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Perceptions of Leaders Regarding Succession Planning in State Universities in a Western State

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

Perceptions of Leaders Regarding Succession Planning in State Universities in a Western

State

by

Amy Buckway

MS, University of Phoenix, 2003

BS, Weber State University, 1996

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

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February 2020

Abstract

Succession planning is used to identify potential leadership vacancies, develop new leaders, and provide systems for knowledge transfer to ensure optimal functioning of the organization during leadership changes. Leaders in higher education have been reluctant to develop and implement succession planning. The local problem is that higher education leadership in a Western state has experienced aging leadership and a lack of succession planning. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to examine the use of succession planning in 5 state universities in a Western U.S. state and to explore the leaders' perceptions and experiences in the implementation of that planning using dynamic leadership succession theory and transformational leadership theory as the conceptual framework. The research questions focused on whether and how succession planning was occurring, in addition to leaders' perceptions regarding the implementation and value of succession planning. Purposive sampling was used to recruit 2 dean-level or higher-level leaders at each of the 5 institutions. Data were collected from 10 semistructured interviews with leaders and document reviews of strategic plans and policies from the universities. Data were organized and coded in a case analysis and cross-case analysis. Results indicated no formal succession planning was occurring, although leaders were using parts of the process. Leaders reported barriers and successes to succession planning, which were used to develop a white paper to provide guidance for institutions of higher education to improve succession planning and leadership transitions for faculty, staff, and students.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to all who seek to grow and develop through knowledge and learning. My parents stressed education, but my father would be exceptionally proud of me because he was only able to attend school through the ninth grade. This lack of ability to attend school resulted in an unquenchable thirst for learning. He always told me to "learn everything you can because you never know when you might need it." This has proven true all my life. Therefore, to all the lifelong learners—I salute you!

Acknowledgments

      I would first like to thank my husband, Kim, for his unwavering support of me through this endeavor. He may be more excited than I am to be at this end of the journey. Thank you for taking time to reassure me that I was smart enough and that I could get a doctoral degree. Thank you to my mother, my sister, and my kids for being supportive. Thank you to my dear friends for being cheerleaders even when you thought I was crazy. I want to thank my coworkers for listening, helping with software issues, brainstorming conceptual frameworks, and generally commiserating with me. I especially want to thank my committee. Dr. Tinney has been an outstanding mentor who has gone above and beyond to answer questions, provide guidance, and oversee the process. Dr. Karet and Dr. Penny have provided valuable input and support. I have had so many faculty members along the way who have been encouraging and helpful and would like to give a special thank you to Dr. Cowan and Dr. Wells. I have been so incredibly lucky to have so many supportive and loving people in my life, and I am grateful beyond measure.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

Change is inevitable, and changes in leadership will happen regardless of the type

of organization. Succession planning is a process of forecasting future leadership needs

followed by a plan for retention and development of employees to ensure the business

functions at the highest possible level during times of transition (Davis, 2017).

Succession planning is an essential process to help an organization flourish during

leadership transitions, but over 70% of nonprofit organizations do not use this process

(McKee & Froelich, 2016). This represents a significant gap in practice.

The local problem is that higher education leadership in a Western U.S. state has

experienced aging leadership and a lack of succession planning. Four of the five

universities selected in the Western U.S. state had experienced or were experiencing

presidential turnover at the time of this study. An illustration of this problem occurred

during a conversation with a dean (personal communication, January 19, 2016) regarding

the lack of succession planning and leadership development. The dean talked about

reaching retirement age and how most of the other leaders on campus were also

approaching retirement. The dean expressed concern about who would replace current

leaders and how the loss of leadership would affect the university. To underscore the

dean's concerns, four of eight higher education institutions in Utah had presidents resign

in 2017 and 2018 (Cortez, 2017, 2018; DeVilbiss, 2017). Advertised vacancies of one

president in Idaho, one chief academic officer in California, one associate vice president

in California, and at least one vice president in both Washington and Oregon further

illustrated the point (Tucker, 2017, 2018). These vacancies in the Western states and the dean's concern demonstrated the high level of turnover in critical roles in leadership throughout Western states. The lack of succession planning with so many turnovers caused many current leaders, such as Deneece Huftalin, president of Salt Lake Community College, to express concern about the loss of institutional history as baby boomers retire ("Utah Millennials," 2015).

When aging leaders retire or die, those institutions suffer a negative impact because successors have not been prepared with the skills, institutional history, and knowledge to lead well (Koester & Martinez, 2016). Leaders at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (as cited in Koester & Martinez, 2016) stated that it was important to review current succession planning and leadership development programs to make improvements. The lack of succession planning in higher education, combined with the baby boomer population preparing to retire, has created a crisis of leadership in higher education (Ishak & Kamil, 2016; McNair, 2015). The problems related to succession planning have often been rooted in a lack of understanding about how succession planning can work in the academic setting and what succession planning entails (Klein & Salk, 2013). McKee and Froelich (2016) recommended further studies to identify the barriers to implementing succession planning in nonprofit organizations such as state universities.

Rationale

Describing how succession planning is currently being done, combined with identifying aids and hindrances, may promote improved awareness of the strengths and

weaknesses of succession planning in higher education institutions and opportunities to make improvements. The dean at a local state university (personal communication, January 19, 2016) expressed concern about the advancing age of the leaders in the institution and wondered who would replace those leaders, indicating the lack of succession planning. Keller (2018) recommended research to discover why higher education institutions are not engaging in succession planning and what barriers institutions face. The purpose of this study was to examine the use of succession planning within five state universities in a Western U.S. state and explore the leaders' perceptions and experiences in the implementation of that planning.

Definition of Terms

Coaching: A method for helping employees learn and improve through immediate or timely constructive feedback from leaders in a less formal setting (Rothwell, 2010).

Forecasting: Predicting employees who will be leaving due to foreseeable events (Peters-Hawkins, Reed, & Kingsberry, 2018).

Institutional knowledge: Knowledge obtained by being part of the organization over time that is unique to the institution's culture, history, and operations. Candidates with institutional knowledge save an institution time and money (Timms, 2016b).

Knowledge management: The retention of knowledge necessary to organize, manage, and run an institution or business. This is accomplished through documentation, communication, generation, and utilization of knowledge with documentation and communication being vital (Winkler & Wagner, 2018).

Leadership development: Training in leadership skills and knowledge through classes or programs either within the institution or externally. Training can be part of a degree program, certificate, or continuing education course (Rothwell, 2010).

Mentoring: Formal or informal advice and training to the mentee as needed (Rothwell, 2010).

Strategic planning: A process of evaluating the opportunities, threats, strengths, and weaknesses of the business and deciding on goals that will generate the most success (Rothwell, 2010). This planning is best done in conjunction with succession planning to ensure that key leadership positions are available to execute the strategic plan (Rothwell, 2010; Russell & Sabina, 2014).

Succession planning: A process of anticipating or forecasting future personnel needs while implementing development programs to retain current employees to fill key positions in the future without losing institutional knowledge or history to ensure optimal functioning of the institution (Darvish & Temelie, 2014; Rothwell, 2010).

Sustainment: Retaining current employees through mentoring, coaching, and leadership development (Peters-Hawkins et al., 2018).

Significance of the Study

Competition for students and funding among higher education institutions is intense and requires strong leadership. There is a lack of understanding about why higher education institutions are not implementing succession planning when researchers have indicated that this planning has a positive impact on business continuity during leadership turnover (Ishak & Kamil, 2016). This study provided insights into how leaders in state

universities in one Western U.S. state view succession planning to provide direction on how to better implement succession planning.

Succession planning influences students during times of transition. Leaders are second only to faculty in their effect on students (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016). A successful leadership transition benefits students, staff, and faculty (Hewitt, Davis, & Lashley, 2014; Pellegrino, Snyder, Crutchfield, Curtis, & Pringle, 2015). When leaders leave an organization without adequate planning, the loss of institutional knowledge and history negatively affects faculty morale and diminishes the overall performance of the institution (Ishak & Kamil, 2016), thereby creating a negative impact on the students (Morrin, 2013). Healthy and successful succession planning works to avoid these pitfalls. Effective succession planning also incorporates mentoring and leadership development that benefits employees by giving individuals a chance to learn and grow (Ishak & Kamil, 2016; Rothwell, 2010). Providing information that could improve succession planning within the state could benefit faculty and students on several levels leading to positive social change.

Research Questions

The local problem is that higher education leadership in a Western U.S. state has experienced an aging leadership and a lack of succession planning. The purpose of this study was to examine the use of succession planning within five state universities in a Western U.S. state and explore the leaders' perceptions and experiences in the implementation of that planning. The research questions answered in this study were the following:

1. In what ways were state universities in a Western U.S. state using succession planning?

2. How did higher education leaders in those universities perceive the process of implementing succession planning?

3. What did higher education leaders believe is the value of succession planning?

Review of the Literature

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was developed from examining the process of succession planning outlined by Rothwell (2010) and using the dynamic leadership succession theory and transformational leadership theory to support the process of succession planning and provide the lens for data collection and analysis in this study (see Figure 1). Succession planning is not a single action but rather a process. Rothwell (2010) defined succession planning as a program that employs "a deliberate and systematic effort by an organization to ensure leadership continuity in key positions, retain and develop intellectual and knowledge capital for the future, and encourage individual advancement" (p. 6). A conceptual or framework is composed of theories, ideas, or beliefs that provide the underpinning for a qualitative study and draws from different areas to help guide the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017).
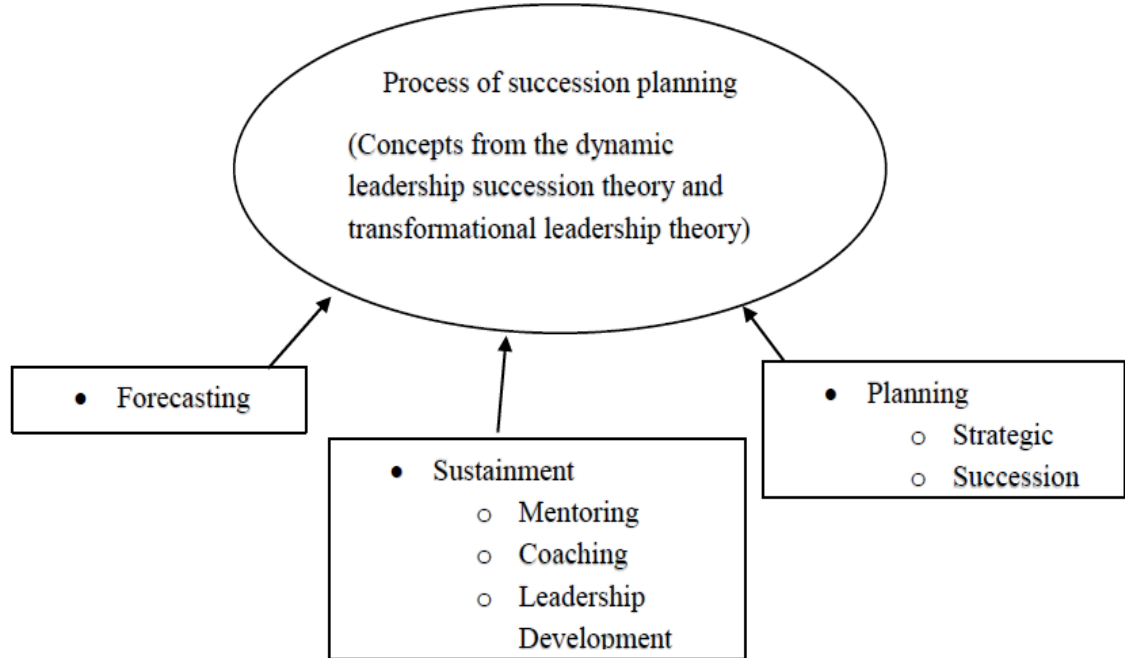
Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

Transformational leadership theory works well with succession planning because of the focus on the development and retention of employees. Ahmad, Mohamed, and Manaf (2017) found that a transformational leadership style had a positive impact on successful succession planning. Furthermore, Winkler and Wagner (2018) found that knowledge management, an important concept in succession planning, was an integral part of transformational leadership. Additionally, Tichy (2014) used transformational leadership as the underpinning of his textbook on succession planning.

There are many leadership styles, but the one that is most effective in relation to leadership development and succession planning is transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is a style of leadership in which leaders inspire their employees and generate more commitment leading to increased retention of employees

(Bass, 1997). Four different characteristics compose the transformational leader: charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1990). The charismatic leader can create an environment in which employees want to achieve more and have confidence in their leader by the leader using influence (Bass, 1990). The inspirational leader helps employees understand the institution's vision while setting high standards for performance that employees willingly strive to achieve (Bass, 1990; Winkler & Wagner, 2018). Intellectual stimulation encourages innovation and creative problem-solving (Bass, 1990). Lastly, individualized consideration offers employees the opportunity to develop their skills through thoughtful mentoring by a leader who recognizes their unique qualities (Bass, 1990). With these traits, transformational leadership improves job satisfaction and, in turn, has a positive impact on retention (Bayram & Dinc, 2015), which is essential to successful succession planning.

