum, such as affinity clustering exercises, which involved faculty and administrators mapping out common program goals based on established learning outcomes. The value proposition was also a technique utilized to cultivate buy-in by general education stakeholders. The completion of a revised prototype started the next phase of the review process, a generative iterative process with a design thinking approach, conducted by faculty (Schrand, 2016).

McClure (2015) conducted a case study to examine the effectiveness of one of the major goals of the strategic plan and to cultivate innovation and entrepreneurship within the curriculum at the state university, a public research institution. The objective of the study was to determine why the institution created the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Also, the researchers wanted to understand why it is important to offer courses focused on this initiative to all undergraduate students. According to McClure, the university's goal was to develop a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship across all disciplines and colleges. The center offered incentives for faculty to create courses in the form of faculty fellowships that included innovation stipends. The center included a student innovation space. McClure's study focused on an institutional curricular change that resulted in a positive transformation in organizational culture as it related to course offerings across disciplines to support the college vision and strategic goal. The provost's office was responsible for navigating curriculum management processes through the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The rationale for the curricular change was to address labor market demands, increase private donations, and remain competitive with other benchmarked institutions (McClure, 2015).

Similar to the faculty fellowship initiative explored by McClure (2015), Walsh, Lewis, and Rakestraw (2013) described a program initiated at Georgetown University established to promote scholarly discussion and collaborative curriculum review among faculty. To address diversity in teaching methodologies, the institution developed the faculty fellowship program. The program focuses on innovative course redesign processes by initiating a collaborative discussion with colleagues across disciplines. The

collaborative Doyle fellowship program model consisted of faculty who were actively involved in a course design process. The cohort fellows engaged other faculty members as a part of the course redesign process during their 1-year fellowship. Fellows were charged with integrating methodologies that aided students in addressing issues of diversity and differences as an integral component of the curriculum. The collaborative-focused program aimed at promoting a sustained process for addressing interdisciplinary classroom challenges.

According to a study conducted by Larkin and Richardson (2013), programs developed to support innovations in curriculum development and review will aid in alleviating the time constraints imposed by a busy higher education environment. Larkin and Richardson explored student outcomes as an essential aspect of teaching and learning and described the curriculum review process as the venue to address the quality of academics in the classroom environment, which is the cornerstone of all higher education institutions despite their classification. Larkin and Richardson discussed the use of course experience questionnaires as a tool in the curriculum management process. Using end-of-the-semester data means there is a period between the experience of the phenomenon by the participants (students) and the evaluation period. This delay had a negative impact on the timeline for meaningful curriculum reform.

Jenkins (2015) described research related to improving student outcomes in community colleges. Improving outcomes involves careful review and analysis of curriculum. As previously discussed, course alignment is critical in streamlining the road to completion. In research conducted by a research center group, guided pathways were

determined to be an emerging theme for improving student outcomes (Jenkins, 2015). According to Jenkins, a growing number of colleges and universities are redesigning programs and curriculum to create more structured pathways and cohesive curricula. The alignment of general education courses with academic program courses is essential for improving curriculum across disciplines. Guided routes and similar programs require team collaborations to ensure congruency of program learning outcomes (Jenkins, 2015). Jenkins's study spoke to the why of curriculum quality management processes and focused on the community college improvement agenda.

In the next section of this review, I summarize the studies discussed in the literature and describe their major themes. I include perceived gaps in the literature and their relationship to the purpose of my study. I also compare and contrast collaborative team processes of curriculum management procedures.

Summary and Conclusions

In my review of the literature, I examined collaborative teams as an essential component of curriculum review processes. There were variations in the review processes, which included collaboration among a few faculty members to partnerships between faculty, relevant staff, administrators, and stakeholders. The review of the literature also demonstrated that, in most cases, the impetus for curriculum review or development was in response to concerns such as lack of student transitions and outcome success. Many of the review processes were large scale and involved various stakeholders. The literature did not consistently reflect clearly defined general quality curriculum maintenance procedures, but, rather, radical curriculum reform as the basic

premise of curriculum review processes. Invariably, the literature emphasized the importance of forming teams that included individuals with various levels of expertise to contribute to the research involved in curriculum management projects. Curriculum alignment across disciplines was another topic that guided the curriculum review process in many studies. The importance of buy-in in transformational processes, such as curriculum management projects, was also a reoccurring theme for implementing changes.

A critical gap I discovered in my review of the literature was a lack of studies that focused on daily operational curriculum management procedures. Specifically, I focused on the procedures aimed at assessing curriculum quality across disciplines. Iterative evaluation at the program level was prevalent in the literature; however, there was not as much literature that addressed institutional practices at the discipline level regarding ongoing curriculum management procedures. Most institutions, including community colleges, have mandatory program and discipline review policies to meet state and accrediting agencies' mandated review protocols. However, I did not find many studies that discussed curriculum review and the importance of a regularly defined process that included a curriculum team that oversees quality management.

In this chapter, I provided a synopsis of the studies that focused on curriculum review or reform as a routine iterative process. Mcleod and Steinert (2015) asserted that continuous revision and alignment of course objectives are essential components of the ongoing review process. Peterson et al. (2015) analyzed curriculum management through qualitative reflection to promote continuous review and reform with the goal of

improving student outcomes. The goal of McClure's (2015) study was to establish a culture of innovative curriculum reform and review for all disciplines within an institution. Walsh et al. (2013) concluded that creating professional development programs that offer initiatives for faculty who participate in a collaborative analysis of courses within their respective classes, aids in promoting a culture curriculum review as a mechanism for curriculum quality management.

The focus of my study was to examine these teams and their processes to achieve the goal of regular review and assessment of curriculum as a means of quality management in large multicampus community college districts. I did not focus on curriculum advisory boards; instead, I concentrated on curriculum teams charged with quality management that involved regular review and analysis of curriculum at the course, discipline, and program levels. A basic qualitative design is useful when a researcher seeks to understand participants' perceptions of a phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). I applied this model in my study to discover the perceptions of team members regarding collaborative curriculum review and development procedures at a multicampus community college district. In Chapter 3, I describe the rationale for selecting this research design and my role as a qualitative researcher. I also include a description of the methodology for participant selection, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. I outline areas of possible concern regarding trustworthiness and the ethical procedures that guided this study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine perceptions of members of a multicampus community college district curriculum quality management team and its subcommittees regarding the organization, governing procedures, distributive leadership strategies, and collaborative formats of the institution's curriculum management system. The research location was a multicampus community college district with several campuses in the southwestern United States. In this chapter, I include a description of the research design and the rationale for the chosen design. I discuss my role as the researcher and outline the process I used for participant selection, instrumentation, and data collection. Additionally, I present the data analysis plan. Finally, I address issues related to trustworthiness and ethical considerations and protocols for qualitative research.

Research Design and Rationale

In this qualitative study, I examined the perceptions of team members regarding their institution's curriculum management system. According to Merrianm & Tisdell (2015), as a researcher using a qualitative inquiry, it is vital to ascertain functional applications of useful information garnered by studying a phenomenon; therefore, I constructed my research question accordingly. My research question is as follows: What are the perceptions of team members in a multicampus community college district regarding the organization, collaborative formats, and governing procedures of their curriculum management system?

For this study, I chose a basic qualitative design. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) recommended this approach when the study is straightforward with clear intent and purpose such as ascertaining the perspectives of participants. I selected a basic qualitative design rather than other approaches as my study was pragmatic and I sought to develop an in-depth understanding of a specific educational practice. Basic qualitative studies are well suited for discovering effective strategies and practices of the phenomenon of interest (Merriam, 2009). According to Stake (2010) and Merriam (2009), the foundation of qualitative research is interpretative perception. In this context, a study designed using this methodology provides clarity regarding a phenomenon the researcher seeks to understand (Stake, 2010). Participants are the experts in qualitative studies, and the researchers are the primary research instrument as a researcher's familiarity with the phenomenon directs their interpretative analysis (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2010).

My goal for my study was to make sense of the participants' constructed view of their experiences. According to Yin (2011), to ascribe meaning to the type of phenomenon that was the focus of my study, a researcher should confer with participants by asking questions and inferring meaning from responses. A basic qualitative method is practical, flexible, and applicable to a broad spectrum of disciplines (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). With this approach, I was able to interpret participants' statements and ascribe meaning to their perceptions and views of the phenomenon.

I initially considered a phenomenological approach for this study. This approach focuses more on examining affective experiences (Merriam, 2009). This approach often explores how those encounters of unusal people or events compare relative to others who

also share those same experiences (Creswell, 2013). According to Merriam (2009), a phenomenological approach is appropriate for studies in which the phenomenon involves intense emotional human experiences.

I also considered a case study design for my research. However, according to Yin (2011), case study design is applicable when the researcher's goal is to examine the phenomenon in depth in a real-world context. Furthermore, Merriam (2009) explained that, generally, the purpose of qualitative research studies in education is not to analyze a cultural phenomenon or examine a bounded or single unit system as is customary with a case study approach. Basic qualitative research focuses primarily on understanding an event by helping the researcher to understand the perspectives of processes related by individuals involved in the occurrence (Merriam, 2009)

Role of the Researcher

As the sole researcher for this study, I served in numerous roles. I was responsible for selecting the multicampus institution that was the research site and the instrumentation. Additionally, I conducted the data collection and analysis process. As the researcher is the instrumentalist for qualitative design, it is essential to be the navigator of the methods for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2009, p. 15). In this context, personal characteristics such as my way of interpreting language and my communication style were contributing factors in how I organized and directed the research process. During self-reflection through journaling, I focused on this characteristic of qualitative research to diminish inherent tendencies for bias, considering how this could influence participant response. There were no known conflicts of interest.

I did not have any personal relationships with participants. Though I work in a similar workplace configuration, my association with the study site was not an issue, as I did not have any known personal stake in the outcome of the study or professional work-related relationships with potential participants.

In qualitative research, the researcher makes interpretations based on personal knowledge (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2010). As the sole researcher, data collector, and analyzer for my study, there was potential for bias. Malterud (2001) asserted that a researcher's background determines the process of investigation. Perspectives of investigators affect all forms of research. Consequently, the propensity toward biases exists, and addressing the possibility of bias is the first step to reducing it (Malterud, 2001). To minimize prejudicial assumptions, I used a pragmatic approach for interviewing. My interview questions were straightforward. I asked follow-up questions to clarify vague responses and to enhance the richness of the data. During the interview process, I maintained a neutral demeanor and tone, being careful to exhibit the appropriate level of collegiality. I informed the participants of their right of refusal to answer questions during the interview process if the inquiry caused them any discomfort or anxiety. I clearly stated and outlined my intent and purpose for the interview, which was to ascertain their perceptions of the phenomenon with no preconceived correct or incorrect responses. Furthermore, my dissertation committee vetted the interview questions in advance to help minimize bias in the questions.

According to Merriam (2009), practices such as engaging in reflexivity through journaling aid in critical self-reflection. Using journaling, I reflected on my assumptions

and made clarifications on my interpretations as needed. I used journaling throughout the interview process and included the reflective details in my data analysis documentation. In addition, I protected the privacy of all data. I used a secure physical filing system. I assigned security codes to preserve participant confidentiality and privacy. For the electronic storage of data, I will keep data in my home for 5 years on my personal computer. I did not store data on my work issued computer.

