ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP IN THREE SMALL, PRIVATE TENNESSEE COLLEGES: WORKING GROUPS, REAL TEAMS, OR BOTH?

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

Liberty University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Michael E. Nichols

June 2010

ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP IN THREE SMALL, PRIVATE TENNESSEE COLLEGES: WORKING GROUPS, REAL TEAMS, OR BOTH?

Michael E. Nichols

Liberty University

APPROVED:

COMMITTEE CHAIR	Barbara Boothe, Ed.D.
COMMITTEE MEMBERS	David Duby, Ed.D.
	Valerie Riley, Ph.D.
CHAIR, GRADUATE STUDIES	Scott Watson. Ph.D.

Abstract

Michael E. Nichols. ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP IN THREE SMALL, PRIVATE TENNESSEE COLLEGES: WORKING GROUPS, REAL TEAMS, OR BOTH? (Under the direction of Dr. Barbara Boothe) Liberty University, School of Education, June, 2010.

Diversity of knowledge and multiple perspectives are characteristic advantages of group leadership as compared to transactional or bureaucratic forms of leadership. When groups are engaged in administrative functions, they are more likely to realize a higher level of performance and more relevant and innovative solutions than may be achieved by a single administrator. Existing research on administrative groups primarily assessed decision-making and functional performance from an either/or perspective, yet both simple and complex thinking and functioning have been found to exist concurrently within organizations and groups. This study examined administrative group leadership in three small, private colleges in the state of Tennessee to determine if the administrative officers functioned as a working group, a real team, or a combination of both. Utilizing a multiple-site qualitative case study, 22 administrators at three institutions were interviewed and observed in an administrative group meeting. When compared to three models of group complexity (thinking roles, frames of reference, and functional domains) the interview responses of two of the administrative groups indicated functional and cognitive complexity. However, the observations of the group meetings demonstrated characteristics representative of working groups. Consequently, there appeared to be strong evidence that the administrative groups of these two institutions combined simple elements of working groups with complex interactions characteristic of real teams. In

contrast, the group observation and interview responses of the administrative team at the third institution confirmed the existence of a real team.

Dedication

This effort is dedicated to my closest and most faithful friend, Sarah. You loved, encouraged, and supported me every step of the way through this long and arduous process. Most gracious and patient partner—my beloved—thank you for encouraging me in so many ways during this endeavor. I love you, Baby.

To Madison, the best daughter a dad could ever have. I love watching you grow into a beautiful young lady with an unbridled passion for God. I hope I always make you as proud as you have made me time and time again.

I also dedicate this work to my Lord and Savior who is faithful and true above all else and by whose mercy and grace I draw each breath. May my Heavenly Father receive all the glory from any good that comes from this effort.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my committee chair, Dr. Barbara Boothe, for your guidance and encouragement through this entire process. Your personal and professional help has come at strategic moments in my life. Your self-effacing spirit and prudent counsel have judiciously guided this project and our team. I will be forever grateful for your investment in my life.

I also express my sincerest appreciation to Dr. David Duby and Dr. Valerie Riley who faithfully served as members of my dissertation committee. Your insightful contributions strengthened this study to be most useful for educational leaders. I am grateful for my many instructors at Liberty University who selflessly provided a top-quality education and encouraged me to pursue a profoundly Christian worldview throughout my program. Thank you for your scholarly passion for education and leadership. Today, I am a better educator, administrator, and, most importantly, I am a better Christian because of you.

To those who spent many hours proofing and editing this work—Donna Babcox, Sarah Nichols, and Mary Norman—thank you for your sacrifice. This work was significantly improved by your contributions. I am sincerely grateful.