The other theory used in the conceptual framework was the dynamic leadership succession theory, which contains the fundamental concepts of succession planning. The dynamic leadership succession theory outlines the importance of forecasting needs regarding leadership positions, addresses the importance of sustainability through creating a culture of leadership development and mentoring, and includes details for implementing succession planning where transition plans are needed (Peters, 2011; Peters-Hawkins et al., 2018). Both the transformational leadership theory and the dynamic leadership succession theory emphasize the importance of leadership development and mentoring to help an organization thrive. These two theories align with

the definition and process of succession planning, and in the current study they provided the conceptual framework to guide data collection and interpretation. Although there was very little research supporting the dynamic leadership succession theory at the time of this study, each article on succession planning fit into the categories of forecasting, sustaining, and planning for the literature review with the transformational leadership theory supporting the retention and sustainment of employees.

Review of the Broader Problem

Authors in business literature recognize succession planning as necessary for all types of businesses, including education. Mahler and Wrightnour (1973) stressed the importance of forecasting, coaching, and professional development to retain current employees, combined with planning to strengthen the business and prevent gaps in leadership. The term *leadership succession* has also been used, but the focus has remained the same, and succession planning is still an issue in business (Mahler & Wrightnour, 1973). Despite the longevity of the problem, most information comes from business literature due to a lack of research on the topic in higher education.

The Walden Library was the primary source for the literature review. The databases searched were Sage, ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center), ProQuest, Business Source Complete, Emerald Management, Education Source, ABBI, Taylor and Francis, Gale Academic OneFile Select, and Ebscohost. Google Scholar was reviewed weekly with a request for notification on all recent articles on chosen search terms, and a review of those references occasionally provided further materials. The search terms used to identify relevant articles were *higher education*, *succession*

planning, *leadership development*, *knowledge management*, *transformational leadership*, *dynamic leadership*, *succession management*, *institutional knowledge*, *institutional history*, *change strategies*, *hiring*, *policy*, *personnel processes*, *strategic planning*, *postsecondary education*, *personnel practices*, and *workforce planning*.

Forecasting. When planning a trip, individuals think through the anticipated activities, destinations, and weather to make sure to pack the right clothing and equipment to make the most of the trip and to provide the most enjoyment. Forecasting for succession planning is similar and is a task best accomplished in conjunction with a strategic plan (Russell & Sabina, 2014). Leaders ask common questions in the strategic planning process, including whether they have the right people, equipment, and resources to meet their goals, and whether an employee in a crucial position is planning to leave. Accrediting bodies mandate strategic planning because this process provides direction, improves competitiveness, and helps to ensure overall survival (Timms, 2016b). Succession planning, on the other hand, is focused on the people needed to implement and achieve the strategic plan (Schepker, Kim, Patel, Thatcher, & Campion, 2017; Timms, 2016a). Businesses employ succession planning as part of the strategic planning process to ensure that institutional knowledge and history are not lost when a leader leaves the company (Newhall, 2015). It is important to implement succession planning before a leadership crisis (Calareso, 2013).

Good leaders are a commodity that can be hard to find, and developing quality leaders is of concern to every business, including academia (Fleuriet & Williams, 2015). Having effective leaders is especially important now as the baby boomer generation is

beginning to retire, creating a leadership void (DeZure, Shaw, & Rojewski, 2014; Eddy, 2013; Lewis, 2013). Smith (2016) noted that there has been an increase in turnover and retirements, with fewer qualified applicants for community college presidency positions, and that 75% of community college presidents and senior administrators interviewed stated that they were planning to retire within the next 10 years. Furthermore, according to the American Council on Education (2017), 58% of college and university presidents are over 60 years old. Whether leaders retire or leave for other reasons, prevention of the loss of tacit organizational knowledge and institutional history is the goal of effective succession planning (Acree-Hamann, 2016; Lewis, 2013).

Higher education management has become complicated as universities and colleges have grown in size and must contend with difficult legal and political issues (Fleuriet & Williams, 2015; Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017; Tekniepe, 2014). Due to the increasing complexity of higher education, finding skilled leaders who understand the responsibilities and culture of an organization is difficult (Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017). Because of the increased complexity and difficulty finding knowledgeable leaders, the idea of succession planning with leadership development in academia is becoming more widely accepted (Allcorn, Stein, & Duncan, 2018; Eddy, 2013; Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017). The time seems appropriate for the promotion of succession planning in higher education.

The age of current leaders is an issue in higher education. Baby boomers hold most of the current academic leadership positions, and the increasing numbers of retirements is creating a more significant problem than in previous eras. In a study that illuminated the lack of succession planning in higher education, Luna (2012) noted the

impending leadership crisis in higher education and observed that 10 out of 11 academic leaders in the study did not have a long-term comprehensive succession plan, much less one tied to a university-wide strategic plan. Similarly, McNair (2015) and Timms (2016b) warned of the imminent crisis in leadership as people retire. Higher education institutions must have a succession plan that forecasts who is planning to retire or leave, and must have other employees prepared with the institutional knowledge to fill those slots (Boerner, 2015; Ngcamu, 2019).

Sustaining. The retention of employees is vital to any business, and a shortage of well-qualified applicants is the most relevant and critical issue in succession and leadership sustainability (Richards, 2016). Eddy (2013) suggested that in community colleges, 50% of presidents promoted were from within their respective institutions. Similarly, Tekniepe (2014) discovered that 78.9% of new community college presidents were from within the institution. Moreover, Capuano (2013) found that when succession planning became a priority with full engagement by all levels of leadership, internal hires increased by as much as 70% and leadership turnover decreased by 48% over 3 years.

Similarly, Ferris, Jayaraman, and Lim (2015) found that CEOs in business had a longer tenure and fewer forced turnovers when hired internally. Another benefit of hiring internal candidates is the reduction of the time required for an employee to become trained and familiar with the new role, as the internal candidate comes with institutional knowledge (Timms, 2016a). Retaining good employees and decreasing turnover is vital for improving the performance and competitiveness of an organization (Ishak & Kamil, 2016).

The issues related to the increasing complexity of succession planning have led to disagreement about whether institutions should develop leaders internally or recruit them externally. External hires do not preclude succession planning, although this does seem to be the belief in higher education due to part of the process of succession planning being internal leadership development (Cavanaugh, 2017). Cavanaugh (2017) noted that U.S. higher education leaders are more likely to hire senior leaders from external sources than are non-U.S. higher education institutions, which could reflect differences in legal requirements or governance structures. When hiring a new employee or leader, leaders should recruit the best candidate. Some believe recruitment should be national to get the best candidate, and that candidates from outside academia should be considered (Ruben & Gigliotti, 2017). Researchers have provided support for this idea by demonstrating that having multiple candidates, internal and external, increases the chances of hiring the best candidate (Schepker, Nyberg, Ulrich, & Wright, 2018). Furthermore, Ruben and Gigliotti (2017) discovered that the expectations of a university president are not unlike those of a business leader and that business leaders may be better prepared to lead a university than those from educational backgrounds. This idea of a business leader as a university president runs contrary to the belief that higher education is different from business and requires leaders with a background in education (Ruben & Gigliotti, 2017).

It is imperative to consider compliance with federal mandates and efforts to increase diversity in institutional faculty, staff, and leadership. Federal mandates require that positions be open to all qualified applicants and that the advertising, interviewing, and hiring procedures provide a fair process for all candidates while allowing the

institution to screen the largest number of diverse and qualified applicants (Walesby, 2013). It is common practice for higher education institutions in the United States to have open searches, especially for faculty and leadership positions (Cavanaugh, 2017). It is reasonable to assume that an institution that lacks diversity will not increase diversity from hiring internally. To increase diversity, a succession plan developed with the input of minority employees will help provide insight into ways to improve inclusivity at all levels and provide multiple development opportunities for all employees (Kumaran, 2015).

Furthermore, an organization that welcomes diverse perspectives should consider qualified external candidates as a method for increasing diversity (Krell, 2015). Succession planning with robust and inclusive mentoring and development opportunities provides a means for retaining that diversity and assisting individuals in advancing within the institution (Kumaran, 2015). Increasing diversity and creating an inclusive environment requires many approaches and interventions on multiple levels within the institution to be part of the succession planning process.

Many still believe that retaining talent and hiring from within is the best choice and is common in community colleges. Hiring a leader from outside the company can create a loss of institutional knowledge, and if an incoming leader's values and vision do not align with the those of the institution, the result can be detrimental to the functioning of the institution (Capuano, 2013; Desai, Lockett, & Paton, 2016; Lewis, 2013; Timms, 2016b). Higher education presidents hired from outside the institution have a greater rate of turnover that may be due in part to a lack of knowledge about the institution's culture

(Cavanaugh, 2017). Involuntary presidential turnover is more likely now than ever before, which may be indicative of the increased complexity of the role (Harris & Ellis, 2018).

Another potential pitfall occurs when institutions set up formal leadership development programs and prepare internal candidates for promotion but then hire external candidates. Turnover rates may increase as these employees leave for leadership opportunities elsewhere (Cavanaugh, 2017). Turnover is expensive when considering advertising, hiring, and training new leaders, and that price is compounded by the loss of institutional knowledge and disruption to the institution (Schepker et al., 2017; Timms, 2016b). Hiring the best candidate for the position without regard to whether the candidate is internal or external is essential.

Another advantage of succession planning with leadership development and mentoring opportunities is that many employees may not have considered leadership roles. Consideration of a leadership role may be particularly significant for minority employees who have not received the same type of mentoring or role modeling as other employees. Thus, they may be less adept at self-promotion and advocating for themselves (Kumaran, 2015). Studies show that most leaders in higher education did not aspire to management but discovered leadership through mentoring or other opportunities (DeZure et al., 2014; Eddy, 2013). Mentoring programs are a way to transfer institutional knowledge and to build a strong pool of future leaders for the institution (Kutchner & Kleschick, 2016).

In higher education, it is vital to make leadership development programs available formally to all employees (Cavanaugh, 2017). Combining formal and informal processes for identifying leaders and encouraging leadership development makes a difference in how people view themselves and makes them more likely to consider a leadership role (Ahmad et al., 2017; McNair, 2015). These reasons highlight the importance of a solid succession plan with leadership development and mentoring to enhance the skills of all potential leaders in the organization (Ahmad et al., 2017; Eddy, 2013). A solid succession plan with leadership development will allow internal candidates to discover and develop their abilities to become the best candidates for future positions within the institution.

Planning. Planning is a vital piece of the succession planning process. Succession planning is a process that assists in the retention of strong employees and "is perhaps best understood as any effort designed to ensure the continued effective performance of an organization, division, department, or work group by providing for the development, replacement, and strategic application of key people over time" (Rothwell, 2010, p. 6). Succession planning involves focused planning to develop leadership capacity from within by creating a strategic plan, identifying the needed skills, implementing coaching and mentoring programs, identifying critical roles, and ensuring adequate resources and support (Kumaran, 2015; VanVactor, 2015). Although much of the literature focuses on the presidential position, all critical positions such as deans, provosts, vice presidents, and board members must be included in the succession plan (Calareso, 2013). Succession planning requires a multilayered process that provides for leadership development, resource allocation for forecasting potential changes, and retention of talent (Capuano,

2013). Succession planning and strategic planning are valid only when the stakeholders help develop the plan then routinely review and evaluate it for progress (Tichy, 2014).

Many people are often aware of best practices but choose not to implement them due to a lack of understanding, expense, or an unwillingness to change what they are already doing. In the literature there is recognition of succession planning as a best practice. Still, higher education leaders have been slow to implement this process because education is a different kind of business (Denna, 2014). Ishak and Kamil (2016) identified succession planning as one of the most pressing issues facing higher education, but they noted a limited use of succession planning. Higher education has been resistant to succession planning, resulting in a lack of formal education programs to develop administrative education leaders and creating a negative effect on sustainment and retention of aspiring leaders (Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017; Patton, 2013). Succession planning systems are tools to develop and manage talent within the organization (Barnett & Davis, 2008) and to promote the success of the institution. However, Wallin (2017) argued that the essential element in effective succession planning is hiring the right person, which increases the long-term retention of employees. Succession planning, like strategic planning, must forecast future needs, involve all stakeholders, identify inherent strengths (leaders), identify potential weaknesses or gaps, and provide follow-up (Bugg, 2016; Davis, 2017; Fleuriet & Williams, 2015).