Methodology

This section is a description of the research location, sample selection, instrumentation, data collection, and analysis process. I outline the study design and discuss the strategies I employed to ensure validity and trustworthiness.

Setting and Participant Selection Logic

The research location was a community college district with multiple campuses in the southwestern United States. I recruited participants from the curriculum management team at this institution. I employed a purposeful random sampling strategy to select participants for this study. Patton (2015) described purposeful sampling as the selection of a sample based on specific characteristics of the population according to the objective of the study. Purposeful sampling is the selection of a targeted group or community (Patton, 2015), and as such, I established specific inclusion criteria. Participants were required to be current members of the curriculum management team at the multicampus location. I interviewed members from a variety of positions, including faculty, administrators, and staff. An active member was an individual who self-identified (with verification from the curriculum education and planning office) as a participating

member of the curriculum management process. After obtaining institutional approval from the study site and Walden University's IRB (IRB-02-02-19-0066615) to conduct the study, I conferred with the director of curriculum and education planning and acquired a list of potential participants based on the established criteria. I used purposeful sampling strategies to enhance the credibility of my research. This sampling strategy provided me with rich data, as I explicitly targeted individuals who were directly involved in the curriculum management process.

Purposeful sampling allowed me to select participants from the representative group. I kept the sample size small, eight individuals (Patton, 2015). Creswell (1998) recommended sample size of 5–25, while Morse (1994) recommended at least six participants. The ultimate goal for my choice of sample size was to achieve data saturation. Saturation occurred as I reached a point in which themes, patterns, and concepts became repetitive. The sample size should be sufficient to ascertain all the central perceptions of the phenomenon (Bowen, 2008). However, despite the sample size, saturation is the point at which reoccurring themes and concepts are repetitive, and there is enough information to answer the research question (Bowen, 2008).

There is substantial variation in sample size for qualitative research studies when using interviews for data collection (Mason, 2010). The size of the management team and recommendations by the director aided in determining the exact number of participants targeted within the established range of 8–12, and data saturation supported the actual number of interviews that I ultimately conducted. According to Patton (2015), it is an acceptable practice in qualitative research to go back to interviewees for more

information or to enrich or clarify data. As saturation was achieved, I did not need to seek additional interviews or follow-up interviews with the eight participants. However, I did send the transcripts to participants to review and clarify responses in which wording was vague or unclear. I received transcripts back from half of the participants with half indicating no edits were needed; the other half provided minor edits such as the name of an organization mentioned.

I submitted a summary of the study intent and the planned methodology to the IRB committee at the institution. I included examples of interview questions. I followed all protocols for research mandated by the institution prior to contacting potential participants. I conferred with the curriculum planning and education office staff from the institution to determine the appropriate communication protocol for soliciting participants for my study. I received permission to send the invitation to potential participants using the institution's email system. After receiving a list of curriculum management team members, I was instructed to retrieve email addresses by accessing the information through the faculty and staff directory. I followed the protocol for conducting interviews on campus, using external systems for recording interviews, and the procedures for communicating with potential participants. I used the same script to convey information to potential participants and actual participants. After I received IRB approvals, I contacted the individuals who responded to my invitation to set up an interview date, time, and location, and I sent out the consent forms. I used a preapproved consent form that adhered to ethical standards mandated by Walden University's IRB. I solicited consent via email with signatures and printed the signed forms, which were secured prior

to the interviews. I asked for a verbal reconfirmation of permission. I also requested consent to use a digital recording device before each interview.

I conducted face-to-face semistructured interviews at an approved location on campus. This was mandated by the institutional IRB. The district location was private and convenient for participants and met IRB institutional guidelines. I planned to utilize a virtual meeting space to accommodate any participants who were unable to meet face to face. Three of the participants were unable to meet face-to-face, so I setup a virtual interview using Zoom. I ensured the privacy of the research content by saving the recorded and transcribed data in a secured file on my personal computer and a backup copied on an external hard drive.

Instrumentation

Seidman (2013) contended that the way research delves into the why and how of processes or procedures in an institution is to explore the experiences of individuals in the institution. Patton (2015) asserted that the skills of the interviewer could affect the quality of responses. Patton recommended a few competencies to apply when creating research questions. I constructed interview questions by following the interview principles outlined by Patton. I had a series of predetermined questions. I used probes and follow-up questions to establish greater depth and clarification of responses.

Employing such methods helped to strengthen my research methodology. In addition, the flexibility of the follow-up questions aided me in delving deeper into the participant responses. Based on Patton's (2015) recommendations, my questions were open-ended and straightforward. Regarding interview techniques, I listened effectively,

probed as needed, payed attention to demeanor. I was empathic, navigated transitions, focused on the details, and remained aware of the environment. I was versatile and flexible, which helped me deal with unexpected situations such as a late arrival. I spaced out the times for the face-to-face interviews as I had multiple interviews over a 2-day span, which provided some cushion to address unexpected occurrences. During a virtual interview, a participant had some issues with audio, but I was prepared, and after some trouble-shooting I called and placed the participant on speaker to record the interview. The participant's video camera worked fine. We were able to see each other during the interview.

I asked follow-up probing questions to seek clarification and explore novel aspects of the phenomenon that I had not anticipated before the start of the interview process. To ensure member validation, I informed the participants that if they thought of anything else after the interview that they felt was pertinent to the questions asked, that they call or email me. As the researcher, I was diligent in refraining from making assumptions and asking suggestive type questions (Patton, 2015). The goal of the inquiry process was to reveal practical insights that can serve as useful applications (Patton, 2015).

Data Collection

The source of the data was the responses to questions asked during the semistructured interviews. I chose this method for interviewing as it provided me with the flexibility to standardize questions with the latitude to rephrase questions within the same context to elicit more in-depth responses as needed. The open-ended format of my

questions allowed participants the freedom to express themselves and provided me with an opportunity to probe as necessary to enrich the data. This method was valuable in triangulating data from my reflective journal notes and the responses from the various participants for a more comparative analysis of the responses.

I scheduled one-on-one sessions with each participant. The sessions averaged about 40 minutes, with a few exceeding 1 hour. Before each interview, I reflected on the interview process by reviewing the guide I created. I practiced interviewing by conducting mock interviews with Walden doctoral students recommended by my methodologist. The students who agreed to serve as mock participants had curricular functions similar to the targeted group to assess the clarity of the questions in advance. This method helped me hone my interview skills.

I took notes during the interview process and recorded essential points, recognizable emotional responses, and mannerisms. The researcher's journal aided me in capturing and reflecting on my thoughts and feelings. Additionally, I took notes while listening to the interview recordings and when reading transcribed notes. To maintain an appropriate level of objectivity, I was diligent about not allowing personal beliefs and assumptions to infiltrate the documentation process. I attempted to establish a positive environment in which the participants felt valued, respected, and accepted. I informed the participants that a copy of the transcript would be provided for their review and editing to ensure the accuracy of the information detailed in the transcript. As mentioned, I provided participants with their transcripts. I used an identification coding system of using pseudonyms for each participant that did not involve any of their personal

information or characteristics. The system was in place to maintain the confidentiality of participants. I will continue to store data appropriately to maintain confidentiality.

Data Analysis Plan

I used a thematic analysis approach, as described by Patton (2015). I also applied inductive reasoning along with thematic synthesis as recommended by Patton. I established familiarity by reviewing audio transcripts before finalizing the written transcripts. I initially coded the interviews, generating dozens of codes, from which I assigned categories. Once I completed the initial coding process, I looked for thematic inferences. To categorize my findings, I used open coding with thematic analysis. I also listened intently to the recorded interviews. I read the transcripts and compared them to the audio recordings. This method helped me identify central concepts and ideas. To identify the thematic framework, I focused on aligning emergent themes derived from the concepts and ideas I heard in the audiotaped interviews. I used the information gathered to decipher which participant experiences were congruent with views or perceptions noted. I triangulated data from my reflective journal and interviews based on participant classification such as administrator versus faculty. Triangulation was useful in ascertaining similarities and differences among participants.

I conducted data collection simultaneously with data analysis. For data management and analysis, I created coding labels for the research question. For example, I listed the code type, related properties as ascertained from the data, and specific examples for each item. I created a spreadsheet to organize data. I organized it using the respondent pseudonym, question asked, and applicable themes. I selected open coding as

my data analysis method as it allowed me to identify and separate the patterns into blocks of data, which led to thematic inferences. As is customary for open coding, I reviewed the transcript line-byline using inductive analysis. My goal was to identify patterns and themes from the qualitative data (Patton, 2015).

Additionally, I focused on the purpose of the study as I continuously reflected on the transcripts (Merriam, 2009). The data was transcribed using Microsoft Word software. I took notes to retrieve greater depth from the digital transcripts. For coding and indexing, I reviewed and updated coding frames as critical themes emerged during the data analysis process. Codes varied in length, from a short word to a few phrases. As I reflected on the verbatim transcripts, through reflective practices such as journaling, I attempted to ascribe deep meaning and thematic constructs from the data. I linked and aligned the fundamental concepts identified with applicable sections of the transcript. I compared the participants' responses, listen for patterns, and interpreted those patterns as a part of the data analysis phase. I checked with participants to ensure the accuracy of the transcript. I employed pattern coding for a secondary method of coding in which I categorized data, separating the broad concepts into smaller groups, constructs, or themes (Maxwell, 2013; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). For successful data analysis, I maintained a clear tracking system, document procedure protocol, quality control process, and I adhered to a realistic timeline.

Issues of Trustworthiness

I employed various mechanisms to ensure trustworthiness in this study such as verification of data by checking transcripts with participants to verify their words were

captured as intended and examining results with the lens of the literature review. Additionally, I used reflection through journaling as a way to preserve the original setting and context of the study as presented by the participants

Credibility and Validity

An integral part of research is authenticating the efficacy and trustworthiness of study findings. Strategies for ensuring study credibility include substantiation through the literature and triangulation of sources (Creswell, 2013). Data should be reflective of the participants' responses and, therefore, their perspectives (Merriam, 2009). Comparing my results to relevant literature and allowing participants to review and provide feedback on the transcripts added to the credibility of my study. The interviews were the primary source of data. The initial inquiries and the follow-up questions designed for a more in-depth probe into the phenomenon furthered strengthened the validity of the study. Additionally, committee members vetted interview questions. I employed reflective processes such as journaling for a more detailed analysis of gestures and notable events.

Transferability

According to Merriam (2009), the concept of transferability relates to the extent to which a study applies to different settings. In other words, how applicable the research is to other institutions. When researchers provide rich descriptions of their investigations, such as the sampling methodology, this enhances transferability (Merriam, 2009). In this context, I described the location of the study, defined the type of institution, and clearly outlined the purpose of the study. Identifying the characteristics or traits of the targeted population enhanced the chance for transferability, as these same traits are comparable in

analogous situations (Merriam, 2009). My goal as the researcher was to provide research data that clearly outlined the context of the study to enhance the ability of potential appliers to make an informed decision regarding transferability. I included participant criteria and a description of why and how I used purposeful sampling in the selection process. I provided details of the recruitment and data collection process. I illustrated dependability by describing my research design and disseminating information regarding data collection procedures. Since my study was focused on one multicampus community college district, transferability is limited.