Table of Contents

Abstract iii

Dedication v

Acknowledgements vi

Table of Contents vii

List of Tables xii

List of Figures xiii

Chapter One: Introduction 1

Background of the Study 1

Focus of the Study 5

Definition of Terms 7

Working groups. 7

Real teams. 7

Theoretical models. 8

Significance of the Study 10

Summary 12

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature 13

Qualitative Inquiry 13

Conceptual Framework 13

Literature on Leadership 14

Defining leadership. 15

Leadership effectiveness. 16

Components and characteristics of leadership. 17
Vision. 18
Passion. 19
Creativity 19
Collaboration 20
Empowering. 21
Literature on leadership groups. 22
Single leader vs. group leadership. 23
Groups vs. teams. 27
Advantages of teamwork. 30
Disadvantages of teamwork. 32
Summary. 36
Literature on Leadership Groups in Higher Education 39
Presidential leadership groups. 41
College presidents. 44
Administrative group members 46
Group simplicity and complexity 48
Thinking. 49
Doing 60
Summary 67
Chapter Three: Research Methodology 71
Design of the Study 71
Conceptual framework and qualitative inquiry 71

Case study research. 72
Role of the Researcher 74
Data Collection 75
Research sample 75
Geographic and demographic data 76
Observation. 77
Interviewing. 78
Data Analyses 79
Coding and analyses. 80
Credibility and dependability. 81
Credibility. 81
Dependability. 82
Limitations of the Study 83
Summary 84
Chapter Four: Results of the Study 85
Demographic Data 85
Case Studies 88
Trident College. 90
Group milieu. 90
Thinking role analysis. 92
Frames of reference analysis. 97
Functional domain analysis 101
The group and the models. 103

Earnhardt College. 105

Group milieu. 105

Thinking role analysis. 108

Frames of reference analysis. 112

Functional domain analysis 116

The group and the models. 119

Charlestown College. 121

Group milieu. 121

Thinking role analysis. 125

Frames of reference analysis. 129

Functional domain analysis 133

The group and the models. 135

Cross Site Analysis. 138

Group milieus 139

Thinking role analysis. 142

Frames of reference analysis. 145

Functional domain analysis 146

The groups and the models. 148

Summary 150

Chapter Five: Discussion 151

Overview of the Study 151

Methodological Review 153

Summary and Discussion of the Results 154

Composition of administrative groups. 154

Group thinking roles. 154

Group frames of reference. 156

Group functional domains 158

The groups and the models. 160

Limitations of the Study 162

Implications for Administrative Groups 163

Implications for Research 164

Summary 166

References 168

Appendix A – Consent Form – President 181

Appendix B – Consent Form – Group Member 183

Appendix C – Observation Checklist 185

Appendix D – Interview Protocol 191

Appendix E – Prefigured Coding Scheme 193

List of Tables

Table 1 *Demographic Data of Institutions* 87

Table 2 *Demographic Data of Presidents* 88

Table 3 *Demographic Data for Group Members* 89

Table 4 *Average Groupwork Score on a Scale of 1 to 10*..... 148

List of Figures

Figure 1 Climbing the Y. 37

Figure 2 Continuum of thinking in teams. 51

Figure 3 Team cognitive complexity. 53

Figure 4 Multiframe organizational theory. 58

Figure 5 Team functional complexity. 61

Figure 6 Relationship of team energy to functional complexity. 62

Figure 7 Team performance curve. 64

Chapter One: Introduction

Background of the Study

The concept of group leadership in higher education has existed for centuries in the form of non-hierarchical communities of scholars actively participating in post-secondary institutional governance (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Hollingsworth, Brewer, & Petty, 2002). Standard components of group leadership include "consensus, shared power, common commitments and aspirations, and leadership that emphasizes consultation and collective responsibilities" (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 86).

While sufficient evidence regarding the benefit of group leadership exists, some have observed that a true collegial institution is uncommon in today's world. In many organizations, hierarchical structure often gets in the way of collegial development, and improvement and communication flows only downward, inhibiting opportunities for collaborative dialogue. Trubowitz (2005) observed that administrators "live in an environment filled with demands for immediate solutions to complex problems" (p. 175). Thus, educational executives often act on issues without sufficient input and planning.

Administrators today are faced with managing complicated economic, demographic, and technological changes. The convolution of these issues regularly poses an insurmountable obstruction to the knowledge, professional training, and individual capacity of a leader (Dean, 2008). Though the path to the presidency often winds through the academic affairs office, few presidents possess prior executive-level experience in finance, development, or student affairs (King, 2007). This reality may indicate that many presidents are ill-prepared for complex issues facing their institutions.