Succession planning must be adapted to fit the culture of the organization. Timms (2016b) equated succession planning to construction. The materials required to build a single-family home are very different from those needed to construct a commercial

skyscraper. Higher education is a business, but it is different from other types of companies and requires a unique approach to succession planning (Patton, 2013; Richards, 2016). Implementing succession planning in a way that works for higher education is important in higher education. Some business leaders provide mentoring and leadership development to select employees in anticipation of replacing leaders in select positions, but higher education leaders and faculty view that as favoritism (Patton, 2013). Providing leadership development opportunities for anyone interested is one method to resolve the issue of perceived bias and ensure fairness for all employees (Cavanaugh, 2017). It is interesting to note that McKee and Froelich (2016) found in their research that (a) succession planning is unsuccessful when organizations identify an heir apparent, and (b) the more development afforded to all employees with clear communication of opportunities, the more successful the process. Hargreaves and Fink (2003), pioneers in research on succession planning in education, have long maintained the importance of providing leadership development as part of succession planning to develop distributed leadership that will sustain improvement and leadership continuity.

Another aspect of the organizational culture to consider in succession planning is whether the working environment is supportive, respectful, inclusive, and a place that people want to work. If the overall atmosphere of an institution is hostile or isolating, then employees will leave feeling disillusioned (Walesby, 2013). A hostile work environment defeats the purpose of succession planning by disrupting retention, creating an unnecessary expense, and causing upheaval (Walesby, 2013). Hosseini, Pourkiyani, and Sheikhi (2019) argued that culture is essential for succession planning, but that

conversely, succession planning can positively influence culture through increased job satisfaction. Proper succession planning improves the culture of an organization by helping employees to feel valued through individual career development plans, providing opportunities for learning and growth, and focusing on retention of employees (Chaturvedi, 2016; Kumaran, 2015). Creating a culture in which people want to stay and contribute is an integral part of the retention piece of the succession planning process.

The literature available on succession planning is modest, but authors stress the importance of succession planning to promote the development and retention of employees to ensure continuity of business. Actual research on succession planning in higher education is limited (Klein & Salk, 2013; Luna, 2012; Richards, 2016), with much of the research coming from the library or K-12 settings. Furthermore, the majority of research in higher education on succession planning is qualitative and therefore, is limited in scope. There is much opportunity for research on succession planning to add to the knowledge base.

Implications

The information provided in the literature makes clear the importance of succession planning and of the need to have it as part of strategic planning. The ways that leaders in an institution may develop and implement a plan are dependent on the culture and how the leadership understands succession planning in that institution. There are different ways to identify and to develop potential leaders and opportunities for internal leadership development, which, combined with external searches, will provide the best candidates for the institution (McKee & Froelich, 2016). There is a lack of research on

succession planning and the need to understand why institutions are not using succession planning (McKee & Froelich, 2016; Richards, 2016; Stone & Major, 2014).

The results of the research provided information I used to outline how leaders in state universities in one Western U.S. state perceive and conduct succession planning. The interviews provided data that illuminated what was working and not working related to the implementation of succession planning as well as providing ideas and best practices for implementing succession planning in other organizations. I used the findings of this research to create a white paper where I outlined plans how to make succession planning more comfortable as a part of strategic planning when implemented in higher education. Capuano (2013) noted that articles on succession planning educate about what succession planning is but do not provide instructions on how to apply the process.

Summary

The previous section identified the local problem of higher education leadership in a Western U.S. state experiencing an aging leadership and a lack of succession planning. Four of the five universities selected in the Western state of this study experienced presidential turnover just prior to the study. The research questions directly addressed the purpose of examining the use of succession planning within five state universities in a Western U.S. state and of exploring the leaders' perceptions and experiences in the implementation of that planning. The literature review findings illustrated the lack of research on succession planning in higher education. What information was available indicated that succession planning was only sporadically occurring and was often done informally. The consensus in the literature was that

effective succession planning requires formalization and should be part of the strategic

planning process. Reasons for this lack of succession planning ranged from oversight to a

lack of knowledge and understanding of how to make it happen. In the next section, I

outlined the methodology used to provide an understanding of how to research the

problem of a lack of succession planning in five universities in one Western U.S. state to

answer the research questions and to provide insight into how to help higher education

with this problem.

Section 2: The Methodology

Research Design and Approach

The methodology of this project study was qualitative. The examination of perceptions, feelings, and experiences is the domain of qualitative studies and reflects a constructivist perspective, meaning that the perspective and experience of the individual is the basis of reality (Burkholder, Cox, & Crawford, 2016). Quantitative researchers examine numerical data. In the current study, I did not quantify the variables because the goal was to gain an understanding of the underlying rationale for lack of succession planning in higher education and to obtain guidance for implementing succession planning. Before beginning any research, it is imperative to apply for institutional review board approval. I received approval from Walden University to conduct a qualitative multiple case study in December 2018 with an approval number of 12-21-18-0619980.

I used a multiple case study design to enable the examination of multiple universities. Researchers conduct case studies to explore, explain, describe, and examine current events in context (Yin, 2014). Case studies are versatile, and researchers can examine different variables, but data triangulation requires the collection of different sources of information (Yin, 2014). A multiple case study is a variation of the case study method in which the researcher examines more than one case and formulates conclusions using data from all of the cases (Yin, 2014). The researcher determines the case, which may be an individual faculty member (Sinha & Hanuscin, 2017), an organization, or a school district (Parylo & Zepeda, 2015). This study was an exploratory multiple case study with each state university defined as a case to examine whether and how succession

planning occurred across five different state universities. Using five universities provided the opportunity to obtain a large amount of information for increased generalizability of findings.

In qualitative studies, researchers use case study, ethnographic, phenomenological, narrative, or grounded theory designs. In ethnography, the researcher examines the behavior of a cultural group over a period of time (Burkholder et al., 2016), an approach that was not appropriate for this study. Researchers use phenomenology to describe the commonalities in experience from multiple individuals related to a distinct phenomenon, and use the narrative design to tell an individual's story relative to a particular event or phenomenon (Burkholder et al., 2016). Neither design was appropriate for this study. The grounded theory design is used for the development of a new theory, which was not the purpose of this study.

Participants

Criteria

It is crucial to select participants who can provide information that will answer the research questions. With that in mind, I chose participants who were leaders at a dean level or higher by using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental sampling, is useful when it is necessary to select subjects based on the knowledge that the subject has (Babbie, 2017). Leaders in the five institutions knew whether and how succession planning was occurring in their institutions and knew of aids and barriers to implementation. Interviews with leaders with institutional knowledge about the succession planning process were vital to obtain the information necessary to

answer the research questions. I excluded leaders who had less than 1 year of employment at the university due to a lack of long-term institutional knowledge. I chose leaders from academic affairs and human resources who were knowledgeable about faculty development. The recruitment of English-language speakers was a requirement of this study. Recruitment of participants was not based on pregnancy or emotional disability.

Number of Participants

It was essential to interview enough subjects to get an accurate picture of each university. I interviewed two participants who held a dean-level or higher position at each university to provide an accurate picture of what is occurring with succession planning at that university. Those two interviews allowed for comparison of the information obtained from each participant at the institution. I did not note any discrepancies in the interviews, so a third interviewee was not necessary. In total, there were 10 interviews of leaders from five universities, which provided data about the status of succession planning in this Western state.

Gaining access to participants was an essential and challenging part of the research. In this case, each university had a list of administrators publicly available on the Internet with contact information. Initial contact of potential participants occurred though email with an explanation of the study and a request to participate. Once a participant agreed, we arranged to meet for an interview. After the first interview, I used snowball sampling by asking for a recommendation of another leader for the second interview.

Having that recommendation resulted in obtaining the second interview in every instance.

I used email to provide an introduction and explain the purpose of the study.

Establishing Relationships

Establishing a working relationship is important to assist in the collection of data.

After the participant agreed to the interview, I set up a date, time, and place for the

interview to occur. I sent an introductory email explaining the purpose of the research

with a copy of the informed consent form for preview purposes. For the interview, I

dressed professionally and was mindful of the participant's time and comfort. It was

essential to listen carefully and watch nonverbal cues to create the best working

relationship and to elicit the necessary information. Verification of contact information

and an explanation of the process for double-checking the transcript and data analysis set

the tone for follow-up communication.

Protection of Participants

Part of the process of ethical research is ensuring the safety and confidentiality of

the participants. Before the interview, each participant received the informed consent

form. The informed consent form notified the participants that they did not need to

answer any questions that they did not feel comfortable answering. I also reiterated that

point before the beginning of the interview. I will maintain a copy of the signed informed

consent forms under lock and key in a secure location for the next 5 years with all other

research documents. There were no conflicts of interest to disclose. I had no authority

over any participant through employment or in the position as a faculty member at one of

the universities. I did not exclude any participants due to a conflict of interest or other ethical concerns.

Data Collection

There were two sources of data for this study. The first was documents indicating the strategic plan, leadership development opportunities, and policies and procedures related to the succession planning processes. Document analysis is a means of data triangulation (Bowen, 2009). Strategic plans, policies, and leadership development documents verified the information in the interviews about how succession planning was occurring. The documents were analyzed for themes by applying the constructs of the conceptual framework (see Bowen, 2009). Thematic analysis is an iterative process of reading and rereading the information to identify codes, categories, and themes within the documents (Bowen, 2009). The limitations of using document analysis include lack of availability or insufficient information in the documents (Bowen, 2009). The documents in the current study were publicly accessible due to these universities being state institutions and subject to public scrutiny. A preliminary document search online revealed all documents required from each university. In addition to the online documents, a leader from University 5 sent leadership development documents via email. As I reviewed these documents, I did not see any evidence of formalized succession planning at any of the five universities. Each interview substantiated the lack of formal succession planning noted in the documents.

Interview comments of 10 university leaders represented the primary data collected for this study. Because it was important to consider the comfort of the

participant, I held 1-hour semistructured interviews (see Appendix C) in locations most convenient for the participant. Several interviews were in participants' offices. I conducted two interviews via FaceTime in the leaders' respective offices, met two participants (separately) in a quiet lobby corner of a large elegant hotel that was convenient and suitable for a meeting, and conducted one interview over the phone per the participant's request. I coordinated with each participant to find the best location for the interview. It was important that participants were comfortable so their answers would provide the necessary information to complete the project study. Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed. To ensure confidentiality, each participant received a number associated with the university that the participant represented. I confirmed the contact information after the interview. Once transcripts of the interview were complete, I sent a copy to each of the participants for review. Participants reviewing transcripts of the interview helped ensure the accuracy of the data collected, which contributed to the credibility of the study (see Devault, 2018).

The storage and protection of all research materials are vital. I transferred all electronic files of transcripts, recordings, and informed consent forms to a memory stick for storage and to keep track of the data. I will keep the memory stick and all memos, journals, documents, and research notes under lock and key for the next 5 years to protect confidentiality.

I currently work as an assistant professor and a program director at one of the state universities in the study. Based on my experience in higher education, I had a belief that succession planning was not happening formally, which was a bias. I was unaware of

other biases but made sure to examine my thoughts and feelings through reflective

journaling to detect other biases that may have emerged during the study.

Data Analysis

I collected data for analysis from semistructured interviews and verified the

interview information with a document review of the policies, strategic plans, and any

leadership development documentation. Once the participants approved the transcripts, I

imported the transcribed data into the Nvivo software for qualitative data organization.

The next steps in the process were to review and interpret the data from the interviews

using open coding and thematic analysis (see Saldana, 2014). Coding is an iterative

process and requires examination and reexamination of the data followed by a

development of themes (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The writing of a research journal and

analytic memos during the process assisted with a reflection on my feelings, biases, and

beliefs as I sorted and reviewed the data. After I organized the data into categories and

themes, I used case analysis steps followed by a cross-case synthesis to determine the

similarities and differences between each university and to answer my research questions

with the richest possible data (see Babbie, 2017; Yin, 2014).

It was vital to ensure that this study was trustworthy. Trustworthiness is the

equivalent of validity in a qualitative study, and I established trustworthiness by setting

up checks and balances within the study that ensured rigor and quality (see Ravitch &

Carl, 2016). Examining succession planning with different data collection methods, such

as a semistructured interviews and document review, provided for data triangulation to

increase trustworthiness through increased credibility (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Furthermore, the use of two participants at each university provided for triangulation of perspectives within each university and between universities (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In addition, a PhD-prepared colleague helped to double-check the coding and provided increased trustworthiness by increasing the credibility of the findings. I had participants review the transcripts as another method of increasing credibility and trustworthiness of the research. The documentation of the study included details about conducting the study and reflections from my research journal to increase dependability. Lastly, the documentation that described how I conducted the study and analyzed the data enhanced confirmability because other researchers can review and validate my methods and findings.

Another issue that could have affected the quality of the research was discrepant cases. Discrepant cases could create a problem with the data and, therefore, with the data analysis. A discrepant case in this study might have been a participant who did not know what the university was doing regarding succession planning or one who had a very different account of succession planning within the university than the participant's colleague. Encountering a participant lacking prerequisite knowledge of the university's succession planning or divergent accounts would have required securing a third interview from that university to ensure adequate data for the research. The one issue encountered was when a participant stated that leadership development was addressed in the strategic plan, but this was not substantiated during the document review. This unsubstantiated claim did not alter any of the findings or affect the quality of the data in any way but was noted as a discrepancy. No other discrepancies were encountered.