Dependability

To reduce factors that can result in study instability, a researcher should include strategies to enhance dependability. In this regard, it is essential for researchers to provide a detailed account of mechanisms used for data collection and analysis. I detailed my rationale for code and theme selections. I used an audit trail, which involves transparency in methodology so that the procedures used during the research process are identifiable (Merriam, 2009). Additionally, I ensured the alignment of data analysis themes with the purpose of the study.

Confirmability

Similar to dependability, researchers seek to ensure confirmability. In any form of research, there is the possibility of bias (Malterud, 2001). Personal preferences regarding the phenomenon and related procedures can be a concern for the researcher as the instrument for unit analysis. Due to this consequence of qualitative research, strategies must be included to establish confirmability. I used the process of reflexivity through

journaling. According to Merriam (2009), reflexivity is the process of researcher reflection during the study to examine and account for potential biases and assumptions (Merriam, 2009). The process is applicable to potential participant and researcher bias as well.

Ethical Procedures

Ethical considerations are essential in any profession. Researchers should seek to maintain ethical standards as they relate to the study design and participant selection. Furthermore, researchers must incorporate measures to ensure participant privacy and confidentiality. The researcher must be transparent when describing the scope of the study when securing informed consent (Merriam, 2009). Ethical considerations serve as a barometer for assessing the integrity of a study's methodology (Merriam, 2009). Participants have an inherent risk when taking part in any study, so it is essential for researchers to consider this reality in their ethical considerations.

I submitted the appropriate applications to the Walden University IRB and the study location's process for ethical guidelines. I clearly explained my study methodology according to the guidelines established in the IRB process. I did not contact any potential participants or discuss the specifics of the study until I had received IRB approval. To maintain moral consistency, I planned for issues that may have arisen that could have affected the integrity of my research. I secured a list of individuals who fit the criteria and could serve as a participant and an alternate. I employed mechanisms to protect data by using multiple coding measures to protect the privacy of the participants. I secured data by using electronic files that are not accessible without security codes. I keep storage

drives and hard copies in a locked file cabinet in my home. Data will be kept for at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Procedures for collecting data included interviews and materials associated with meetings such as minutes. I used an encryption system to protect the identity of the participants. I started interviews with general participant questions such as their name, job title, and duties to relax participants and create a safe environment for honest and open dialogue. Merriam (2009) recommended that researchers focus on ethical considerations to protect participants and plan for any variables that could result in a moral dilemma from the inception of the research idea to the completion of the study.

Summary

In this chapter, I described the methodology of the participant selection and the rationale for purposeful sampling. I listed the study methodology and discussed the rationale for choosing a qualitative interpretative design. The qualitative design focused on practical applications of the nature of the study. Data sources for my study included interviews and my researcher's journal. My research method was constructivist by nature, as my goal was to ascertain the perceptions of the participants. I outlined my role as the researcher, and I included my data collection plan as well as my method for participant selection. I addressed trustworthiness for qualitative studies and included issues of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. I reviewed ethical considerations and related concerns.

Chapter 4: Results

Maintaining quality curricula in a community college district with multiple campuses is a challenge for large systems. Multicampus community college institutions accredited as one entity have the arduous task of operating as one system. In this context, developing a curriculum management process that encompasses the unique aspects of all the campuses while maintaining uniformity as one college requires strategic approaches. The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the perspectives of individuals involved in the curriculum management process in a multicampus system. The research question for this study was: What are the perceptions of team members in a multicampus community college district regarding the collaborative formats, organization, and governing procedures of their curriculum management system? In this chapter, I provide a detailed description of my participant pool that will include the participant setting and demographics. I also describe the process of data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and results.

Setting

After receiving IRB approval from the university and the research partner, I conducted my study at a multicampus, community college district located in the southwestern United States. The institution consists of several main comprehensive campuses across several cities. There are satellite learning centers and a corporate training center. The institution is a comprehensive associate degree granting institution with a focus on liberal arts and the sciences. Additionally, several degrees and certificates are offered in workforce programs. The institution also offers an array of noncredit

courses and programs. This district is ranked highly and enrolls over 50,000 students annually.

Characteristics of Participants and Session Organization

The study included participants from various comprehensive campuses and the district facility. As outlined in the research partner IRB stipulations, I acquired a list of names of individuals involved in the curriculum management process from the district curriculum office. Since the IRB chair at the partner location informed me that the institution did not give out email addresses, I used the name list provided and secured email addresses from the institution's online staff and faculty directory. As discussed in Chapter 3, I used purposeful sampling, as the list provided included individuals who met the established criteria for prospective participants. My targeted group consisted of individuals identified as members or active participants of the curriculum quality management team.

I initially sent out an email invitation to the first 20 employees on the list. When I received the list of names from the curriculum department, I used the directory to learn more about their positions in the college. I worked closely with a district curriculum representative to make sure that the list I received included only individuals who met the criteria of being involved in the curriculum quality management process. At that point, I realized that the quality management process was extensive and involved many curricular focused groups or teams throughout the district. The curriculum management process was relatively new at the institution and was instituted partly due to the one unified district initiative that originated from the chancellor's office, a result of a recent external review

of the college procedures, and state mandates requiring colleges to provide evidence of curriculum quality. One of the new aspects of the curriculum management process was the hiring of a district director of curriculum and educational planning. The curriculum management process consisted of several pathways depending on the focus of the review and reform project.

With knowledge of the expansiveness of the curriculum management system, I outlined the criteria in the email invitation. One participant contacted me via phone to ask additional questions to make sure the criteria I described included varied positions in the college. I addressed the questions asked and confirmed that the participant met the established criteria. After 8 days, I sent a follow-up to my initial email invitation to individuals who did not respond to the first email and the rest of the individuals on the list. Ultimately, eight individuals voluntarily responded to my email invitation to be interviewed. I sent a reply to acknowledge emails received affirming interest in participating in my study and attached my informed consent document for prospective participants to review. All eight individuals who replied to my invitation email confirmed participation by returning the signed consent form prior to their scheduled interview.

All interviews were private, with only the interviewee and me present. The face-to-face interview location was in a district facility. The partner IRB preferred for me to work with an administrator in the curriculum department to secure a designated area for my interviews. I was assigned a small intimate conference room with comfortable sitting, refreshments, and water, seeking to create a calm atmosphere. The door remained closed during the interviews, and a sign was placed outside the door indicating that a meeting

was in session. I interviewed eight individuals. Unfortunately, three of the eight participants' schedules prohibited them from meeting me on 2 days in which I conducted the face-to-face interviews. As a result, and after dissertation committee consultation, I set up video Zoom meetings to accommodate their schedules and preferences.

Demographics and Confidentiality of Gender

As previously described in Chapter 3, I invited participants who were involved in the curriculum management process in some capacity at a multicampus community college system in the southwestern United States. The participant pool included a variety of employee classifications such as faculty, department chair, dean, vice president, vice chancellors, and directors. Years of employment for the participants ranged from approximately 2–30 years. The participants were from four different geographic locations in the district.

Due to the small participant pool size, I do not discuss the specific details related to titles or positional roles of the participants along with the results of this study to maintain their confidentiality. Additionally, I did not include gender specific descriptions. However, I used the participants' employee classifications for my data analysis purposes. The participants were familiar with and involved in the curriculum management process at the campus and district levels. The participants' degrees ranged from master's to doctoral. All eight participants were fulltime employees at the institution and members of curriculum management teams or active administrators of the district educational planning department. Due to the size of the institution, there was not just one curriculum

committee but a conglomerate of groups and subgroups that converged through a structured curriculum and educational planning process.

Data Collection

Semistructured interviews were the primary data collection tool for my qualitative study. I created a naming system for participants and used them in presentation of the findings to protect their identities. The gender-free pseudonyms are as follows: Vichan, Direcurila, Coldee, Viajay, Viazee, Asrael, Chats, and Medee. The naming system is generic and is not tied to any identifying feature that would connect to any of the participants. Since I do not use gender specific descriptions, I periodically use gender-free terminology such as *them*, *they*, or *this person* as opposed to *him* or *her*. Table 1 is a synopsis of the general backgrounds of the participants. As indicated in Chapter 3, after I obtained IRB approval from Walden and the partner institution, I conducted face-to-face interviews at one location as prearranged through the district office. I also organized Zoom interviews to accommodate the time constraints of three of the interviewees (Chats, Medee, and Asrael).

Table 1

Demographics of the Participants

Participants Pseudonyms	Position Titles at the Institution	Years at the Institution	Education Attainment
Coldee	Dean of Academic Affairs Former Faculty Member	30 + years	Master's degree ABD
Vichan	Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs	4+ years	Doctoral degree
Direcurila	Director of Curriculum and Educational Planning	6 + years	Master's degree
Medee	Dean of Academic Affairs	2 years	Doctoral degree
Viajay	Vice President of Academic Affairs	36+ years	Doctoral degree
Viazee	Vice President of Academic Affairs	6+ years	Doctoral degree
Chats	Faculty Department Chair	13+ years	Master's degree ABD
Asrael	Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instructional Assessment Former Faculty Member	9+ years	Master's degree

Face-to-Face Interviews

The onsite interviews were in a small conference room that I structured to create an intimate setting and aid in establishing a cozy and private atmosphere. I believe this setting stimulated open dialogue due to the ease in which participants seem to share information. I started each conversation with the same script, which included acknowledging that I had received their consent forms. I recapped content from the

consent forms and asked for verbal agreement to record the sessions. I also emphasized that there were no right or wrong answers. I informed participants of their right to decline to answer any question that they were uncomfortable with and of their right to withdraw from the interview at any time. I reviewed the purpose of the study and provided a synopsis of relevant background information prior to starting the interview.

I started the interviews by gathering information from participants regarding their respective positions in the college and how it related to the curriculum management process. This introductory inquiry served two purposes: to get to know the participant and to provide me with some specific context relevant to the research question and purpose of my study. Also, the first line of questioning focused on processes and procedures as outlined previously. As I proceeded with the interview, codes began to emerge. Codes were identified as key words or concepts such as structure, organization, communication, collaboration, process, procedure, governance, and uniformity.

The participants appeared comfortable and were forthcoming with answers and responses to the semistructured interview questions. I asked each participant for verbal consent to digitally record the interviews. I used nine questions and follow-up probes questions as needed (See Appendix A). I also took journal type notes before and after the interviews. I created worksheets for each interviewee that included the introduction and questions. I left space to jot down notes during the digitally recorded interviews and summarized my impressions of participants responses into a synopsis table. I listened intently to the responses of interviewees so that I could ask probing questions explicitly

applicable to their answers. I had sample probing questions in my interview guide that aided me in formulating appropriate probes during each interview (See Appendix A).

Zoom Interviews Details and Specifications

Regarding the Zoom interviews, I used a private space in my home to conduct the sessions. I practiced before the first interview to make sure my equipment worked properly. I also created a plain background for the virtual meeting so that there would be few distractions during the meetings. There were no technical difficulties with the cameras of the three interviewees. One participant had trouble with the audio feed. I could see the participant and noted gestures, body language, and so forth. I was able to call the participant and place my phone on speaker to digitally record the interview. I had prepared in advance for such an occurrence so the interview would not be disrupted. I was able to see all participants during the Zoom interviews, and they were able to see me as well; however, I did not videotape the interviews. I used a digital recorder for data collection to keep the interviews and data similar to that from the face-to-face interview sessions.