Consequently, Kouzes and Posner (2002) found that rather than trust the skill of a solitary administrator, organizations and constituents long for the collective synergy that teamwork provides.

Consequently, in a headlong quest for team development, institutions often form groups without providing sufficient training and support, without modifying the institutional structure, and without establishing an effective communication arrangement (Hackman & Johnson, 2004; Hollingsworth, Brewer, & Petty, 2002; King, 2007; Knudson, 1997; Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Strong academic environments promote competition and discourage teamwork. Solidarity is very time-consuming as collaborative groups require significantly more time to make decisions (Rubenfeld & Scheffer, 2005). The process of team-building is never-ending.

Knudson (1997) found that many executives refuse to allow their success to depend on others. From their perspective, the risk of failure is too great. As a result, the sharing of a common purpose, goals, and accountability is forfeited. She added that "multiple minds working together will be more complex than one mind working alone" (p. 44). Knudson also observed that "collegial bureaucracies should be transformed by restructuring and realigning the channels of communication and personnel into interactive groups or teams" (pp. 39-40). However, she found that institutional pressures often direct the attention of the administration toward external adaptation, creating barriers to teamwork. Many administrators find themselves guarding against potential threats instead of seizing current opportunities (Rubenfeld & Scheffer, 2005). Consequently, the institutional culture is deprived of administrative attention as executives grow more isolated from their constituents (Hollingsworth et al., 2002).

Managing the institution, creating the campus climate, and communicating the college mission are three major functions of college leaders (Knudson, 1997). However, institutional executives wrestle with how to manage teams whose principal tasks include vision, advancement, problem-solving, and the introduction of new information and methodology. Thus, some contend that decision-making should be entrusted to the lowest possible level. Knudson challenged administrators to "create an environment free of institutional bureaucracy in which team members feel free to offer creative solutions to problems and even disagree" (p. 33). However, is it possible to completely liberate an institution of bureaucracy? Additionally, should this kind of freedom be desired? What does the institution look like that is entirely free of bureaucracy? What does it do and how does it do it?

These questions have spawned an ongoing debate within organizational communities. Senge (1990) posited that some institutions will no longer look solely to top-level administrators to set the strategy for all constituents to follow. Colleges and universities in the future will value commitment and creativity of constituents at all levels within an organization. Therefore, the collective critical thinking (or complex thinking) of all constituents becomes the primary objective of developing teams (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Bolman & Deal, 2008; St. John, 2009).

Some have found that recent innovation has led many to consider developing leadership groups in lieu of a single-leader model (Hackman & Johnson, 2004; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Weber & Karman, 1989). In a culture that is increasingly inundated with information, groups are said to be considerably better suited for accessing and using the information (Duguid & Brown, 2000). Consequently, many post-secondary institutions

have appointed a group of top-level administrators that reports directly to the president and that works closely with the president. These groups facilitate creativity and innovation among professional personnel found in highly-sophisticated institutions. The complexity of colleges and universities demands a group approach to leadership and decision-making (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993). Multiple perspectives provide access to a wider variety of information and interpretations than a single perspective. When teams are engaged, they are likely to facilitate higher performance and achievement (Bentley, Reames, Reed, & Zhao, 2004; Hackman & Johnson, 2004; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Knudson, 1997).

The literature reveals that the concept of leading in teams has proliferated in the banking, insurance, and manufacturing industries (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Guskin & Bassis, 1985; Hackman & Johnson, 2004; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Knudson, 1997; Morgan, 1986; Rice & Austin, 1991). However, educational executives have typically struggled to empower faculty and staff through group leadership. This observation is substantiated by both the paucity of literature on teams in higher education and by the hierarchical organizational structure of many post-secondary institutions. Yet the literature reveals that today's educational workforce calls for new models of educational leadership that include complex collaboration, shared authority, and participative decision-making as well as simple, functional structure and direction (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Guskin & Bassis, 1985; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Knudson, 1997; Morgan, 1986; Rice & Austin, 1991).