Data Analysis Results

Data Collection Process and Analysis

I obtained the data for this research through 1-hour, audio-recorded, semistructured interviews. I interviewed two leaders at each institution who were executive directors, provosts, or vice presidents (see Table 1). Two interviewees from different universities had formerly served as the president of their respective institutions. I first searched online through each university's website to find documents about succession planning. Then, during the interview, I asked each participant for any available documentation relating to succession planning. These documents included leadership development offerings, strategic plans, or other documents provided by participants related to the information provided in the interview. After transcribing all the recorded interviews, I checked transcripts for accuracy and then sent corrected transcripts to participants for review. After receiving the approved version, I printed each transcript and coded in the margins any information that pertained to the research questions. I uploaded electronic versions of the transcripts into Nvivo while referring to the hand coding on the printed version of the transcript. As I adjusted codes, I was able to review the data and begin to see patterns. I arranged the codes (or nodes, as is the terminology in Nvivo) under each research question that the code addressed. Groups of similar or identical codes began to emerge as themes. I kept memos in my research diary and, as I pondered the data, I could see patterns developing.

Table 2

Participant Demographics

Participant	Age	Gender	Position
1a	40	Male	Assistant vice president of academic services
1b	50	Male	Executive director of HR
2a	50	Female	Associate provost
2b	50	Male	Vice president of administrative services (HR)
3a	70	Male	President emeritus
3b	40	Female	Assistant vice president of HR
4a	60	Male	Senior vice president of academic services
4b	50	Female	Vice president of HR
5a	40	Male	Associate provost
5b	30	Male	Assistant provost

I reviewed and coded each document according to the related research question. I used documents to support participants' statements. The information found at each institution did not refute what participants had said in their interviews (with one exception). I uploaded documents into Nvivo and attached the information to the relevant university. I reviewed all data within Nvivo so that I could analyze each case independently and compare it to the four other cases.

As I reviewed the data, I started coding by highlighting parts of sentences that conveyed the meaning of what the participant was saying. Through this process I created a large number of codes, and I then began to group codes under a code that expressed a more generic concept or idea. I kept the codes grouped under each research question to prevent confusion on my part. After I combined similar codes, I was able to reduce all the

codes to a manageable number, and then I was able to see the themes emerging. In Table

2 I show the themes with consolidated codes or subthemes that contributed to the theme.

Each time I worked with the data I was able to further consolidate codes under each

corresponding theme by using this iterative process. The first theme of no formal

succession planning was perhaps the easiest theme to see during the coding process due

to the simplicity of the question. The second, third, and fourth themes related to the

second research question when I examined the successes and barriers of succession

planning efforts. These three themes provided information on practices that were

working, on barriers related to current institutional practices and ethos, and on strategies

for overcoming barriers to future succession planning efforts. The fifth theme was from

the third research question when I asked about the perceived value of succession planning

by the participants resulting in the final theme of recognition of the value of succession

planning.

Table 2

Research Questions With Themes and Subthemes

Research question	Themes	Subthemes
RQ1: In what ways are state universities using succession planning (SP)?	No formal SP	Don't know about SP SP for the university is unstructured SP is in its early development Utilizes elements of SP
RQ2: How do higher education leaders in those universities perceive the process of implementing succession planning?	Successes in SP processes	Leadership development within the university provides networking, mentoring, and experience Leadership development for both faculty and staff at different levels has resulted in many leaders
	Barriers to SP processes from current institutional practices and ethos	Faculty distrust of administration/shared governance Change Lack of time, prioritization, and resources May not see value or understand SP Problem with gender bias Unanimity that more leadership development is needed Uncertainty about whether to hire externally or internally
	Strategies to operationalize successful SP	Important to consider diversity Need to be more systematic about SP Overcome barriers by supporting leadership development and creating a positive culture
RQ3: What do higher education leaders believe is the value of succession planning?	Recognition of the value of SP	Helping people grow and develop Ability to hire the best candidate Institutional knowledge retained Higher education is more difficult and complicated

Findings

  The local problem is that higher education leadership in a Western U.S. state has experienced an aging leadership and a lack of succession planning. I analyzed the data by using the research questions as a guide, with codes grouped by question. Themes emerged as I grouped the codes under each research question. One major theme emerged for both Research Questions 1 and 3, and I identified three major themes related to Research Question 2. I identified subthemes and discussed them under each of the themes. I used documents obtained from each university to support or, in one instance, to refute participants' information. In the following section, I will discuss these findings related to each research question.

  Theme 1: No formal succession planning. With Research Question 1, I examined the ways state universities were using succession planning. Participants were unanimous in their responses that none of the universities in the study utilized formal succession planning. Two participants from two different universities reported that they had never heard the term *succession planning*. Participant 5b explained, "I've never heard the term before, so if we do succession planning, then we either do it without my knowledge, or we do it, and we don't call it succession planning."

  Although participants believed that there were no formal succession processes, they did believe that succession planning happened when needed, or ad hoc. One participant reported that there were no succession planning processes in place at one of the universities. This absence of succession planning was unsubstantiated because administrators of all five of the universities in this study encouraged leadership

development programs, with four universities having developed additional internal leadership development programs or opportunities. A statement by Participant 2b summarized what most participants conveyed: "I would describe the succession planning at [this university] as mostly ad hoc." Participants expressed that various elements of succession planning were occurring as needed but on an informal basis. Leadership development is only one part of the process of succession planning, and there was no evidence through documents or interviews that any other part of the process of succession planning was structured.

The use of succession planning processes as needed led eight of 10 participants to describe succession planning as being in the early development stages. Participant 2b expressed the idea best by saying, "I shouldn't say that we're not doing it; I should say we're in our infancy." Furthermore, eight of the 10 participants acknowledged that university strategic plans did not address succession planning. I asked each participant if the university strategic plan addressed any of the succession planning issues such as forecasting changes or leadership development. Participant 3a admitted, "It absolutely does not, I'm afraid to say." In addition, Participant 4b firmly responded, "Nope, it does not." I noted that one participant claimed that the university's strategic plan addressed leadership development, but this is the one exception to documents supporting participants' statements with the information unsubstantiated in the document review.

Succession planning is a process. Although none of the leaders in the universities in this study was using a formalized succession planning process, each one was using elements of the process. Leadership development was the one consistent part of the

process for all five universities. Two participants noted that forecasting potential changes in personnel, another part of the succession planning process, was easier for retirements but otherwise was not addressed. There was an exception with one university forecasting potential personnel changes for the top level of administrators. The university that was forecasting potential changes of top leaders had a new president previously employed in the private sector and was already using succession planning before becoming a university president.

Theme 2: Successes in succession planning processes. There was much information encapsulated in Research Question 2 because I asked about the successes and barriers of current succession planning and how to remove barriers for future succession planning. The first idea I explored was what participants believed was going well at the university in the succession planning process. Faculty on tenure track must serve on committees, which provides opportunities for faculty to network. Three participants noted that faculty senate and committee work were opportunities to exhibit leadership potential. Participant 4b summed this experience up by saying:

Faculty senate is a great way to provide leadership. Individuals come in there and discover that they like knowing about more than just their department. They like knowing about the university. If they advance, they might become faculty senate president, and a faculty senate president might become an administrator.

In addition to faculty senate and committees, there were opportunities for leadership development courses or programs that provided opportunities to collaborate and network internally and across the state. These opportunities to network provided

access to new mentors. As I asked about leadership development and mentoring, Participant 3b remarked, "I think of my collaborative support network as my mentoring network." Participants identified mentoring as a critical component of leadership development.

Leadership development for faculty and staff at different levels has resulted in new leaders at each of the institutions in this study. In addition to committee work, there were leadership development opportunities available to faculty and staff at different levels, and leadership development was successful, as noted by Participant 2a:

I think that there is one leadership development model that has been effective when I think about the folks that have been through that HERS [Higher Education Leadership Training for Women] training. They are now sitting in associate dean positions, applying for dean positions, associate provost positions, and chair positions. It has worked to help us grow our own.

Leaders from University 2 were proud that the new president was an internal candidate after a nationwide search and believed that leadership development and cross-training had developed the best candidate for the position. They were excited that the new president understood the culture of the organization, was committed to the university, and had institutional history. This new president illustrated the point of Participant 3a, saying, "If you have a strong internal candidate, you can be pretty confident the search is going to turn out well. Because you're either going to get that person or somebody better."

One university had developed a provost fellow position, which provided release time from teaching to learn about administrative roles and an opportunity to work on

projects that benefitted the university. Leaders in that university remarked that several provosts had resulted from the provost fellow leadership development opportunity and had represented a success in leadership development. Both the university with the new president selected as an internal candidate and the university with provosts from internal candidates illustrated how leadership development could be successful in developing leaders inside the organization.

Theme 3: Barriers to succession planning processes from current institutional practices and ethos. After examining successes, I asked participants about barriers to succession planning that they were encountering as part of Research Question 2. An unexpected finding was that of faculty distrust of the administration. Participant 4b summed the sentiment up with this view:

> I think in an academic climate, there's a constant battle between the faculty and the administration due to the perception that if you go into administration, you're going to the dark side, and you're now evil, and you're one of them, and you're no longer one of us.

Faculty may not want to express an interest in leadership because of this view of administrations being the dark side or evil. Fifty percent of the participants echoed this sentiment with distrust of the administration being an element of the reason that shared governance was a barrier to succession planning. Participant 3b stated the idea best:

> As I articulated it to myself, I think it's because higher education so much values this notion of shared governance, and also it doesn't really like to think about

developing people for specific positions, whether that's a department chair or

dean or an administrative position.

Although participants considered distrust of administration and shared governance

as a significant barrier, bigger barriers were lack of time, prioritization, and resources.

Six of 10 participants believed that lack of time, prioritization, and resources were

barriers to succession planning. According to two participants, leaders in the private

sector are ahead of higher education leaders in their recognition of the value and

prioritization of the succession planning process. When discussing resources, Participants

1b and 4b noted that retention was an issue, along with a lack of ability to offer pay raises

and a focus on retention only when people were leaving. The other resource in shortage

was mentoring. Participant 1b remarked that leadership development was going well, but

that mentoring within the university was not having much success. In discussing other

needs, five participants noted that time is an essential piece necessary to develop

succession planning. Participant 2a expressed this sentiment:

There's so many issues in higher education that we are dealing with fires and just

trying to keep the ship moving in the direction that we hope it's supposed to be

moving that we don't take the time to step back. We don't create the space to step

back and say, 'Oh, ok, hey, we really need to give some thought to this.'

However, improving succession planning will require a change, which

participants also identified as a barrier. Change being the obstacle in the broad sense of

the word. Three participants believed that change was a barrier to succession planning

because change can come slowly and create frustration or, on the other hand, frequent

changes in department leadership may negatively affect continuity and, therefore, succession planning. Participant 1a explained, "I think there will be initial barriers to just change. The initial change and understanding of what we're trying to accomplish with it." Whether looking at rapid position changes or slow institutional changes, participants acknowledged change as a barrier.

A lack of understanding of a process can result in not recognizing the value of an object or process, and seven of 10 participants believed that people in higher education might not see the value or understand succession planning. Participant 1b clarified, "I think just the lack of understanding, not having a champion, not having training, not having an understanding of how you can be proactive and make a difference before they leave." Participants believed that the lack of understanding of succession planning negatively influenced retention, among other elements of succession planning.

Another unexpected finding was that of gender bias because none of my questions specifically asked about gender. Four participants acknowledged gender bias was a barrier. The two participants from University 5 noted that there was a gender imbalance with a lack of women in the administration at their university. Participant 5b said, "The original idea was to provide professional development for females because we've had a gender imbalance across the faculty and staff and administration." In addition, Participant 2a believed, "Women's voices are shut down more quickly" and that there is a gender bias in some job searches. All four participants spoke of leadership development opportunities specifically for women with Participant 2a acknowledging, "Several male colleagues have come forward and said, 'Why are women getting this special leadership

opportunity?'" Considering equality and inclusivity will be necessary for succession planning when considering the barriers of gender or minority bias and shared governance.

I noted that participants identified leadership development under the successes and the barriers. There was frequent mention of the need for more leadership development. Two participants spoke about faculty becoming leaders without being prepared, while Participant 3a reported that leadership development was spotty. Participant 2b remarked that universities should endeavor to improve on "home growing" leaders. Lastly, Participant 3b expressed that the tasks of leaders were more apparent than the expected behaviors, which all tie back to a need for increased leadership development.

The last barrier identified was a conflict between whether to hire internal or external candidates. Participant 5b summed up the consensus from the participants in that hiring should be a mix of both external and internal candidates, depending on the qualifications of the internal candidates. Participant 3a believed that a lack of a strong internal candidate resulted in a higher probability of having a failed search or hiring a weak candidate, and several other participants echoed this idea.