As with the face-to-face interviews, I started each conversation with the same script, which included acknowledging that I had received their consent forms. I recapped content from the consent forms and asked for verbal consent to record the sessions. I also emphasized that there were no right or wrong answers. I informed participants of their right to decline to answer any question that they were uncomfortable answering and their right to withdraw from the interview at any time. I reviewed the purpose of the study and provided a synopsis of relevant background information prior to starting the interview.

Additionally, as with the face-to-face interviews, I included introductory type questions to get to know the participants and establish a rapport for more effective communication.

Interview Session Details: Process and Procedure

The average interview time was 41 minutes. I used probing questions to enrich the data. I asked for clarification and recounted my understanding of responses to enhance the accuracy of the data. I was careful to maintain a neutral tone to promote a safe atmosphere. I was focused and listened intently, and I made sure that my responses were appropriate, and my demeanor accepting and nonjudgmental. The participants appeared eager to discuss their perspectives on the curriculum management process.

I uploaded and saved the digital files to my private computer after each interview. The interviews were transcribed by a transcriptionist who signed a confidentiality agreement before I sent them the first recorded interview. Following receipt of each transcription, I sent the transcribed Word document for the participants to review, as outlined in Chapter 3. I received responses from half of the participants after they reviewed their transcripts, with half having no edits and half with minor edits.

Data Analysis

The first stage of data analysis was familiarization (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015). Prior to sending the audio files to the transcriptionist, I listened to the interviews and took notes. I also took notes during the interviews as part of my analysis process. Once I received the transcripts from the transcriptionist, I read them and listened to the audio files again. When I sent the transcripts to participants for review, only two participants

made edits, which were relatively minor such as clarification or spelling of the name of an organization mentioned during the interview.

As I reviewed the transcripts, I reflected on body language and the demeanor of the participants I observed during the interview process. I created tables for the nine principle interview questions with a synopsis of the responses for each participant. I also used a table to organize my reflective thoughts that stemmed from the interviews (see Appendix B). Initially, I organized the data into large chunks and worked my way into smaller pieces while trying to ascribe meaning to participants' responses. Additionally, I employed a thematic analysis approach using inductive reasoning as described by Patton (2015). I examined the transcripts line by line looking for patterns. As I worked through the process of familiarization, I began to organize data into themes that emerged.

I reviewed responses for each interview question for all eight participants so I could initially focus on a particular aspect of the interview at one time. I started assigning codes that overlapped with themes. I used words and phrases to represent codes that aided me in condensing categories and identifying major themes. Many of the responses to the questions were similar; particularly, the questions focused on organization and process. I noted such similarities using coded words that helped me recognize major themes as discussed in the results section.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

I adhered to ethical standards as established by the IRB at Walden University to ensure credibility and trustworthiness. Additionally, I followed the ethical guidelines outlined by the partner institution's IRB. I avoided any appearances of coercion by

sending out consent forms after the participants expressed interest in joining in the study, which I felt was a crucial step to ensure transparency. I did not commence with interviews until after I received signed consent forms. I followed all procedures for inviting participants described in Chapter 3: sending out follow-up emails, sending the consent forms, and organizing interviews. I stayed in close contact with my committee to ask questions and seek clarifications to immediately address any setbacks, such as the lag in time experienced when waiting to receive names of district team members. I employed transcript review techniques (such as sending the transcript to participants to review) and triangulation strategies (to capture data from different aspects) to enhance trustworthiness

Credibility

An essential element of research is establishing the validity of research findings. To substantiate findings, I analyzed the data using the conceptual framework of the study as a guide (Patton, 2015). The peer-reviewed sources included in the literature review section provide the source of authentication (Creswell, 2013). The review and vetting of the research question by my committee aided in ensuring usability. Also, I conducted practice interviews with individuals familiar with curriculum review and reform in higher education to get feedback on the questions and work on appropriate types of probes. The semistructured interview format aided in retrieving in-depth, rich data as it allowed for more flexibility in addressing specific pathways of discussion topics elicited by participants during the interviews. I sent the transcripts to participants to enable them to review and edit where they deemed appropriate to clarify their responses if needed.

Transferability

By using purposeful sampling as the method for selecting participants, they were, therefore, all fulltime employees at the institution and actively involved in the curriculum quality management process at the institution. The qualitative design focused on the participants' perceptions and allowed latitude that helped enrich and authenticate the data. This format increased the likelihood of comparable results in similar settings. The results obtained may be potentially used by bench-marked institutions to apply to their curriculum management processes.

Dependability

To address the question of dependability in this qualitative research study, I sent the transcripts to the participants to review. Sending the transcripts to the participants allowed time for them to examine the transcripts for accuracy. Additionally, a review of the transcripts provided time for reflection. Adding this step improved the efficacy of findings as these are ultimately based on the accuracy of the transcripts in reflecting the meanings inherent in the responses.

Confirmability

During the interviews, I intently listened to the participants' responses. I asked for clarification when the answers were unclear or diverged from the questions. Additionally, I continuously analyzed gestures, tone, and body language to ensure that the participants did not exhibit signs of distress regarding any particular inquiry. I used reflective journaling immediately after the interviews as well as during and while working through the familiarity process of coding. I maintained a neutral stance and modulated my voice

to ensure that I created a safe environment conducive to open dialogue. I used the conceptual framework to make connections between the themes, research question, interview questions, and purpose of the study.

Results

As I organized the data into categories, I identified five major themes that addressed the research question: What are the perceptions of team members in a multicampus community college district regarding the organization, collaborative formats, and governing procedures of their curriculum management system? The five themes developed from the data analysis were (a) *district's push toward uniformity in curriculum*, (b) *collaborative district networks*, (c) *governance structure: challenges and rewards*; (d) *efficaciousness, effectiveness, optimism,* and (e) *curriculum ownership*. These five themes reflect the general observations shared by participants that the district network is complex, which impacts communication, collaboration, and system navigation in curricular matters. For instance, Medee openly discussed concerns regarding the problems inherent in a multicampus district as it relates to curriculum management and Coldee alluded to a problem with communication due to the size of the organization and the processes or pathways for curriculum review at all levels.

Chats and Asrael indicated that the larger the group, the more difficult it is to communicate effectively. However, overall, the quality management process was viewed favorably and as an evolving process, and most appreciated the unified district focus and described it as a step in the right direction.

The five themes capture the findings and I review each below with extensive quotations from the participants (see Appendix B).

Theme 1: District's Push Towards Uniformity in Curriculum

The first theme emerged during the analysis of interviews as the participants described the district strategic goals for the institution. Uniformity refers to the administrative mandate of homogeneity among the campuses as it relates to processes and procedures. As this mandates encompasses all areas of the college, I found that participants internalized this concept. Uniformity was viewed as an important aspect of their committee work. The uniformity theme stem from participants' views that quality management procedures were designed to promote continuity throughout the district in curricular matters. Uniformity was described as a strategic goal and mentioned or alluded to by all eight participants as a district initiative. Asrael expressed how the institution functions as a unified district: "We are trying to ensure that everyone is informed at the institutional level so we can as a district make the best possible decisions in regard to curricular change proposals." As an example, Asrael added, "If there is a proposal for a new course, faculty teaching in that discipline from all campuses collaborate to create a district syllabus to submit for review as part of the new curriculum management process." Viazee stated,

> The district office of academic affairs begins the process with our curriculum online system to input and review proposals recommended by faculty then the faculty groups meet to discuss the proposals at an open institutional level meeting.

Viazee noted that this meeting is open to all district employees.

Direcurila explained that the institution strived to exist as a unified district with multiple campuses.

> When an individual campus is interested in starting a specific program, the program is announced at the district level so that all stakeholders and interested parties are in on the planning from the inception. The process is really inclusive upfront.

The goal, according to Direcurila, is to be collaborative versus being competitive. However, Viazee noted, "Some faculty are still in competition mode which does not align with the unified district concept."

Vichan elaborated on the impetus for change in the curriculum management process, stating, "We are accredited as one institution with several campuses." According to Vichan, the institutional curriculum management process has been evolving for a few years with the unified district strategic goal as the focus. Vichan stated, "We received feedback from an outside consultant that said to us that it looked like our curriculum was built on whimsy." Vichan noted that the report was an impetus for change: "In response to the report, there was a curricular shift to common learning materials." Academic curriculum teams were established across the district, and initially the focus was adoption of textbooks and ancillary materials. Vichan explained,

> This was a tumultuous time, and to move forward with a more expansive curriculum management process, we had to restructure the committee…The goal was to get faculty to talk about curriculum and assessment in a meaningful way and not just limit discussions to common learning materials.

Asrael stated that the strategic goal "is to become a unified district, to begin working together across all campuses to serve all students." Asrael described the shift as more of an evolutionary change from a common learning material focus to a more defined district curriculum management system. According to Asrael, "While the academic curriculum teams originated in 2014 as an initiative for common learning materials," the discussions became more expansive. Asrael added, "When a faculty member in a specific discipline decides there is a need for a curricular shift, the matter is discussed with the academic curriculum team, which is a district representative group of faculty in the discipline." Asrael explained that the group consists of a chair and a faculty representative from each campus in the district.

In addition to the unified college initiative, all eight participants stated that serving students where they are and service to the community are two additional strategic goals that govern their curriculum management process, with the first being working as a unified district. Coldee provided more context for the addition of those goals: "When the new chancellor came, three strategic goals (function as a unified district, serving students where they are, and service to the community) were instituted, and everything we do must be aligned with the three goals." This statement mirrors sentiments from other participants, such as Chats and Viazee, as to why, despite the addition of two goals, the unified district goal is considered the principal goal. Viazee summed it up:

> We function on three strategic goals in the district. One is that we operate as a unified district. Therefore, the academic curriculum teams are supposed to operate accordingly in their recommendation and decision-making process. Additionally,

> as a unified district, the curriculum management team is tasked with making curricular decisions that correspond with the needs of our students and our community. We have to take measures to ensure that we are adhering to guidelines from the state coordinating board, the college board of trustees, and the leadership team. We have to operate as one institution, as a unified district. That is why we come together, why we form those curriculum committees so that we can make sure that all of our objectives are in line. So, what we do on one campus we are supposed to do on the other campus.

Medee, who was fairly new at the institution, indicated that the push toward district cohesiveness was positive and has led to a positive shift in institutional culture. Medee explained, "I was a proponent of the unified district goal from day 1. The practice of competing amongst ourselves and the students losing out is just unacceptable." Viajay described how, while specific administrative responsibilities are performed at the campus level, the goal is to function as a unit so, ultimately, campus discussions become district discussions. Viajay used the course catalog as an example of a uniformed guide that outlines descriptions of courses and programs at the district level. Faculty from all campuses come together to create course descriptions according to discipline. This process is guided by the district curriculum and educational planning office to ensure that important state mandates are included.