Theme 4: Strategies to operationalize successful succession planning. In order to improve succession planning in higher education, I attempted to discover what participants believed that leaders could do to be successful. The first item identified was diversity, which tied directly to the barrier of gender bias that participants identified in Theme 3. Participant 3a remarked:

> Now you have to worry about diversity. If it's a white guy, is the white guy only
>
> going to pick another white guy to try to help? I think we're all becoming much
>
> more conscious. I think the big value is that you get at least somebody in the pool
>
> that sets the high bar.

Three participants addressed the importance of considering diversity and leadership development for women. Participant 4a remarked that he realized there was a gender bias when two internal candidates were top contenders for a leadership position. They both had the same preparation and qualification, but the male candidate had received leadership experience that the female had not. The male candidate received the promotion because of his leadership experience. This incident illustrated the importance of making sure that all eligible employees receive opportunities for leadership experience when attempting to increase inclusivity and promote diversity. Eight of the participants stressed the importance of diversity throughout the interview in response to Research Questions 1 and 2 when speaking about leadership development.

The next idea I identified was the need to be more systematic about succession planning. Seven of 10 participants spoke about the need to be more systematic regarding succession planning by thinking about how to fit succession planning with shared governance principles, making succession planning a priority, and delineating succession planning processes. Participants remarked that succession planning would not occur unless leaders give priority to the process. The need to be more systematic also tied back to the need to dedicate time, resources, and financial support in order to make succession planning more formalized and successful.

The last area identified by participants regarded leadership development and a positive culture, ideas which were interlinked. Seven out of 10 participants spoke about the need to support leadership development as another method of overcoming barriers with succession planning. The idea of supporting leadership development tied directly to the concept of a positive culture, a relationship which six participants identified. Participants believed that the positive culture and leadership development contributed to increased retention through job satisfaction, which contributed to successful succession planning. Participant 2b described the idea best:

> I mean, you have to have a good strong positive culture and environment for people to work in or they're not going to want to stick around. Even the broader health of the university and the collegiality of the environment is important to healthy succession planning at an institution. You have to have a healthy institution to begin with.

Creating a positive culture relates to the retention of employees and the ability to recruit strong candidates.

Theme 5: Recognition of the value of succession planning. The last theme to emerge from the data was from Research Question 3 when I examined the perceived value of succession planning by the participants. There was unanimity among the 10 participants regarding the importance of formal succession planning with four different areas identified. The first idea identified was the value of helping people grow and develop. Participants believed that succession planning was an essential tool for improving retention, job satisfaction, and productivity through leadership development

opportunities. Three participants believed that succession planning enabled leaders to help employees into positions that best suited the employee and the university. Participant 2b best described the sentiment with, "And succession planning is perhaps the most important tool you have to get the right people on the boat. So, there are few things more important in a position like this than good, thoughtful succession planning."

The second idea expressed by participants under this theme related to the value of the opportunity to hire a strong candidate, either internal or external, related to utilizing good succession planning. The leaders at University 3 expressed this idea best by summarizing that the value of succession planning was in the depth and breadth of internal choices that improved the pool of candidates for leadership positions. Three participants explained that external candidates brought new ideas while internal candidates offered business continuity, and both options were valuable in different ways.

Two participants believed that the value of succession planning was in business continuity through the retention of institutional knowledge, which helped to generate the third idea. Both participants stated that having replacements ready benefited the new leader in allowing the person to take more risks and be creative instead of reactionary. This idea is an echo of helping employees with leadership development and retention, combined with the benefit of conserving internal candidates who have retained the institutional knowledge.

The last area identified under this theme was that succession planning has value because leadership in higher education is increasingly difficult and complicated. According to Participant 1a, there are few things more important than a thoughtful

succession plan, a need which is a critical one for higher education. Four participants spoke to the phenomenon of faculty moving directly into leadership roles with no training, demonstrating a gap in succession planning. In considering the increased complexity of higher education leadership, Participant 4a remarked:

> Now we live in an age where no one is willing to accept that, and yet we haven't. ... Our succession planning practices haven't caught up to that transformation that's going on. I mean, institutions haven't caught up generally. I'm trying to figure it out. I really value shared governance, but it's harder and harder to involve people who are involved part-time in the governance without expertise when the governance issues are so difficult and require so much expertise, and the pace is so much faster. You can't be gone all summer and expect to be fully involved in the governance process. That's just too long. And that's just one example of the ways in which that's happened. So I really think we just haven't caught up to the fact that the management approach we've traditionally taken needs to be refined, needs to be more deliberate, more conscious, or intentional.

Summary

Succession planning is a process, and while I interviewed participants, we discussed the process. When I examined forecasting, sustainment, and planning, I found varying degrees of implementation. However, I found that none of the leaders in the universities in this study was using formal succession planning. The participants expressed that succession planning was important, but all of the universities in the study were only consistently using the leadership development part of the process. Two

participants had never heard the term *succession planning*, but after I explained the

succession planning process to the participants, they expressed an understanding of

succession planning and were able to contribute to this study. The fact that some leaders

in higher education had never heard the term further illustrated the need for education and

practical guidance about succession planning for all leaders in higher education.

Forecasting was the least understood and the least used part of the succession

planning process. Forecasting is looking ahead at what critical positions will be vacated,

but this process is also examining the strengths and weaknesses of current employees and

preparing those employees for future advancement (Boerner, 2015). A new president who

had previous industry experience in succession planning was starting to use forecasting at

University 4. The forecasting process was being used for top administrative leaders to

determine skills and areas needing development. Participants at all other universities

stated that forecasting was happening as necessary and was not formalized.

Using forecasting and giving employees development opportunities can help in

identifying those employees who have an interest and an aptitude. A formal succession

planning process would then have the manager document strengths and weaknesses in

order to develop a plan with an employee for further development so that the employee is

ready when opportunities arise. Forecasting is an area that deserves more focus from

university leaders when formulating leadership development programs.

Sustainment was the area that had received the most attention from leaders in my

study. Participants used leadership development, mentoring, and coaching to retain and

develop employees to retain institutional knowledge. Six of 10 participants spoke about

how a great boss or mentor can make a tremendous difference in the advancement of an employee, which is reflected the transformational leadership theory. As further evidence of the importance of mentoring and leadership development, Participant 2b referred to the fact that he and a relative had both started in similar positions at different universities. The participant had achieved a higher position and responsibilities in his career because of leaders and mentors encouraging him, opportunities which his relative had not experienced.

Faculty view the development of a person for a specific position as favoritism. If faculty perceive favoritism, such as developing a certain person for a specific role, this view contributes to the distrust of administration. Participants overwhelmingly mentioned distrust of the administration as a barrier to succession planning. McKee and Froelich (2016) found in their research that (a) succession planning is unsuccessful when organizations identify an heir apparent, and (b) the more development afforded to all employees with clear communication of opportunities, the more successful the process. Educating faculty and staff on how succession planning does not equate to favoritism and should be an inclusive process is one part of overcoming the barriers in higher education to implementing succession planning.

The provost fellow position represented an example of how succession planning can work in higher education. This was a position created by the leaders in one of the universities in my study to give faculty a chance to work on projects within the university and to learn about leadership. The position of provost fellow was advertised university wide and open to all faculty. The selected candidate then spent a couple of years with a

half teaching load and also worked on projects for the university and learned about the

role of the provost. This model of provost fellow is inclusive and fair; therefore, this

model is compatible with shared governance. In addition, the development of internal

candidates helps to retain employees and institutional knowledge.

Another aspect of sustainment or retention that participants discussed was the

importance of a positive culture. Hosseini et al. (2019) pointed out that succession

planning can improve the culture by helping employees feel valued through development

programs. However, a culture that is unpleasant will cause employees to leave and render

succession planning ineffective (Walesby, 2013). Part of the culture that is important to

consider for succession planning is increasing diversity and being inclusive of all

employees. Participants identified gender bias as an issue during the interview process,

and accordingly, it will be important to be cognizant of potential biases and strive to

create an inclusive environment. Kumaran (2015) addressed the importance of including

minority employees in the succession planning process to help provide insight on

increasing inclusivity. Faculty distrust of the administration must also be addressed as

part of the evaluation of the culture when creating a succession planning process in

higher education.

For succession planning to succeed, it must be part of the broader strategic plan.

Newhall (2015) gave five top tips for succession management, with one tip being that it is

important to examine current talent, forecast needed talent, and then tie that need to the

strategic plan. When succession planning is not part of the strategic plan, an

incongruence can develop between the desired outcome and reality (Pellegrino et al.,

2015; VanVactor, 2015). In addition, Groves (2018) stressed the importance of having

succession management as part of a strategic priority with a focus on leadership

development and mentoring. In my research, none of the universities addressed

succession planning in the strategic plan, but participants did acknowledge the wisdom of

integrating succession planning and strategic planning.

Succession planning works when the creation of a strong pool of candidates

enables institutional employers to pick the best candidate, internal or external.

Participants talked about the importance of having a strong internal candidate to create

the strongest possible pool of candidates for a position. Having a choice of a robust

internal candidate increases the odds of having at least one right choice in a job search

(Schepker et al., 2018). Having multiple strong candidates is the best scenario, whether

those candidates are internal or external. Job searches are expensive and having a good

choice can decrease the expenses of multiple job searches for one position, which makes

succession planning a more economically feasible prospect (Timms, 2016b).

An aspect of planning that will require time and money is the designation of a

champion for succession planning. During my research, participants identified the need

for having a champion who could discuss the importance of succession planning and

could be the person who ensured that the topic is on the agenda and that follow-through

occurred. Palumbo and Manna (2019) identified the champion as a change agent who

helps inspire and empower other employees to create a culture conducive to change.

Moreover, Faupel and Süß (2019) found that employees of transformational leaders are

more likely to champion change while further contributing to the desired culture of

innovation and development. Pellegrino et al. (2015) advised the recruitment of a small group of change leaders to bolster success with institutional change initiatives.

The statements from the participants emphasizing the importance of succession planning reinforced the importance of this study and the need for practical instruction on how to implement succession planning in higher education. Shared governance was cited by several participants as unhelpful and was seen as a barrier to implementing succession planning, and as such, is therefore a significant reason that not all guidance from business literature could be applicable to higher education. Higher education is different from other types of businesses and requires an individualized approach to implementing succession planning that accounts for the uniqueness.

Participants expressed ideas that could be helpful for universities to implement succession planning. There are very few resources with practical information to help with establishing succession planning. Thus, I presented the findings supported by the literature in a way that would provide practical advice for university leaders. For the project, I used the data gathered from Research Question 2 and some information supported by the literature to create a position paper or white paper to outline best practices for implementing succession planning in higher education. Best practices in higher education will differ from other businesses because of shared governance and differences in business practices.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The project selected for this study was a policy recommendation with the creation of a white paper in which I outlined practical guidance for the implementation of succession planning based on my research and current literature. According to Purdue OWL (2019), the purpose of a white paper is to provide authoritative information on a topic to solve a problem or present a position. A search of the Walden Library database with the search term *whitepaper* or *white paper* yielded results from industries with informative or instructive documents that supported the appropriateness of this choice of project.

Rationale

My research findings and literature review indicated a lack of formal succession planning in higher education and that some leaders have not heard of succession planning. In addition, my findings indicated a lack of practical guidance for higher education on how to implement succession planning. Groves (2018), Larcker and Saslow (2014), and Timms (2016a) provided guidance for businesses in implementing succession planning, but Capuano (2013) pointed out that there is little to no practical instruction for higher education. The articles I found that offered instruction or best practices were for businesses, but they were not for higher education. However, I used those articles combined with my research to tailor guidance for succession planning that is specific for higher education. During my research, I asked leaders to identify how to overcome barriers and identify practices that were working regarding succession planning. Higher

education, although a business, is different from other businesses due to the nature of providing education as a product and because of having shared governance. These differences require some thoughtfulness on best practices for implementing succession planning in higher education. Furthermore, the same approach may not be applicable among different institutions of higher education.

Review of the Literature

I organized the literature review into four categories: implementing change, creating a place where people want to work, dedicating time and resources, and considering a new name for succession planning within higher education. The categories emerged from my research findings and provided the basis for helping leaders understand the process of succession planning. The categories may also produce the necessary guidance for successful implementation.

The search words for this literature review included *succession planning*, *succession management*, *white paper*, *creating*, *organizational change models*, *transformational leadership*, *organizational change*, *culture*, *leadership development*, *shared governance*, *inclusivity*, and *diversity*. Databases included Education Source, Emerald, Ovid, ERIC, Sage, and Ebscohost. I subscribed to Google Scholar, and I received weekly notifications of new publications regarding succession planning, which resulted in many new articles. The articles coming from Google Scholar were frequently in PDF format and were not located in a database. I also searched the internet for information on the purpose and method of creating a white paper. The amount of literature on succession planning has increased dramatically during 2018 and 2019, which

seems to demonstrate an acknowledgment of the importance of the topic and an increased interest in it.

White Paper Purpose and Creation

White papers are versatile and offer the format for the project part of this doctoral capstone. White papers can be used by any person to contribute information on any topic, and they can be used to persuade or inform (Purdue OWL, 2019). Cullen (2018) provided instruction on how to create white papers and stated that white papers are developed to supply in-depth information on a certain topic with the intent of solving a problem, providing understanding, or assisting in decision-making. Cullen further asserted that white papers should be developed with a purpose or a problem to solve, and the author's expertise is to be shared through the white paper to assist others. Martin (2016) recommended an example of a purpose-driven white paper by addressing conflicting information in the use of technology to teach physical education. Martin outlined the different arguments and proposed recommendations to physical education educators. Humphreys and Blenkinsop (2017) addressed a problem of a lack of understanding of the climate crisis in liberal education by offering an in-depth review of literature of certain search terms that they believed were most critical for readers to recognize. Both articles had a purpose that was clearly outlined, and the researchers demonstrated their expertise by citing multiple sources from the literature to strengthen their position (see Cullen, 2018).

In the next section I review the literature related to the creation of the white paper for this project study. The focus of the literature review was based on the findings of the

study. The following areas are addressed: (a) implementing the change of succession planning, (b) creating a place where people want to work, (c) dedicating time and resources, and (d) considering a name change.

Implementing the Change of Succession Planning

I chose the succession management capabilities framework by Groves (2018) to present a tool to help leaders visualize the changes that need to occur for succession planning to be successful. The succession management capabilities framework offers recommendations in an organized manner for implementing succession planning to allow for the greatest opportunity of success. Change is one of the inevitable features of life and was identified by participants as one of the barriers to implementing succession planning. When considering implementing succession planning, it is wise to contemplate the impact of that organizational change and to have a plan for moving forward.

Groves (2018) developed the succession management capabilities framework to ensure practical guidance for the implementation of succession planning in a health care setting. The framework includes three main categories of (a) enabling capabilities, (b) assessment capabilities, and (c) transition capabilities. Under the enabling capabilities, there is a focus on (a) getting buy-in from top leadership, (b) developing a leadership development culture through collaboration with employees, (c) developing evaluation tools and metrics that engage leaders and employees, and (d) integrating succession management practices into the strategic plan (Groves, 2018). The second category, assessment capabilities, is a focus on forecasting and development through performance feedback and talent reviews to attain an overview of the entire organization to prepare for

upcoming leadership changes (Groves, 2018). The final category is transition capabilities in which new leaders, whether internal or external, are oriented and mentored to the new role, and potential leaders can receive experiential opportunities within the organization (Groves, 2018). Leaders at University 5 had developed a provost fellow position that allowed a faculty member a half-time teaching load. The other half of the workload focused on learning about the provost role and doing a project that benefited the university, which is an example of the transition capability.

Groves (2019) did a study of two major health care systems that validated the succession management capabilities framework. The use of succession management practices demonstrated increased patient satisfaction levels, along with leadership bench strength and executive-level placements (Groves, 2019). The leaders at the universities in my study were working on enabling capabilities by incorporating leadership development. Leaders at University 4 were using informal talent assessment of upper- and mid-level administrators, and leaders at University 5 were working on the transition capabilities. None of the universities were using a formalized process and integrating it with the strategic plan. This lack of formalization and integration of a succession plan with the strategic plan suggested that the succession management capabilities framework applies to higher education. However, the use of the succession management capabilities framework is easier to implement if higher education leaders can visualize how part of the process is being employed and could also envision the parts of the framework that need to be enhanced or altered to fit their organization.

Creating a Place Where People Want to Work

    Culture. Creating a positive culture in the workplace helps with retention of current employees (Chaturvedi, 2016; Kumaran, 2015). Potential employees want to come to an organization that has a supportive and friendly environment, which is an integral part of proper succession planning (Hosseini et al., 2019). Multiple elements contribute to or harm a positive culture. Participants in the current study spoke about the need for transparency to create trust and to improve relationships between faculty, staff, and administration. Groves (2018) noted the importance of transparency, fairness, and communication for the creation of a leadership development culture within the succession management capabilities framework. In addition, Faupel and Süß (2019) and Hempsall (2014) stated that trust is an essential piece of developing the relationship between leaders and employees as well as building commitment and a culture of innovation. Furthermore, Raispor, Tadbiri, Afsharnejad, and Sadeh (2018) argued that trust is one of the critical elements in the successful implementation of succession planning. A trusting, positive relationship with a supervisor can engender commitment from employees (Covella, McCarthy, Kaifi, & Cocoran, 2017).

    In addition to developing trust through transparency, communication, and fairness, having common goals and shared values represents another element of a positive culture. Snyder, Ingelsson, and Backstrom (2018) noted the importance of having shared values to build a strong culture. Furthermore, the leadership must identify the values of the organization and communicate those values to the employees to create shared values (Snyder et al., 2018). Groves (2018) recognized this shared values idea under the

leadership development culture in which managers and employees work together to discuss and create plans for career development. Trust and shared values are integral parts of a positive culture that supports the commitment and retention of employees.

Leadership development. For this literature review, I looked at leadership development as a component of the culture of an organization. Leadership development influences culture in several ways, one of which is impacting inclusivity. Participants at four of the five universities in the study spoke about the importance of inclusivity in leadership development. Hughes (2018) recommended adding diversity intelligence as part of leadership training to foster a more inclusive culture because there is a gap between knowing what diversity is and knowing how to communicate with diverse employees. Dejean (2015) demonstrated that managers subconsciously pick people who look like themselves in the hiring process, which further supports the importance of having diversity intelligence as part of leadership development.

Mentoring and coaching are essential elements of leadership development that can also foster inclusivity. Mate, McDonald, and Do (2019) found mentoring to be vital in overcoming gender bias and increasing opportunities for women. When leaders in an organization mentor and develop new leaders who are strong candidates, organizations are more successful (Allcorn et al., 2018; Fray & Sherman, 2017). Providing opportunities for all employees, training on diversity intelligence and inclusivity, and mentoring are methods for improving the culture of an organization.

Leadership development has an impact on the culture, and when they are considering succession planning, supervisors must encourage and permit employees to

participate in development activities. A culture of leadership development is one in which employees are encouraged to take new or different assignments that allow the employee to learn new roles and skills and to not be held back because of being needed in certain positions (Groves, 2018). Dalayga and Baskaran (2019) pointed out that, aside from increased wages, development and training positively influence the retention of employees. Furthermore, leadership development with mentoring can make an institution more competitive in finding and keeping talented people (Kutchner & Kleschick, 2016). Participants in my study mentioned the importance of cross-training and taking on different roles to prepare for leadership opportunities, which Fadeyi, Oladele, Imhonopi, and Nwachukwu (2019) also found in their research to be meaningful. To grow and develop, employees must have an opportunity to try new positions or roles that expand their knowledge and skills. Cross-training to other positions or roles is an integral part of the transition capabilities in the succession management capabilities framework and will promote the retention of talented employees and prevent the loss of institutional knowledge (Groves, 2019).

     Shared governance. Shared governance is part of the identity of higher education, especially within the state universities in this study. Participants identified shared governance as a barrier to implementation of succession planning because of the fast pace that changes are occurring and the fact that faculty governance is frequently absent during the summer while decision-making is still occurring (Participant 3a). Although this barrier is a problem, shared governance increases commitment by having faculty be vested stakeholders in the university (Covella et al., 2017), and commitment to

the organization directly correlates with increased retention and engagement of

employees (Bailey & Cardin, 2018; Covella et al., 2017). Bailey and Cardin (2018)

introduced a shared governance model to nurses in an organization to create a culture of

engagement and professional development. Higher education has an advantage in having

shared governance as an established part of the culture; this advantage means that the

organizational change required to implement succession planning in education is different

from business change processes (Barrett, Gaskins, & Haug, 2019). Part of the issue with

shared governance relates to the importance of fairness in higher education. Succession

planning according to the business literature includes a process of identifying pivotal

roles followed by potential successors whom leaders groom to fill those positions

(Newhall, 2015). However, faculty frown upon this approach in higher education and

view it as promoting favoritism and a lack of fairness for all (Cavanaugh, 2017). One

method to overcome the issue of fairness is to provide equal opportunities for leadership

development so that all employees can develop talents and discover a desire to lead

(Cavanaugh, 2017). Groves (2018), in the succession management capabilities

framework, stressed the importance of transparency and fairness in leadership

development that is important for shared governance.

Dedicating Time and Resources

     A champion. Leadership in higher education has become more complicated, and

resources are limited. A request for time and money to invest in succession planning does

not inspire most leaders to begin the process. In addition, organizational change, as

required with implementing succession planning, requires an investment of money for

both direct and indirect costs (Palumbo & Manna, 2019). Therefore it is essential to demonstrate the importance of dedicating time and resources in the most economical fashion possible.

For change to occur, having a champion to educate and inspire others to embrace the change can be instrumental. Having a dedicated champion is a commitment of both time and resources that sends a message to faculty and staff about the importance of succession planning. During my research, participants identified the need for a champion who could discuss the importance of succession planning and who also could be the person who ensured that the topic is on the agenda and that follow-through occurred. Palumbo and Manna (2019) identified the champion as a change agent who inspires and empowers other employees to create a culture conducive to change. Moreover, Faupel and Süß (2019) found that employees of transformational leaders are more likely to champion change while contributing to the desired culture of innovation and development. Pellegrino et al. (2015) advised the recruitment of a small group of change leaders to bolster success with institutional change initiatives.

Strategic planning. For succession planning to succeed, it must be part of the broader strategic plan. Newhall (2015) gave five top tips for succession management, with one tip being that it is important to examine current talent, forecast needed talent, and then tie that need to the strategic plan. When succession planning is not part of the strategic plan, an incongruence develops between the desired outcome and reality (Pellegrino et al., 2015; VanVactor, 2015). In addition, Groves (2018) stressed the importance of having succession management as part of a strategic priority in the

succession management capabilities framework with a focus on leadership development and mentoring. In my research, none of the universities addressed succession planning in the strategic plan, but participants did acknowledge the wisdom of integrating succession planning and strategic planning.

Considering a Name Change

From the initial name of *executive continuity*, succession planning has changed names several times and is used interchangeably at times with *talent management* (Sibbald, Wathen, & Kothari, 2017; Supraptiningsih, Payangan, Brasit, & Mardiana 2018), *talent development* (Dalayga & Baskaran, 2019), *succession planning management* (Torabi, Karimi, & Nadi, 2019), and with *succession management* (Fadeyi et al., 2019; Groves, 2018, 2019). During my interviews, two participants believed that the faculty viewed the term *succession planning* unfavorably and recommended using a different term. The reason for this unfavorable view was that business identifies people to groom for select positions, which faculty members view as favoritism in higher education (Cavanaugh, 2017). Participant 3b had given the topic extensive thought and study before determining that the term *succession management* would be a good compromise. Succession management is a term that is widely recognized in the literature and becoming more prevalent. Participant 3b believed that the name was more comprehensive because planning is part of the process. Groves (2018) echoed this sentiment by defining succession management as a structured process that formalizes succession planning by identifying and preparing new leaders while retaining institutional knowledge through planned leadership development. In my project, I will use the term *succession*

management because it aligns with the conceptual framework and encompasses the entire process.

Project Description

I developed a white paper in which I outlined the steps for implementation of succession planning based on the research findings supported by the literature which can be found in Appendix A. The white paper was constructed by using eight key points from my research and from the literature to highlight ideas for change to provide higher education leaders with a guide for the introduction of formal succession planning and to increase the chances of success. These key areas are:

- creating a positive culture;

- fostering inclusivity;

- encouraging leadership development;

- working with shared governance;

- providing time and resources;

- finding a champion;

- including succession planning in strategic planning; and

- evaluating internal vs. external candidates.

If leaders read the white paper and decide to implement succession planning, then leaders will first need to educate coworkers, faculty, and staff about the process of succession planning and how the implementation of it will benefit the organization. Getting support from other leaders, faculty, and staff will make other barriers easier to overcome.

Time is a barrier. Leaders at higher education institutions are required by accrediting organizations to engage in strategic planning and could therefore merge succession planning with strategic planning to be more efficient with time. For the implementation of succession planning to be successful, it will require leaders willing to champion the process, an effort which will require time and a willingness to become knowledgeable about succession planning. The difficulty of finding leaders willing to put forth the effort to learn more about succession planning and champion the cause could be a barrier to implementation.

Time for meetings and learning about succession planning represents a cost in terms of salary and time lost working on other projects, and it represents the largest expense. Leadership development is another expense when considering succession planning. All of the universities in my research were already investing in leadership development, and the majority expressed a desire to invest more, therefore minimizing this barrier.