In addition to the three strategic goals, participants also mentioned or alluded to eight college goals. According to the college website, the goals are initiatives related to student centered learning, integrated instructional learning environments, a unified

student success model, positive student experience, secondary partnerships, maximizing scheduling and campus facility utilization, and workspace organization to promote collegiality and foster communication. Viajay stated the college initiatives and strategic goals promote uniformity across the district:

> All of the strategic goals or initiatives of the college are geared toward making the student experience the absolute best it can be from, you know, an application that doesn't take 3 hours to fill out all the way up to an enrollment process that doesn't block them, you know, unnecessarily to arriving on campus, and having sufficient parking, and snacks in the library if students [are] staying over to study. This is related to the initiative of facilitating a positive student experience. Everything that we are trying to do is to tie that all together. So, we have the goal to be a unified district in all aspects of the college, and curriculum quality management is a significant part of the equation.

Lastly, what I heard from some of the participants supports the idea that there is a gap in the research literature concerning quality curriculum management as iterative process, or at least what Coldee was aware of as a practitioner. During the interview, Coldee expressed that the research purpose is unique. Coldee stated, "I don't think we really looked into curriculum management from that perspective, and that, that is to set, parameters or goals or aims, that one can really follow." Another participant described the concept of quality management as a good phrase to describe the ultimate goal of curriculum teams. Findings indicate that team members had not considered their system as an iterative or as a routine mechanism for ensuring quality in all curricular matters.

Theme 2: Collaborative District Networks

The second theme, collaborative district networks, emerged as participants discussed the sharing of curriculum-related information throughout the district. Collaborative networks refer to the conglomerate of entities (such as team members at the various campus locations) that merge to form a cohesive group that collaborates to achieve curriculum focused goals. As a multicampus system, the network is geographically distributed and due to variations in campus cultures, it is essential to collaborate to promote continuity in curricular matters. An essential component of the management system is the integration of several curriculum focused groups such as the academic curriculum team and the district curriculum and educational planning administrative team. Participants described the flow of information across the institution as an essential component of the unified district initiative. Thusly, I determined, that the dissemination of information among different groups is the function of the communication network. All eight participants purported that curriculum discussions start with faculty through the district academic curriculum team for a specific discipline or program. After the district faculty review, the conversations are expanded to include administrators. Several participants mentioned that the administrative review process starts with the deans, then to the vice presidents, ending with the leadership team. Changes to or development of workforce-related programs (for example, nursing) require advisory boards. As part of the curriculum management process, there are open forums for curriculum focused presentations and discussion. There is a curriculum management platform to keep accurate records of changes and documentation of meeting minutes. In

this section, I include historical perspectives and fundamental processes of the collaboration networks in the district that were emphasized by participants.

According to Vichan, during the early years of employment at the institution, the collaborative stance on curriculum was that anyone could propose curriculum: "It was an interesting thought process regarding curriculum development, review, and management when I got here." People would say to me anyone can bring curriculum forward, a member from the community or a student can bring curriculum forward." Vichan added that while the institution was proud of this policy, that as the curriculum process became more sophisticated, it became apparent that there was no mechanism for a student or community member to navigate through the pathway system without a faculty champion. Viazee, while musing on improved networks, described the introduction of new curriculum software and the meeting record-keeping system. Viazee, Asrael, and Vichan indicated that the software is an integral component of the communication network that aids in disseminating curriculum focused information throughout the district.

Direcurila described the transition from the original curriculum management process to the current system, providing additional historical context:

> When we were trying to implement the new process, we transitioned in the middle of a curriculum review cycle. There were already new proposals that were being considered through the old review process. We pulled a few of those proposals to start the new procedures. This presented a conundrum as the old process was still in place and being applied. This meant that we were running parallel processes. It quickly became apparent that there were some deficits in the district collaboration

> and the communication network; there were some things we had not allowed for. For example, in the communication flow, we had not allowed time to adequately prepare documents for review by the board of trustees. Additionally, the provost and chancellor were not allotted adequate time to review proposals before disseminating the information and distributing the documents at the governance board meeting. We are really working on our procedures to allow more time for thoughtful collaboration throughout the district.

Direcurila also enthusiastically described collaborative networks using a specific context related to essential elements of the collaborative processes:

> So, I think in terms of our office, what really stands out to me is the way in which we collaborate. So, we have Asrael and myself as part of the district office curriculum facilitation team, and we are working to ensure that the process documents are created in close collaboration with the accrediting agency compliance liaison. What we're trying to do internally at the smallest level or closest level is really make sure that we're not creating documents or processes in isolation. So, everybody's trying to look at the process and say, "Okay, here are the pieces that I need to connect to make sure the process is collaborative and that it works."

As I reflected on the statements made by Direcurila, I was able to see the significance of the collaborative networks and understand how the contribution of each group aided in creating an integrative system.

Coldee provided a somewhat different view of collaborative networks as a work in progress instituted as a procedural component of the process: “We are going in the right direction as it relates to district collaboration in curricular matters.” However, upon reflecting on the topic, Coldee described the collaboration as more of a feature of the curriculum management process as opposed to a true communicative network:

> So, when I look at the higher leadership structure from a governance perspective, I think of district collaboration in that context. I report to the associate vice chancellor of academic affairs. The vice chancellor of academic affair’s office works directly with the vice president of academic affair’s offices. So, that’s where the collaboration comes in. So, the dean’s academic council will vote to move something forward. The proposal is sent to the provost then the provost will forward it to the chancellor and out to the campus presidents. So, it’s back and forth in collaboration before a final decision is made.

Medee expressed the increased attention to cross disciplinary district communications stating the following:

> We are seeing that cross-discipline or transdisciplinary collaboration is becoming more and more important. Curriculum collaboration often happens at the discipline level, and I would say one of our challenges as a large institution is learning how to integrate formal vertical processes with horizontal processes. We have very few horizontal processes. We have a lot of vertical processes. I think that is a higher education challenge. We’re going to have to get better at a more

> expansive system of collaboration because industry and employers are in need of skills that transcend a singular discipline.

According to Chats, collaboration often helps facilitate cooperation. Chats indicated that this seems to be the case for certain groups, but not all groups have had the same experiences. Chats stated that while working on district curriculum focused committees that were not directly related to a specific discipline area, the collaborative process did not help facilitate cooperation. Chats further asserted that in some cases, collaboration that did not include effective communication resulted in animosity between teams. Medee summed up collaboration systems:

> I want to make sure that it is clear. There is a lot of collaboration taking place, and there is a lot of leadership at all levels. I am just saying we have not optimized our culture, our processes to leverage it, to celebrate it. Collaboration is happening, but it is happening organically due to people's persistence or professionalism and their love of students. Collaboration is not happening because we're empowering it and enabling it and fueling it. Organizationally, it is all in these little pockets everywhere. Wouldn't it be neat if we could just work as one unit, right; as one unified set of educators, with the same mission, and all with the same goal. We actually do have the same mission and goal. We are just not doing it in a unified, systematic way.

As I analyzed statements related to collaborative networks, I recognized that there were some discrepant perceptions of how well the system functions. Coldee and Medee provided some insight while agreeing that the process is

collaborative but also alluding to the cumbersome nature of maintaining an optimized collaborative system.

Theme 3: Governance Structure: Challenges and Rewards

Organizational structure refers to the processes and procedures that are created to allocate tasks to accomplish curriculum focused goals. Organizational structure was discussed by all participants. Most of the participants discussed organizational structure holistically in terms of leadership and followership in the realm of distributive leadership principles. However, two of the participants described the governance structure as a traditional down-top system. The structure was described in a variety of ways; however, the focus was on institutional governance with a few references to the concept of shared governance. In this context, organizational structure refers to the institutional structure that is integrated into the quality curriculum management process. As I reflected on the variety of ways in which governance structure was discussed or alluded to by participants, I surmised that governance as it relates to curriculum management had not been clearly defined. As mentioned in the challenges section, the phrase 'shoot from the hip' was used to describe the management structure by a participant. This is a clear indication that there is a perception that the governance structure lacks structure. There are two subthemes related to this emerging paradigm: challenges and rewards.

Challenges. According to Coldee, processes and procedures were designed to facilitate communication. Coldee stated, "I think this is an interesting topic, because I don't think we looked into curriculum management from that perspective, and that is to set parameters or goals or aims that one can follow in a prescribed way." Coldee

concluded, “I think, so far, it has been a kind of shoot-from-the-hip management style, so I think this is a very needed research approach.” Coldee mentioned the concept of shared governance and described it as a nebulous concept, one that is not clearly defined at the institution. As it relates to communication networks, Coldee indicated that in terms of curriculum management (specifically, governance of classroom curriculum), there are no definitive policies for who makes final curriculum focused decisions. Medee indicated that shared governance is not a strength of the institution.

> I would say governance, specifically shared governance, it is not necessarily a strength of this institution. I have been involved in various institutions where shared governance was a central element in everything. Faculty leadership was embraced and celebrated. I do not know if we have fully optimized how to capture and utilize faculty leaders at this institution as it relates to curricular matters and governance. We are very hierarchal at this institution in terms of governance and dissemination of information. Our governance system is analogous to a power distance structure. There’s hierarchy, which is clear reporting-wise, and then there’s an adjacent cultural element called *power distance*. For example, if you were my supervisor in a high-power distance culture, I might not look you in the eye, or I may look you in the eye but sheepishly. I may be very nervous to bring up anything that is my opinion. I do feel we are now moving toward a more collective engagement. I think this is an awesome opportunity for the institution.

Participants described a voting process from the faculty level to the vice president level in the governance communication process and reported that the majority of curriculum decisions ultimately are decided at the leadership level. If it is a new program being proposed, they described additional steps such as chancellor and board approval. One participant described the organizational structure as a para-policy system. Medee described the decision flow process: “The curricular decision-making flow is from bottom up with the chancellor having the final approval of curriculum.”

Although the organizational structure was described similarly by all participants, only some described leadership support very favorably. Medee emphasized that they have great leaders, although Medee also characterized the organizational structure as a power distance system. Most participants noted that it is difficult to manage curriculum in a multicampus system without having a process that promotes collaboration with a structured navigation system. Coldee stated, “In a system with a lot of moving parts, it is difficult to orchestrate cross curriculum schedules and such.” Cross curriculum was described as having students enroll in companion courses during the same semesters, like taking a technical writing course while enrolled in a biology course.

Participants agreed that curriculum management processes originated with faculty at a campus level, then the dean, and finally, the executive and associate level chancellors with passage through various committees comprised of some of the lower level groups (for example academic curriculum teams-group of faculty representatives). Viazee specifically emphasized the essential role of faculty stating that they play a critical role: “Although we have academic curriculum teams as representative groups, all faculty can

attend curriculum focused meetings and voice concerns or promote ideas and changes that they want to see happen in the curriculum."

Rewards. The participants seemed generally optimistic about the new curriculum management and governance process and hopeful that district communication networks will continuously improve. In the subtheme of challenges, a few participants who discussed concerns also mentioned a positive aspect of the system. For example, the discussion about the constraints of the multicampus system, often ended with comments about faculty leading the discussions about curriculum. Although Medee admitted to concerns regarding the governance system, Medee also expressed optimism by describing the collaborative communication process as a movement that can be sustained with a renewed commitment to shared governance. In contrast to comments related to challenges, Chats also spoke favorably of the governance process, perhaps influenced by the local team experience:

> Administrators allow faculty to do what we are tasked to do as the content experts. I think it is because the academic planning team for my discipline does not have many disagreements. Administrators serve as liaisons in the curriculum management process. I feel they allow us to make curricular decisions. We get a lot of administrative support.