Implementing a succession planning process would take a minimum of a year if the process was properly integrated into the strategic planning process and was part of the strategic plan. The first 3 months would involve educating stakeholders and recruiting champions. In Months 3 through 9, leaders' and stakeholders' time would be spent deciding on what areas of the succession planning process to focus on, with the development of a plan to address the required changes based on the decisions made. The final 3 months would revolve around securing any needed resources identified after the focus areas were selected and from starting the implementation of the plan.

Implementation time and success will vary depending on the willingness of the

institutional leaders to embrace the process and to dedicate the necessary time and

required resources.

I propose to submit the project to the participants after approval from my

committee with follow-up emails to the study participants two weeks after sending the

white paper. This 2 week delay will allow time for participants to have read the material

and to allow an opportunity to receive feedback, both negative and positive, and to

answer questions from participants about the white paper. I am responsible for sending

the white paper and soliciting feedback. If participants send feedback to recommend

changes to the white paper, I will make changes based on that feedback and send a

revised version back to participants.

Project Evaluation Plan

To evaluate the efficacy of the project, I will send an email to each participant

from the study, requesting feedback after allowing the leader enough time to read and

contemplate the white paper. The key stakeholders of this project are the leaders, faculty,

and staff in higher education. The goal of the evaluation of my project is to improve this

white paper so that it can be useful to any leaders in higher education who are interested

in implementing succession planning. I can supply further information if requested and

can make changes to the white paper based on the feedback. A survey tends toward

generalization. However, I am seeking input that is more specific to develop the best

possible guidance on succession planning, which is why I am requesting direct feedback.

A limitation of direct feedback can be the desire of participants not to offend or hurt my

feelings. Consequently, it will be important to clarify the desire to receive both positive and negative feedback in an attempt to improve the project.

Project Implications

Every participant interviewed stated that succession planning was essential to increase retention of current employees, maintain institutional history and knowledge, and promote business continuity. These same participants noted that each one of the five universities in this study was consistently only using the leadership development part of the process. Eight of ten participants lacked an understanding of the succession planning process. Providing a white paper that offers practical information on how to overcome barriers and then to implement succession planning has the potential to improve opportunities for employees at those universities while increasing retention of employees and institutional knowledge. Creating robust applicant pools ensures that the university leaders can hire the best-qualified applicants, whether they are internal or external candidates. Hiring strong candidates and maintaining institutional knowledge improves the student experience and creates a culture that encourages opportunities and growth. These approaches both represent a positive social change for all stakeholders of the university.

The other potential for positive social change is in the creation of a culture that is positive and includes leadership who encourage the development of all employees. Continued career development and a supportive, positive culture improve job satisfaction (Hosseini et al., 2019; Raispor et al., 2018). This supportive culture may improve the

quality of life for faculty, staff, students, and leaders, which would then also have a positive effect on students.

Implementing successful succession planning will require an organizational change in stages from forecasting, the retention of faculty and staff through leadership development, and linking succession planning to strategic plans. University leaders may want to consider changing the name to succession management to encapsulate the entire process and to decrease prejudice against the change. I will present the white paper with the name changed to succession management to prevent confusion on the part of the reader. Participants in this study and researchers in the literature agree that succession planning is beneficial for higher education and can bring positive changes on several levels that can ultimately make the institution a better place to work and learn.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths and Limitations

This study included all state universities in the state I studied, which is a strength. Another strength was involving two leaders from each university who work in upper administration and have a comprehensive perspective of academic affairs and human resources. A limitation was the lack of diversity of higher education settings in this Western state because all institutions in this study were nonprofit state universities. Another limitation was that I conducted this study in one state, which may not be representative of other states. Although the leaders were a strength, the fact that I interviewed only two people from each university was a limitation. Qualitative studies lack generalizability because of the small number of cases examined.

A strength of this project was the development of a white paper using the research findings and basing recommendations on the current literature. These findings may be an encouragement for higher education leaders to consider the potential changes required to implement succession management from different perspectives and to move forward in a way that is most appropriate for their institution. Two potential weaknesses of this project were that (a) leaders may not find time to read a white paper and (b) a paper lacks the impact of face-to-face training.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

Another approach to the project would have been developing training to deliver the findings of my study. Training would have provided a more personalized and hands-on approach to deliver the information that I learned. I could have used the white paper

developed in this project as the basis for training or guidance if university leaders were interested. I can also publish articles to disseminate the knowledge I obtained. Although I believe publication would be valuable, a white paper is more likely to have an impact by being condensed and designed to provide guidance.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

During this doctoral journey, I learned more than I expected. I learned the expected skills of research and the process that is involved with research, but more importantly I grew as a writer and found a desire to do more research. I chose succession planning based on an interview in an early class with a dean at my university who expressed concerns about who would be the next generation of leaders. I did not have a topic that I felt passionate about, but as I looked at the literature, I found succession planning to be satisfying to study. I grew passionate about this topic as time went on, but if I could go back in time, I would have chosen to examine women's experiences in leadership. As I was reading the literature and speaking with leaders, I was surprised that leaders of four of the five universities spoke of gender bias. One participant spoke about men and women getting the same training, but men were receiving more opportunities to have leadership experiences, which gave the men an advantage in hiring. Another participant spoke about a lack of women at the boardroom table and how important that representation is. I enjoyed hearing about the leadership journey of all the participants, but I particularly enjoyed hearing about the trials faced by women. Going forward, I would like to do more research on women's experiences in leadership.

Specific to my study, I learned about qualitative research and case studies. During classwork, I enjoyed the qualitative research class and found it the most challenging of all the classes I had taken. As I prepared my prospectus and proposal, I read extensively about the types of qualitative research to determine how to do my study. I like qualitative research because of the storytelling quality and learning about a person's perspective or beliefs. During my research, I asked about each leader's individual experience in leadership so I could better understand whether people had set out to be leaders, or if they had developed into leaders over time by happenstance. One participant had set about being a leader in high school, while the rest of the participants experienced mentoring and encouragement by others to consider leadership during their careers. This lack of knowledge or interest in leadership mirrored what I read in the literature. It reinforced the importance of leadership development as part of succession planning to help people discover their talents and passion for leadership.

Conceptual and theoretical frameworks were a part of research that made sense only in a vague manner when I started my proposal. However, when I received feedback that I should only be using one theory for my conceptual framework, I bought a textbook on conceptual and theoretical frameworks and started reading. The conceptual framework I had developed for my proposal felt right to me, but I was unable to defend my choices or explain why I believed it was correct. As I read the textbook for the second time, I finally felt comfortable explaining my choices. I was also able to appreciate the doctoral process of education, where I am investing in becoming a scholar practitioner and educator. It is both uncomfortable and exhilarating to be in charge of my education.

As I finished my research, I learned that the researchers in the literature were correct about the lack of succession planning in higher education. However, I also learned that the problem was more nuanced than when I conducted my first literature review. As I look back, I would have structured my interview questions differently because I created redundancy, which made the work of data analysis more time-consuming. I was my own biggest obstacle throughout the entire process. From taking on too many responsibilities at a time, not reading the directions, and generating my own anxiety and mental blocks, I made this journey longer and more challenging. However, I learned that I am capable and that I can make a difference through research and my work as a scholar practitioner.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

The reason that I chose this topic was because of a leader identifying a concern about upcoming leaders and a lack of replacements, which caused my interest to grow as I read about the importance of succession planning and also about the lack of succession planning in higher education. I struggled to understand why, if succession planning was so valuable, higher education leaders rarely used or understood the process. I read many articles that addressed a lack of practical guidance to help leaders understand the process of succession planning and to give those leaders the necessary tools to implement successful succession planning.

Succession planning and succession management are becoming more important topics. Research on these processes had increased markedly during the time I was working on this study, as evidenced by the amount of available literature. This increase in

available articles gave me hope because many times during this journey, I wondered if my topic was important enough or if I were one of the few who saw the value. I believe that this research and my project are valuable, and they can help higher education leaders.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Succession planning has proven to be an interesting topic and is one that deserves more attention. In recent years, scholars have started to conduct more research on succession planning, which allowed me to find more articles at the end of my doctoral journey than at the beginning. I would like to see more research done on the successful implementation of succession planning to provide more explicit guidance and examples of how succession planning can work in higher education. Researchers could examine different types of higher education institutions such as technical colleges, community colleges, and proprietary institutions to acquire a more comprehensive view. I would also like to see research on how succession planning can help institutions become more inclusive and diverse. If leaders use succession planning correctly, it is possible to increase the number of women and minorities in leadership roles to reflect society.

Conclusion

Succession planning has the potential to increase internal pools of candidates and improve inclusivity when institutions implement this process. Through my study, I discovered that although no state universities in one U.S. Western state were using any formal succession planning, every participant verbalized the importance of succession planning and a desire to do more. I learned that succession planning is a process that requires leaders to take a multifaceted approach to implement in an organization. I

learned about conceptual and theoretical frameworks, case studies, and the iterative process of qualitative studies. I experienced personal growth, which has increased my confidence in my writing. I have enjoyed the process and have discovered an interest in finding out more about women's experiences in leadership. I am grateful for the process and look forward to a long career as a scholar practitioner.

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Appendix A: The Project

Tips for Successful Succession Management in Higher Education

By

Amy Buckway

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Succession management (also known as succession planning) is a process of anticipating or forecasting future personnel needs while implementing development programs to retain current employees to fill critical positions in the future without losing institutional knowledge and history to ensure optimal functioning of the institution (Darvish & Temelie, 2014; Rothwell, 2010). I will use this white paper to outline key ideas for implementing successful succession management in higher education, as identified through research and available literature on the topic.

Leaders in higher education may not have heard the term *succession planning*, and I demonstrated through my research that not a single state university in a certain U.S. western state had leaders using formal succession management. As I reviewed the literature, I discovered that researchers echoed the findings of my research. All the leaders interviewed for this study spoke of the importance of succession management for retention of employees and institutional knowledge as well as the ability to increase the quality of candidates in job searches. In this time of increasing complexity, decreasing budgets, and ferocious competition for students, a strong and stable institution is incredibly valuable. Succession management is a useful tool to address these issues.

Methodology

The study used to provide data for this white paper was a qualitative case study where I examined five state universities in a certain Western state. The purpose was to investigate if and how succession planning was occurring. I interviewed two leaders at

each institution who were executive directors, provosts, or vice presidents. Two interviewees from different universities had formerly served as the president of their respective institutions. In one of the research questions I focused on successes and barriers to succession planning with a hope that the findings could enable insight into how to implement succession management in higher education. I coded and compared interviews, first at an institutional level and then at a state level. Leaders provided documents such as strategic plans, policies, and leadership development information from each institution showing how these administrators supported, verified, and (in one instance) refuted information obtained from the interviews. In this white paper I represent what I learned in my research and in the review of the literature.

Succession Management Capabilities Framework

Groves (2018) developed and subsequently validated (Groves, 2019) the succession management capabilities framework where he outlined the practices and outcomes of a robust succession management program. Groves (2018) designed this framework for business, but it is also applicable to higher education organizations. The framework consists of three main capabilities: a) enabling capabilities, b) assessment capabilities, and c) transition capabilities. Under each section of this document, I will identify the type of capability and potential outcomes related to each.

Enabling Capabilities	Assessment Capabilities	Transition Capabilities

•Time and resources
  •Champion
•Culture
  •Leadership development
  •Inclusivity
  •Shared governance
	•Leadership development
	•Strategic planning
	•Time and resources
		•Leadership development
		•Strategic planning
		•Internal vs. external

Create a Positive Culture

A large part of the succession management process is the retention of employees to keep talent and institutional knowledge within the organization. Creating a positive culture is arguably one of the most essential tools for retention that organizational leaders can use (Covella, McCarthy, Kaifi, & Cocoran, 2017) and possibly one of the most difficult of changes to implement. Leaders I interviewed in this study identified creating a positive culture as one method for overcoming barriers to implementing succession management.

The next question is, how do you create a positive culture? Several leaders in this study mentioned transparency as a way of building trust to help improve the culture. Raispor, Tadbiri, Afsharnejad, and Sadeh (2018) and Covella et al. (2017) stressed the importance of trust in developing a positive culture and in securing a commitment from employees. Leaders from three of the five institutions spoke about the need for transparency and inclusiveness to foster trust. As an administrative team, it may be worth considering transformational leadership training for all university leaders. The use of transformational leadership improves culture and increases trust and job satisfaction (Faupel & Süß, 2019; Feng, Huang, & Zhang, 2016; Hempsall, 2014; Palumbo & Manna,

2019). The development of trust and culture is subjective and requires time to work on behaviors and relationships. The creation of a positive culture takes a concentrated effort from administrative leaders over time with regular reevaluation to determine which interventions are successful and what else needs to change. Each institution is unique and has a different mission, and this individuality will require leaders to adapt interventions to meet those differences and challenges.

Encourage Leadership Development

All three areas of the succession management capabilities framework involve leadership development and are integral to the creation of a positive culture and the retention of employees. Leaders at the universities in this study were having success with leadership development, but all participants identified a need to improve leadership development. Kutchner and Kleschick (2016) found that many organizational leaders were struggling to attract top performers and that creating leadership development and mentoring programs was a way to improve the culture and develop internal talent. If leaders can establish internal expertise, then the organization becomes less dependent on recruiting external talent. The development of internal talent requires that the leaders in an organization focus on leadership development and retention of faculty and staff to be successful.

Another part of leadership development to consider is mentoring. Every leader in my study spoke of the positive impact of mentoring on their careers. Mentoring is commonly informal, and mentoring relationships can develop when leaders recognize the potential in employees or other leaders. Leaders who foster mentoring as part of

succession management can be more effective if the design of formal mentoring helps leaders and potential leaders increase skills and institutional knowledge. For example, members of the board can provide mentoring to university executives to expand executives and board members' understanding of each other's roles (Larcker & Saslow, 2014). Mentoring is vital as employees strive to grow and to learn new roles, and it is crucial for leaders to have the support and opportunity to ask questions or seek input from peers as they transition into new positions.

Two leaders in my study identified the need to provide salary increases as part of a retention plan. Raises may or may not be an option for organizations with limited budgets. Aside from raising wages, development and training are among the most important ways to improve the retention of employees (Dalayga & Baskaran, 2019). Dalayga and Baskaran (2019) found that career development and training opportunities strongly correlated to an intention for an employee to stay at an organization. While every university in the study had leadership development opportunities, leaders in my research believed that there could always be more training, mentoring, or other skill development opportunities than they had been offering. Leadership development is a way to provide opportunities for networking, mentoring, and experience, which increase awareness of opportunities and improve retention of employees (Kutchner & Kleschick, 2016).

Foster Inclusivity

When developing a succession plan, it is essential for leaders to consider diversity and to be inclusive of race, gender, and faculty and staff. Leaders from four out of five

universities in this study identified gender bias as an issue in higher education leadership. Mate, McDonald, and Do (2019) found mentoring and networking to be a vital component in the career advancement of women. Leaders in my study identified leadership development programs for women as providing an opportunity for networking and the possible genesis of mentoring relationships. Encouraging minority and diverse employees to participate in leadership development can assist those employees in finding and fostering leadership talents that the employee may have been previously unaware of and could also provide a more diverse leadership bench strength for the organization. In addition, mentors of diverse populations help promote diversity and inclusivity for all employees (Dejean, 2015).

While these programs are valuable for women, men may feel left out if a variety of leadership development opportunities are not available. Inclusivity is important at all levels, and care taken to give all faculty and staff opportunities to learn, grow, and to experience leadership if the person is willing and able. Dejean (2015) demonstrated that employers tend to hire people that are of a similar race and gender. In addition to unconscious bias, there is a gap between knowing what diversity is and knowing how to communicate with diverse employees, which is a lack of diversity intelligence (Hughes, 2018). Leadership must make a concentrated effort to bring awareness and training to help all employees increase diversity intelligence, which could bridge the communication gap and help create a more inclusive culture (Hughes, 2018). This lack of diversity intelligence is an area in which human resources and administration must work together to assess and plan to provide training that will best serve the organization.

Work with Shared Governance

Barriers identified by almost all leaders interviewed were faculty distrust of administration and shared governance. These two barriers seemed intertwined as explained by participants in my research. Shared governance is part of what makes higher education different from other businesses but is often given as a reason for the belief that succession planning will not work for colleges and universities. Transformational leadership is relevant to talk about in regard to shared governance. Kuntz, Davies, and Naswall (2019) discovered that when leaders used a transformational leadership style, then they also improved a learning culture and increased organizational engagement of employees, which are vital parts of the enabling capabilities for succession management. Shared governance is also crucial for creating employee engagement (Bailey & Cardin, 2018). Transformational leadership and shared governance are complementary and when used together, leaders can improve the culture to facilitate and sustain succession management by increasing trust and job satisfaction.

When higher education leaders and faculty exercise shared governance, they increase the importance of involving all stakeholders in a discussion of the value in retaining good employees and institutional knowledge with leadership development to benefit the entire organization through succession management. For the sake of expediency and convenience, discussions can be carried out in conjunction with strategic planning and with the sharing of broader vision and values. This sharing conforms to the building of a positive culture by being transparent, building trust, and having shared values. While working with key members of the faculty senate, leaders can also help to

identify champions within the faculty to communicate and share the vision of succession management.

Provide Time and Resources

As always, the combination of a lack of time, prioritization, and resources creates a barrier to any proposed change. Succession management fails through administrations' lack of a willingness to dedicate the necessary time and support to the initiative (Fadeyi, Oladele, Imhonopi, & Nwachukwu, 2019). Getting top administrators to understand the importance of succession management is the very first step in the entire process and is part of the enabling capability of the succession management capabilities framework (Groves, 2018). Leaders must give time at meetings to address and discuss issues relating to succession management. In addition, leaders and faculty need time to work on the implementation of changes related to succession management. Another consideration for time and resources is the need for employees to cross-train to vital positions. Allowing employees' time to learn new roles can put a strain on departments while they work with reduced faculty or staff. However, the benefit of cross-training is increased retention of employees and institutional knowledge. The other benefit is having a strong applicant pool prepared with the necessary expertise when key positions open.

One of the most critical resources for success in organizational change is for administrators to identify a champion at a leadership level who can promote and guide the development and implementation of a succession management process. Designating one member of the administrative team to oversee and prioritize succession management is instrumental to the success of this initiative.

Find a Champion

Other leaders, faculty, and staff may not see the value or have an understanding of succession management. A champion provides a discussion of the value and explains the process to all stakeholders in the university. Having a dedicated champion is a commitment of time and resources for university leaders and therefore communicates that succession management is valued. Pellegrino, Snyder, Crutchfield, Curtis, and Pringle (2015) advise the recruitment of a small group of change leaders to bolster success with institutional change initiatives. The champion should recruit a small group of change leaders among administration, faculty, and faculty senate to help facilitate the implementation of succession planning and to increase buy-in with shared governance. Implementing succession management requires organizational change, so it is interesting to note that transformational leaders are more likely to champion change (Faupel & Süß, 2019). Change champions can help employees see how the change can have a positive impact on them (Faupel & Süß, 2019).

Include Succession Planning in the Strategic Plan

It is important to be systematic about succession planning by assuring its inclusion in the strategic plan. Participants in my study acknowledged that their strategic plan did not deal with succession planning. However, researchers who examined succession planning stressed the important link between succession planning and strategic planning for succession management to be successful. Pellegrino et al. (2015) pointed out that when strategic planning excluded the succession management process

that an incongruence developed between the desired outcome and reality. Administrators can use strategic plans to address forecasting, retention, inclusivity, and leadership development. In creating the desired culture for succession management, leaders may choose, directly or indirectly, to address interventions in the strategic plan. For example, leadership development is a key element that influences multiple parts of the succession management process. Therefore leaders will need to decide how best to address this topic in strategic planning. Identifying issues and solutions for succession planning within the strategic plan helps ensure that stakeholders address the desired changes at an institutional level and keep those issues and solutions at the forefront.

Evaluate Internal versus External Candidates

There were varied points of view expressed in the literature about whether to hire external or internal candidates. I found in my research that leaders believed that having a highly qualified internal candidate ensured a strong candidate pool, and this reality is therefore the highest likelihood of hiring the best candidate for the position, whether internally or externally. Allcorn, Stein, and Duncan (2018) remarked on the importance of an objective assessment of the necessary skills and requirements of the open position. While Groves (2018) recommended the use of "behavioral-based interviews for managerial roles that are aligned with leadership competencies" (p. 4). One study participant commented on the importance of understanding the requirements of the position to ensure hiring the best candidate. If it is not clear what the required skills and knowledge for the position entail, then it is doubtful that the best candidate will be hired (Allcorn et al., 2018). This idea of clearly understanding the job skills and requirements

to hire the best candidate also relates to retention. Hiring the candidate with the required skills and knowledge will promote retention through job satisfaction (Covella et al., 2017).

Transition capabilities become a priority after the selection and hiring of a candidate, and proper onboarding then becomes essential. New leaders hired from outside the organization have lower retention rates, so a robust onboarding program with mentoring and training will increase retention and productivity (Groves, 2018). Internal candidates come with institutional knowledge, but they must still receive formal orientation and mentoring to ensure maximum effectiveness in the role (Groves, 2018).

An internal candidate comes with institutional knowledge, and an external candidate comes with a fresh perspective. There must be a clear understanding of the requirements of the open position for hiring the appropriate candidate. Once hired for the job, those conducting the onboarding process will facilitate a smooth transition to the role to help provide an understanding of the mission, vision, and culture of the organization. Having succession management process in place can enable leaders to ensure strong candidates during the hiring process and having a smooth transition with training and mentoring after hiring. Change is inevitable, and succession management is one tool leaders can use to reduce the disruption to faculty, staff, and students as well as to strengthen an organization to withstand the turbulence of the business of education.

Conclusion

Leadership development is vital because of the ability to:

- change the culture

- improve retention

- retain institutional knowledge

- decrease dependence on the recruitment of outside talent

- train new employees

- work toward inclusivity

These outcomes frequently overlap and influence each other from multiple angles. For example, fostering inclusivity improves the culture and retention rates and requires training and mentoring to increase awareness and skills around diversity. In addition, by implementing shared governance, leaders require that all stakeholders understand and participate in the succession management process. All of these positive outcomes explain why the integration of strategic planning and succession planning is necessary for succession management to be successful.

Key Takeaways

Top administrators must commit to the succession management process to succeed. Commitment is demonstrated by:

- Generating a supportive, positive culture with a focus on development

- Integrating the succession planning process into the strategic plan

- Involvement in the mentoring and development of faculty and staff in the organization

- Making the leadership development process open and transparent to foster inclusivity

- Allowing employees release time to learn new roles or take leadership development training

- Creating and using a formal orientation and training for new hires (internal and external)

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Appendix B: Letter of Introduction

Dear (insert name),

My name is Amy Buckway, and I am an EdD student with Walden University in the Higher Education Leadership and Management track. I am interested in succession planning in higher education and would like to interview leaders at a dean level or higher level who have at least one year with the university.

I would appreciate it if you could take one hour of your time to talk to me about succession planning in your institution. I feel this topic is important due to the complexity of leadership in higher education and the importance of educating and mentoring new leaders to keep an institution functioning at its highest level. As I have researched this topic, I have noted in the literature a lack of research on the topic. The research that is available shows a lack of succession planning with a possible leadership crisis looming for higher education.

I appreciate your taking time to help me further my education and learn more about how to promote leadership in higher education. If you are willing to be interviewed, then please email me at amy.Buckway@waldenu.edu or call at 801-497-6534 to set up a time to speak.

Thank you,

Amy Buckway

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Start interview protocol with quick explanation of what succession planning is:

Succession planning is a process that uses forecasting to determine potential losses of current leaders due to retirement, promotion, or other reasons. This is in conjunction with an effort to retain current employees and leaders through leadership development, coaching, and mentoring. Lastly, this is a planning process that lays out the forecasting of leadership needs and developing new leaders. This process is integrated with the strategic plan to ensure organizational knowledge is retained to prevent lost productivity or create issues for employees and students.

Demographics:

Sex: M or F

Age: 20-30, 30-40, 40-50, 50-60, 60-70, 70+

RQ 1: In what ways are state universities in a Western state using succession planning?

Describe what kind of succession planning this university does, if you know.

Describe any types of informal succession planning currently being done at the university if you know.

What is the institution currently doing to prepare for departing leaders?

How does university leadership forecast potential leadership changes?

Describe both the formal and informal leadership development programs in place.

How do faculty and staff learn about leadership development opportunities?

What are the requirements for participating in leadership development opportunities?

How does the strategic plan address succession planning issues (such as forecasting

changes and leadership development)?

What kind of documentation is available related to succession planning (i.e.

policies/procedures for retention, leadership development, strategic or succession plans)?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about how succession planning is

implemented here at the university?

RQ 2: How do higher education leaders in those universities perceive the process of

implementing succession planning?

How do you feel the process of implementing succession planning is going for the

university?

What do you perceive is working well in regard to succession planning (i.e. leadership

development, mentoring, retention, etc.)?

What do you perceive are barriers to implementation of succession planning in higher

education?

How would you recommend overcoming those barriers?

What kind of impediments have you experienced or witnessed to career advancement in

higher education?

What do you feel your institution is doing well in regard to succession planning?

What do you feel could be improved?

What would you like to see done in terms of succession planning in your institution?

Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about barriers or successes with

succession planning at this institution?

RQ 3: What do higher education leaders feel is the value of succession planning?

What do you feel the value of succession planning is?

Why do you think that higher education institutions do not generally do succession

planning?

Tell me about your experience entering into leadership roles.

How did mentoring and coaching impact you in your leadership roles?

How did you decide to enter into a leadership role?

Is there any else you would like to tell me?