Vichan claimed that the curriculum groups were appropriately integrated into the district organizational structure to provide teams with the services needed. Viajay emphasized that the structure is designed to keep them honest, particularly the checks and balances built into the process, such as open forums where curriculum originators present

their proposals. Previously, due to the cumbersome nature of a large multicampus system, to streamline the process, the open forum component was removed with disastrous results, from Viajay's perspective. Components of approved proposals were altered without global knowledge of such changes, according to Viajay, who enthused, "The forums have since been reinstated and supported at the leadership team level as an integral component of the curriculum focused governance structure."

Asrael concluded, "We all work together to ensure that we have the best curriculum for our students." Viazee concurred when talking about the mission of the curriculum team and stated: "The mission of the team is to work together in a collaborative network to provide the best curriculum options for our students as a unified district."

Direcurila described the curriculum pathway process as a four-lane highway that includes a far left lane of new programs. Next, there are curriculum revisions, core curriculum, and curriculum maintenance and compliance. Direcurila asserted that strong governance and organizational structure are required to manage such a vast array of curriculum related tasks and responsibilities. Direcurila communicated that the system or structure is not perfect, but it is essential in helping everyone stay aligned or on the same page as it relates to curricular matters and decisions.

Theme 4: Efficaciousness, Effectiveness, and Optimism

As I examined participant responses regarding the impact that the management system has had at the district level, I found that participants perceived that the work of the group has produced some desired results (efficaciousness). Degrees of successful

application of curriculum management processes were evident. While the efficacy of their work was generally acknowledged by participants, there were some nuances of system overload, resulting in a conundrum. Additionally, as a fairly new system, I detected varying levels of confidence in the ongoing review and reorganization of the curriculum quality management system. All participants expressed feelings of confidence in the current curriculum management process regarding their feelings about positive impact of the system throughout the district. Participants discussed ways in which the role of the team has been legitimized in several ways such as space allotted and designated for regular meetings, administrative support, and faculty buy-in. Vichan seemed excited about district support of faculty when describing the physical spaces designated for curriculum teams to meet and collaborate. According to Vichan and Viazee, having designated meeting spaces provided a sense of authenticity. Additionally, five of the seven participants described the impact of the designated meeting spaces at the district level as positive. The following is a paraphrased short summary of reoccurring expressions of self-efficacy by the participants during the interviews: "We are now a unified district; the pathway process enhances collaboration. There are no silos. Campus specific programs receive districtwide support and campus initiatives are district initiatives."

Asrael stated that the management system promotes buy-in of programs throughout the district, even programs that may be featured only at one or two campuses. Coldee was hopeful that the new process continues to promote unity and provides an example in which a co-op program that is a feature of only one campus is strongly

supported throughout the district with other campuses encouraging students majoring in the targeted areas to consider the opportunity to enhance their skills and employability.

According to Asrael, the curriculum and planning office personnel provide uniformed guidance for the district in curricular matters.

> So . . . I think we have a lot of great work in—being out there and allowing the faculty to have more interaction and more hands-on into the process. Although faculty had access previously, but it was perhaps a little bit more prescribed and dictated.

Viajay reflected on a time at the college when everyone seemed very caution regarding their programs and courses but acknowledged that there had been a positive cultural shift.

> Now, the reality of the situation is we need to set a process that does all of the things that you are questioning me about: good curriculum management, of making sure that it is data driven. I think we have positive impact at the district level in this regard.

As indicated, most of the comments regarding the new curriculum management process were positive; however, two of the participants noted that all the different groups, pathways, and the hierarchal nature of governance are not helping. Medee asserted that the complexity of the organizational structure is problematic. There needs to be more focus on outcomes. Medee further asserted, “We need to migrate away from complex bureaucratic structures and move more toward a unified human based, relationship based,

and expertise-based focus." Coldee expressed similar concerns: "Sometimes, it is just difficult to get an answer, and this is frustrating."

In contrast, Direcurila indicated the most positive aspect is that the organizational structure provides a framework for which the processes work. Consequently, in this context, the push for a more digitalized system has had a positive impact on the efficiency of the curriculum management process. Medee added,

> I would say at a broader level, the process by which new proposals for either updates, changes, and brand-new degrees or certificates offerings are brought to a central district process is improving. It is a process that governs curriculum from the classroom to senior leadership, so pretty much everyone is involved. When I first came, the process was only face-to-face. Changes have been implemented to include curriculum software. We are slowly becoming more efficient with a digitalized system with the implementation of software like Curriculog.

Viajay described the impact of the curriculum quality management systems as a positive influence at the institutional level:

> We have begun to function much more like a university than we ever did in the early years I was with the college. In the early years, we just kind of ran off of money from the state and tuition, you know, when were just a small college, but we've become much more global in our thinking as it relates to curriculum and much more expansive in the quality management process. There is [*sic*] still things we can do, but it takes people. It takes money. But I think that those are all

plusses. We are putting a lot of good systems in place. Even better than we had in the past.

Asrael summed up the impact of the curriculum management process:

In the past year, we have made the curriculum management process more transparent, and we have streamlined the procedures so that they are aligned with our budget process. Our mission is to make sure that we provide the students the best curriculum that we can provide to them. In this context, our curriculum team mission is congruent with our institutional mission because we want to give quality education to our students. We can offer quality curriculum by working with the faculty members who are the subject matter experts. We continuously work with faculty at the campus level through the academic curriculum teams and the curriculum and instruction coordinators. Through this mechanism, we ensure that our curriculum is faculty-driven and that it's focused on student success.

Theme 5: Curriculum Ownership

The question of curriculum control and membership expertise was inherent in discussions regarding academic content. Consistently, participants indicated that the faculty were the owners of the curriculum. Viazee emphasized that the curriculum process is driven by faculty. Asrael asserted, "Our mission is to provide a quality education for students, and we do this by collaborating with faculty who are the subject matter experts." Vichan, an administrator, stated, "The faculty, of course, maintain responsibility for curriculum, but we maintain responsibility of curriculum processing to adhere to federal and state guidelines." Vichan continued,

> I think the positives of the collaboration are ownership because then folks own what is coming forward. You know, it is a very funny thing that our accrediting agency will say, "You need to prove that the faculty own the curriculum." And, I think in my head, it is like, "I can't imagine who else would." I mean, what administrator, and I suppose there are people in the world who could do this, could sit and write curriculum?

Viajay provided a different view of curriculum ownership and described the importance administrators, staff, and faculty partnerships in curricular matters. Viajay asserted with some levity,

> I do firmly believe that while faculty are the backbone of curriculum, they do need the support of administration because there may be matters they do not know about. I worked with a faculty group one time, and they had this phenomenal idea for a program they were gonna do district-wide, and they were planning this big awards event and all of this, and I said, "Okay, so if you're gonna do cash awards those have to go through the foundation." And they were, like, "Really?" And I was like, "Yeah." And they were like, "Well, and then, you know, we're going to do refreshments," and I said, "Okay, so the college has certain approved vendors, so you'll need to work with procurement and go through that to find the vendor." Well, my brother-in-law has a barbeque business. Actually, he might want to be a vendor [laughter].

According to Viajay, this example illustrated why curriculum quality management and ownership do not simply rest on the shoulders of faculty. Processes and procedures

that govern curricular matters aid in ensuring that the product (the curriculum) is aligned with the mission of the team and state mandates.

Direcurila explained that the curriculum and educational planning department oversees and facilitates the procedures outlined for curriculum management. For example, Direcurila explained that to propose a new program there must be a market analysis to predict employment needs within the community served. In this regard, there will be forecasting of enrollment: "The program must be in high demand, garner high wages, and provide training for required skills." According to Direcurila, to determine the validity of offering a new program, the leadership team, which consists of classifications such as chancellor, campus president, vice president of academic affairs, work with academic curriculum teams (faculty) and program advisory committees to identify industry needs by exploring opportunities and questions to address employment gaps within the community.

> Viazee emphasized the essential role of faculty within the procedural context: Curricular decisions are, in part, made through market analysis, which provides details about industry needs. There are also programs that are sanctioned by the coordinating board. We are able to implement curriculum due to the expertise of faculty as faculty are the content experts and are best suited to address the academic needs of students.

Procedures for program review, program development, program revision, core course review, and field study programs all follow a flow chart of processes instituted by the district office of curriculum and educational planning. Asrael described a system of

checks and balances between faculty and administrator with a goal to promote a sense of ownership and buy-in by all and placed emphasis on the curriculum and planning office and staff by explaining their central function in curricular matters:

> We are supposed to be the experts in curriculum and in our role. We help navigate the process to ensure important guidelines are followed. For example, yesterday, I had a faculty member that wanted to turn a continuing education certificate into a Level 2 certificate for credit. The proposal was submitted with a request to keep all the courses the same. In a case like this one, I have to be able to not only say "you cannot do that," but I have to be able to explain why it is not feasible and use that opportunity to teach the faculty member, you know, what are the pieces that we are dealing with, you know, in making curricular changes.

Summary

During data analysis, the following five themes emerged: (a) the district's push toward uniformity in curriculum; (b) collaborative district networks; (c) governance structure; (d) efficaciousness, effectiveness, and optimism; and (e) curriculum ownership. The themes emerged as participants provided me with detailed descriptions of their perceptions of the curriculum quality management process at a multicampus community college system in the southwestern United States. Staffing classifications such as faculty, midlevel administrators, and leadership team administrators were represented in the participant pool, which consisted of eight individuals.

Participants displayed knowledge regarding the curriculum management process. Years of employment at the institution for participants ranged from 2 years to 30 plus

years. All participants had advanced degrees at the masters and doctoral levels. There was a lot of consistency. However, there were some differences related to general perceptions of the structure and function of the quality management system . For example, while participants acknowledged positive aspects of their curriculum management system such as the transition from silos to a more unified system, a few participants conveyed that it was difficult to navigate through the system as structured. Problems such as delayed responses and missed opportunities to communicate more effectively due to the bureaucracy of a system laden with processes and procedures were conveyed during the interview.

My research question focused on the perceptions of participants regarding collaborative formats, organization, and governing procedures of their curriculum management system. Here I addressed the three major aspects of my research question. As it relates to collaboration, participants consistently indicated that the current format of their curriculum management system is collaborative. The system was described as integrative, involving several curriculum focused groups structured as parts of an operating unit. All parts or groups were perceived as significant to the collaborative nature of the system. For example, academic curriculum teams which are composed of faculty were described as the group that starts curriculum focused discussions that ultimately lead to changes once the discussions moves through a structured process. The perception was that this process works best when there is collaboration between district faculty through the academic planning teams.

In terms of organization, general perceptions of organizational procedures and structure were integrated with the district push toward uniformity. The perception of participants was that the system was created and designed around this precept and the goal is to operate accordingly. Based on participant interviews and data analysis, participants perceived organizational structure as a work in progress with room for improvement. In terms of governance, perceptions varied. In general, governance as it relates to decision making was described as ultimately ending with leadership having the final word or voting decision. There were some comments regarding a lack of shared governance or the perceptions that the idea of shared governance had not been clearly defined at the institution. Governance was described by a few participants as a bottom up system (employee input, collaborative) while others described it as a top down system (higher authority making decisions). One participant described governance using the analogy of a power distance system.

I found that the level of complexity due to the size of the institution, consisting of multiple campuses in various geographical areas, was perceived as a challenging reality for establishing an effective organizational structure, collaborative process, and governance system. It is important to reiterate that participants described the curriculum management system as a newly developed process, and as such, changes in the system are on-going. I extrapolated based on the participants' responses and views that trial and error is an appropriate description for the continuous improvement of the quality curriculum management system.

In Chapter 5, I summarize my findings using the visual lens of the literature review. I apply my conceptual framework as I interpret the results of the study. I discuss the study limitations and describe the implications for positive social change. I conclude the chapter with why this study is vital for multicampus community college institutions.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the perceptions of members of a curriculum management team at a multicampus community college district regarding the organization, governing procedures, and collaborative formats of their curriculum management system. Community college districts with multiple campuses accredited as one institution have the arduous task of maintaining unity in curricular matters to ensure quality programs at all levels (Eddy, 2010, 2014). With the increasing demand by accrediting agencies to demonstrate and support the assertions of student success, having a system in place that promotes a systematic approach to curriculum management is essential.

For this study, I used a semistructured interview process to understand perceptions and inductive reasoning to ascribe meaning to their responses. In this context, inferences were categorized into themes (district's push toward uniformity in curriculum; collaborative district networks; governance structure: challenges and rewards, efficaciousness, effectiveness, optimism; and curriculum ownership). In this chapter, I interpret the five themes and describe how perspectives of participants in this study compare with results of studies and theories I analyzed in the literature review. I also include a summary and interpretation of major findings.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine the perceptions of members of a curriculum management team at a multicampus community college district regarding the organization, governing procedures, and collaborative formats of their

curriculum management system. The findings discussed in this section are related to the research question: What are the perceptions of team members in a multicampus community college district regarding the organization, collaborative formats, and governing procedures of their curriculum management system? I have summarized findings using the three significant aspects of my research question: (a) perceptions of participants regarding the collaborative formats, (b) organizational structure, and (c) governing procedures of their curriculum management system. Participants described a system that included variously interconnected and collaborative curriculum focused groups. Participants conveyed feelings of appreciation for open communication among the different groups. However, some participants indicated that having so many communication pathways can create a stalled system where answers are not forthcoming, and progress is slow.

Participants described the governing structure as a feature of the quality curriculum management procedures while pointing to a top-down or bottom-up governing protocol depending on the curricular project. Additionally, participants agreed that faculty were integral in leading discussions regarding curriculum and were part of the curricular decision-making process. As it relates to the generalities of the governing structure, rather the perception was a system that valued employee input or one in which leadership ultimately made the decisions, participants regarded the quality curriculum management process as a work in progress. However, participants supported the new protocols and generally understood the rationale for checks and balances. Faculty and administrators (lower level to high ranking) expressed appreciation for the contributions

of all team members regardless of classifications such as faculty, chairs, deans, or vice presidents.

Interpretations of Findings

My interpretation of findings are aligned with the following key aspects of my research question: the perceptions of participants regarding collaborative formats, organization, and the governing procedures of their curriculum management system. I will demonstrate the results of this study with findings in the peer-reviewed literature that relate to three threads in the literature: the impetus for quality curriculum management, the importance of collaboration, and the impact of institutional structure. Additionally, I will also interpret the study findings within the context of the conceptual framework for this study: distributive leadership theory and principles, as described by Gronn (2000), and Senge's (2006) learning organization theory.

Institutional Structure and the Learning Organization Theory

I deduced, based on study results, that attributes of a learning organization are inherent in the organizational structure of the institution where I conducted my study. According to Senge (2006), whose work I used as part of the framework for this study, a learning organization is an institution that is structured to cultivate a deep learning capacity and facilitate adaptive mechanisms to sustain innovative change. According to Senge (2006), system thinking is the ability to see the connectedness of a system rather than focusing on individual units or parts of a system.

In curricular matters, teams that work together to amalgamate innovative paradigms flourish in environments that cultivate a culture of collaboration. Senge's

theory includes five characteristics indicative of a learning organization. In the next section I have outlined the five characteristics as revealed in my study.

Personal mastery and proficiency became evident during interviews as participants discussed their individual job duties and contributions to the curriculum management process. Additionally, participants exhibited knowledge regarding the quality management process and how the procedures align with institutional policies and strategic goals. Participants' job classifications and on-going professional development efforts were evidence of personal mastery.

Findings in my study indicated that participants perceived that the organizational structure promotes a culture of shared vision through the unified district initiative. While participants generally conveyed their understanding of the college mission and vision, in the realm of the unified district concept, I sensed that due to the variant classifications of participants, that assimilation of the institutional vision and purpose was not dispersed equally among members of the group. I sensed that all of the participants at some level embraced the initiative as the central premise of their communicative and collaborative system. The basic tenets of their mission of effective qualitative management of curriculum to improve student outcomes was a goal expressed by all team members. However, some participants seemed to have an epiphany during the study that perhaps the connections between their work in quality curriculum management had not been linked. Additionally, when the management system process worked, the interactive, collaborative nature of the teams cultivated team learning and application of knowledge. Participants discussed their ability or desire to share expertise and learn from others to

maximize human resources to manage the curriculum with a goal of improved student outcomes. In my study, Checkland's (1999) views were supported in that systems are complex and that outomes of problems and situations depend on actions and reactions of stakeholders.

Based on insights gained from the participants, the assertion that systems thinking aids in the ability of employees to comprehend how the institution functions is supported (Senge, 2006). However, there are extenuating circumstance and factors that come into play which necessitates a holistic view of situations and processes beyond the scope of physical activity. In my study, I recognized the significant impact of human interaction beyond any perceptions process efficiency.

Based on interviews, it can be deduced that system thinking has stimulated a general feel of optimism and support for the curriculum quality management process. Participants reported that the management system has eliminated the propensity of functioning as silos and instead supported working more directly as a cohesive unit. The unified district focus catapulted systems thinking as it is this initiative a group commitment to functions as a unit, galvanized the group. During the interviews as participants discussed and reflected, I felt the synergy and the sense of optimism that the management process had improved and will continue improving was palpable.

Distributive Leadership and Team Dynamics

In my study, I found aspects of distributive leadership principles evident in the governance structure of the curriculum management system. The intent of distributive principles is to combine in a synergistic fashion the roles of leaders and followers. I

determined that the majority of the participants associated collaborative interactions with distributive leadership principles as respect for the contribution of various interconnected groups was expressed. Six of the eight participants described the management system using distributive principle terminology (such as shared governance and collaboration). Sentiments such as the need for all curriculum team members to have input and to share expertise to truly be transformative is aligned with distributive principles outlined in the literature. For example, Woods and Gronn (2009) described a distributive administrative format as one in which contributions of a task-oriented group represent the central focus of an effective system as opposed to individual contributions.

In my study, faculty were consistently characterized as the curriculum experts. Administrators were characterized as experts of policy and procedures. The fact that participants were cognizant of how expertise positioned membership indicates that the concept of followership serving in a leadership capacity and vice versa is a concept recognized and embraced. Overall, team members embraced the expertise of members regardless of specific classifications. Study findings regarding the structural organization of the curriculum management teams revealed that the system is inherently distributive as it relates to processes and procedures.

Student Success is Impetus for Curriculum Management

During the interview process, it quickly began apparent, that the stimulus for creating and maintaining an effective quality management system was to improve student outcomes. Findings in my study corroborated the assertion that there is a need and rationale for curriculum reform, review, and development as a quality management

mechanism (Middlehurst et al., 2009). The importance of quality review of curriculum is confirmed in this study. I determined that student success and student outcomes were perceived to be the primary impetus for curricular change processes in the district I studied. I found in my study that initial questions related to the mission of the team revealed that improving student outcomes is an essential goal of team members. Findings of my study showed that team members carry out their curriculum management processes to meet specific college initiatives related to a unified student success model.

The focus on improving student outcomes as the impetus for creating a good quality curriculum management system, supported the views gathered from the literature as several studies found that student success is a goal for quality curriculum management processes (Arguelles, 2015; Gulley & Mullendore, 2014; & Jones et al., 2012). In my study, administrators detailed data collection and analysis related to student outcomes as one of the factors that drives curricular decisions. Focused attention of data to drive accountability policy aimed at improving student outcomes was also evident in the literature in studies like Kerrigan (2015) when the central focus was for connecting data analysis with policy and procedures. My study adds to the literature and substantiates similar findings such as the Kerrigan study.

Curriculum and Collaboration

To recap, in my research, participants also discussed the significance of collaborative networks in the unified district initiative. In this section I focused on the alignment between collaborative teams and curriculum focused processes. The collaborative team format inherent in the management team structure was perceived as a

significant contributor to the success of the team. Findings in my study suggested that the collaborative nature of the curriculum quality management team represents a cultural shift from a silo mentality to a more cohesive and unified approach. This finding validates the significance of collaboration in curricular matters which is salient in the peer-reviewed literature. Bandeen et al. (2016) and Slantcheva-Durst (2014) found that collaborative team processes are essential in achieving team-oriented goals common in curricular endeavors. Creanor (2014) found that collaboration on innovative teaching research projects resulted in reformed teaching modules that improved student outcomes. In my study, I found that the move to a unified district focus resulted in a cultural shift in the curriculum management process. This finding supports similar results of studies reviewed in the literature.

For example, a community of practice collaborative team was found by Mestre et al. (2019) to result in a campus-wide adoption of the evidence-based curriculum that was a cultural shift in curriculum management processes. The unified district concept in my study has supported the assertion as seen in the literature that collaborative process promotes system thinking. Additionally a structured process with clearly defined navigation routes were inherent in the established procedures of the quality curriculum management process in my study. According to the literature, guided routes and similar programs require team collaborations to ensure congruency of program learning outcomes (Jenkins, 2015). Results of my study certify elements of Jenkins's research as it relates to the why of curriculum quality management processes as a component of the community college improvement of student outcomes agenda.

Impact of Institutional Structure

Institutional structure refers to the organization and function of the institution which includes the infrastructure, policies and procedures. Study findings indicated that the structure of the institution as a multicampus district greatly impacted curriculum management processes and procedures. Groups such as the academic planning teams were described similarly in that all the discipline focused teams have a chair, a secretary, and a dean. Although there is some unity in the overall structure of groups, it was reported that the level of engagement varies across the district so therefore impacts the functionality of the groups. During the interview from participants institutional structure related questions, I gleaned the significance of district forums as an open meeting to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are taken into account such as the impact of a curricular change at the program level on prerequisite courses. I discovered that task such as predicting enrollment needs are problematic as courses do not always flourish as anticipated. Having a multicampus system requires the group to be on one accord to find solutions and ways to revamp curriculum. Based on participants' interviews, I concluded that this sort of situation is a prime example of how systems thinking and collaboration is impacted by institutional structure.

In the collaborative format of the team, communication among external and internal stakeholders was revealed as a part of the curriculum management team structure and format. This aspect of collaboration between internal and external stakeholders as a feature of the curriculum management process. My findings substantiate studies like Yarnall (2014) in which the integration between institutional curricular teams in

community colleges and external industry partners in curriculum review were discussed as an integral part of the management process. Results from Yarnall's study indicated that informal discussions with industry leaders as part of the curricular input structure involved distributive collaboration. Formal discussions involving advisory boards were described as a form of centralized collaboration. Both processes were deemed a significant part of the institutional structure that impacted curricular decisions. Based on analysis of data, there is a general perception that institutional structure (complexity of the multicampus format) has impacted the curriculum quality management process adversely in some aspects, such as relaying information needed to make informed decision which resulted in a delay in the approval process. For participants that expressed concerns about the perceived top-down governance structure, the need to transition from a complex bureaucratic structure in lieu of a more unified, human-based, relationship-based, expertise-based focus. This view corresponds with Checkland's (1999) characterization that systems thinking involves human interactions and is much more than a collage of physical activities aimed at achieving a goal,

Limitations of Study

As the study focused on a community college system with multiple campuses, study findings may not be representative of higher education institutions in general. Additionally, multicampus community college campuses vary in organizational structure and function. Findings may apply to benchmark institutions but may not align with other multicampus systems. Due to the vastness of the district's curriculum management system, some participants focused on more familiar aspects of the process. I was the only

investigator, and as such, interpretations of results correspond with my background in higher education. While I have no association with this particular community college district, I work at a benchmark institution. As I work at a similarly structured institution, I acknowledge that I recognize that I have my own thoughts and ideas regarding quality curriculum management at multicampus community college districts. Thusly, I kept the purpose of the study in mind during the interviews. I focused on the assumptions of the study to reduce the tendency of allowing any of my preconceived suppositions related to curriculum management to alter my interpretation of participant's responses. I followed all guidelines of Walden University's IRB and the partner institution's IRB. Additionally, I adhered to all interview guidelines to avoid coercion and to maintain an atmosphere of dignity and respect. Adhering to interview protocols was essential to elicit open and honest dialogue.

Implications for Research and Action

The research in this study was limited to one multicampus district in a particular geographical region of the United States. Additional research is warranted to examine the phenomena by comparing several other community college districts with multiple campuses. An examination of all aspects of curriculum management would enhance the literature and shed light on best practices. A study focused on different geographical regions may add more detail about best practices and perceptions of curriculum quality management rewards and challenges across a broader spectrum. Additionally, future studies could include a variety of workplace professionals to gain more in-depth insight into perspectives related to quality curriculum management in higher education. Research

that seeks to ascertain how faculty and staff employees that work in curriculum focused areas, and administrators view or understand curriculum management as a quality control mechanism would be useful for setting curriculum targeted strategic goals.

Additional studies focused on processes and procedures beyond the program level (as many of those are state-mandated) would be beneficial. I think the question becomes how stringent are curriculum-related processes outside of those involved in program development, review, or reform. It would be interesting to assess the perceptions of curriculum management processes at the discipline level and compare the various approaches. Likewise, a more comprehensive qualitative study that seeks to ascertain perceptions of current curriculum processes at the institutional level could help multicampus districts to improve quality management procedures. Based on research findings, how well an organization understands the function of curriculum management teams at the district level, the better the institution becomes at the cultivation of collaborative processes and systems thinking. There appear not to have been many studies that adequately focus on the iterative quality curriculum management systems in multicampus community college systems. Community college systems with multiple campuses continuously evolve. Research must be continuous to capture all aspects of curriculum management as a fluid and dynamic, iterative process.

Implications for Positive Social Change

In this study I explored the perspective of faculty and staff regarding the quality curriculum management system at a multicampus community college institution. As many of large community college districts grapple with distance isolation among

campuses, it is difficult to cultivate a systematic process for curriculum management. Examining procedures that govern the quality curriculum management process at such an institution can help bring about the success of an active learning organization. According to Senge (2006), employees serve as representatives who work collaboratively to accomplish goals. In this study, participants were the agents engaged in reflective thinking and collaborative discussion. According to study findings I surmised that if a system recognizes the contributions of individuals and promotes continuous dialogue this practice may allow for the expertise of members to enhance collective knowledge. Thusly, a holistic quality management system consisting of these attributes augments the organizational learning environment.

My study findings are congruent with the observations of Zudans-Fraser and Bain (2016), a core component for assessing the curriculum review and design process is the extent in which the collaborative process is a part of the institutional culture. Study participants alluded to a shift in culture as it relates to systems thinking. Conversely, my findings support the importance of collaborative formats and systems thinking to support transformative curriculum management practices in similar institutions. Applying systems thinking precepts in my study resulted in a cultural shift as evidenced by the mention of the move from silos to a more cohesive collaborative format of curriculum management. A shift in institutional culture that cultivates systems thinking will help institutions develop as a learning organization. The expertise shared and knowledge applied across disciplines will improve course content and accessibility which in turn leads to better student outcomes. It is often difficult to align theory and practice,

however, a collaborative network and the implementation of processes that cultivate systems thinking can be the impetus for positive social change.

Conclusion

The need for quality curriculum management is evident in the literature and is supported by faculty and administrators. However, there needs to be more precise mechanism to aid institutions in cultivating an iterative continuous improvement process for all elements of curriculum applications at the discipline, program, and institutional level. Curriculum drives knowledge acquisition and knowledge acquisition is required for student success. Curriculum review and reform should be structured as an integral part of the institutional culture at all levels. Study findings indicate that a review by an outside consultant revealed that prior to the development of the new curriculum management system, the organizational approach was described as whimsical. During the interview it was noted that at times it appears that they are sort of "shooting from the hip". The study illustrates how a multicampus district can work toward quality management of curriculum as an institutional phenomenon. Analysis of responses of participants regarding general perceptions of quality management of curriculum is that the process to achieve success is constantly evolving It is widely understood why curriculum quality management processes are needed. However, more studies are needed that explore ways in which multicampus community college districts with large enrollments can develop, reform, and implement effective quality management systems. This study provides a framework for consideration by such institutions.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

Research Question: What are the perceptions of team members in a multicampus community college district regarding the organization, collaborative formats, and governing procedures of their curriculum management system?

Conceptual Framework (Gronn's distributive leadership principles and Senge's learning organization theory)

- Distributive leadership-Distributive leadership is based on group dynamics (Wood & Gronn, 2009).
- The premise of distributive leadership is to facilitate collaborative associations, which correlate with the ideology of curriculum management teams (Jones et al., 2012).
- The concept of distributive leadership encompasses the core principle of shared governance in the curriculum quality management process.
- Senge (2006) asserted that learning organizations thrive by the collective contributions of individuals in a fluid and dynamic continuum through continuous learning and development processes.

Methodology

- Pragmatic approach
- Basic Qualitative
- Straightforward questions
- Semistructured interview with open-ended questions

IV. Key Topics for Developing Questions

- Processes, Collaborative leadership, Curriculum, Quality curriculum management, Distributive leadership, function, mission, institutional vision

V. Introduction & Interview Questions:

Greetings, I would like to thank you for taking the time to speak with me regarding your curriculum team experiences. As you know, in response to the increased demands of student success initiatives, many higher education institutions are challenged with creating or reforming their curricula to align better with state-mandated outcome-based approaches (Tam, 2014). Community college institutions, as well as other higher education institutions, are increasingly under pressure to provide evidence of what students have learned and what students can do as a testament of the quality of their academic and workforce programs (Leveille, 2013; Tam, 2014). Maintaining or establishing a unified system that focuses on curriculum quality management is essential in this regard.

As the interview is structured to solicit your thoughts and perspectives, there are no correct or incorrect responses. Consequently, no answers given will result in data related to you professionally or personally. This research study is an integral portion of my dissertation requirement to obtain a doctoral degree in higher education leadership with a specialization in community college leadership. Responses will not include personal identifications like participants' names. I will assign specific characters, such as numbers, to ensure confidentiality. During the interview process, please advise me

immediately if you feel uncomfortable with a particular question and prefer not to provide feedback.

Interview Questions:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study. Will you discuss your position the college and how it relates to the work of the committee?

1. Describe the selection process for this group.

   Possible follow-up probe question: Are members of your group appointed or elected?

2. Will you describe a typical curriculum management meeting?

   Possible follow-up probe question: How often do you meet?

3. Describe the mission of the team.

   Follow-up probe question: Will you describe to me how well you think the team mission aligns with strategic goals? Can you give examples?

4. What stands out for you regarding the team?

   Follow-up question: Can you provide me with specific examples of the organization, governing procedures, and collaborative formats of the curriculum management team?

5. Can you describe the governance procedures of your group?

   Follow-up question: How do you feel about leadership support of your team?

6. Can you describe what aspects of your team work has been a ‘collaborative format” what do you think has been the role of collaborative formats on the effectiveness of your group?

Follow-up question: In your opinion what are the advantages and disadvantages of using collaborative formats for curriculum management? Can you tell me about them?

7. Describe the quality management process for discipline specific curriculum.

   Follow-up question: How do these procedures compare to the quality management process for review at the program level?

8. How does your group assess quality management of curriculum?

   Follow-up question**:** How does your group define quality management?

   Follow-up question: Are there any professional development programs on curriculum management for team members? Can you tell me about them?

   Follow-up question: Have you experienced these professional development programs? If so, what have you gained from these programs?

   Follow-up question: As a team member, are there things you do personally to enhance your proficiency to address curricular matters across academic disciplines and programs? Can you describe it?

9. Do you think your group has any impact on application of curriculum within the district? If so, can you tell me about it?

   Follow-up question**:** does your group convey information to faculty and academic managers such as deans regarding curricular issues or decisions that affect classroom instruction? How have you done that?

Closing the Interview:

Is there anything else that you would like to share that has not been covered in this interview regarding the curriculum management team?

Debrief:

Thanks again for participating in my research study. Please confirm your preferred method of contact. I will follow-up with a short summary of the dissertation upon completion of the research study. Additionally, I will also contact you to review all or aspects of the transcript if clarifications are needed or warranted.

Appendix B: Theme and Data Analysis Example

Participant	**Theme: District's Push Toward Uniformity**
Medee	We've had a new set of initiatives rolled out from our chancellor and senior leadership at the district level, um, with three main goals. One being to become a unified district, to begin working together as a team across all campuses to serve all students, which I think is fabulous.
Vichan	we're structured in that, um, we are structure as a unified district, so we are accredited as one institution with multiple campus locations.
Chats	Although, we have several different campuses in the district, we have to operate as if we are a unified district. Does that make sense?
Viajay	So, um, so everything that we are trying to do is to tie that all together. So, we have, the goal to be a unified district. That is one of our big strategic goals.
Coldee	Okay. So, the institution, with the new chancellor coming onboard, we have three goals that we work everything upon. Uh, that we are a unified district. So, that's why all of the communication has to take place among all campuses, even our online campus. So that is the major goal.
Viazee	One of those, goals is that we function as a unified district. And, so if I had to describe a mission for the academic curriculum teams, it's focusing on our unified district model.