Existing research on administrative teams primarily assessed decision-making and functional performance from an either/or perspective. Some examples include: single-

leader working groups or real teams (Katzenbach & Smith, 2006), simple or complex teams (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993), transactional or transformational leaders (Burns, 2003; Hackman & Johnson, 2004), and single frames of reference or multiple frames (Bolman & Deal, 2008). However, other researchers and scholars have observed both simple and complex thinking and functioning existing concurrently within a particular organization or even within a particular team. For example, a number of studies assert that institutions often form teams and engage in teamwork without providing sufficient training and support, modifying the institutional structure, or establishing an effective communication arrangement (Hackman & Johnson, 2004; Hollingsworth et al., 2002; King, 2007; Knudson, 1997; Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Katzenbach and Smith (2001, 2006) found that both single-leader working groups (or simple teams) and real teams (or complex teams) are necessary within most organizations. They differentiated the common elements of effective group work for groups in general from the critical disciplines that are essential for single-leader groups and for real teams. Katzenbach and Smith suggested that any attempt to lead a working group like a real team, or vice versa, will lead only to problems and failure. As such, the literature seems to indicate that, rather than trying to develop or form a simple or complex team, leaders should determine the kind of group that is present and/or necessary for the desired objective and lead that group to achieve greater effectiveness.

Focus of the Study

This study will explore administrative groups (or teams) in post-secondary education primarily to determine the type of administrative group or team that leads a particular institution. Specifically, the intent is to examine how college presidents and

their executive officers think and work together. The study will distinctively assess administrative team leadership in three small, private colleges in the state of Tennessee. This study will not necessarily consider methods for leading the subject groups to achieve greater effectiveness. However, team effectiveness cannot be categorically ignored, as the literature overwhelmingly suggests that groups, rather than single leaders, facilitate a higher level of effectiveness. Consequently, the focus of this study is to determine if the administrative officers function as a working group, a real team, or a combination of both.

Previous research has principally focused on comparing administrative teams of diverse institutions to one another. For example, in their study of presidential administrative teams of fifteen post-secondary institutions, Bensimon and Neumann (1993) sought to determine whether the administrative team was either simple or complex. They differentiated between conventional, utilitarian leadership and shared, interactive team leadership. In contrast, this study will observe the commonalities and differences within the characteristics and functions of administrative groups in a sample of similar institutions. When considering types of groups, previous research has primarily sought to categorize a group as either a working group or a real team, either a simple team or a complex team, etc. However, this study will seek to determine if college administrative officers function as working groups, real teams, or a combination of both.

Definition of Terms

Working groups.

A working group is a small group of people with complementary skills who often are committed to a common purpose and objectives, and individually tasked with developing a working approach. Group members are often individually accountable, if at all (Katzenbach & Smith, 2006). Several related terms are defined below.

Cognitively simple groups generally demonstrate less than four of the five core thinking roles (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Knudson, 1997).

Functionally simple groups usually perform duties in one or two of the functional domains, usually only in the basic, utilitarian domain of doing, rather than also performing cognitive and expressive functions (Knudson, 1997, p. 16).

Single-leader group is a small group of people with complementary skills who often are committed to a common purpose and objectives, and individually tasked with developing a working approach. Group members are often individually accountable, if at all (Katzenbach & Smith, 2006).

Real teams.

A real team is a small group of people with complementary skills who are equally committed to a common purpose, objectives, and working approach for which the individuals hold themselves mutually accountable (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Birnbaum, 1992; Katzenbach & Smith, 2006; Larson and LaFasto, 2001). Several related terms are defined below.

Cognitive teamwork refers to the abstract activities of perceiving, discovering, thinking, creating, talking, speculating, and arguing. Cognitive

teamwork is thinking versus doing (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993, p. 54-55; Neumann, 1991).

Cognitively complex teams require the demonstration of at least four of the five core thinking roles: analyst, definer, interpreter, critic, and synthesizer (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Knudson, 1997).

Functionally complex teams require the performance of at least one useful activity in each of the functional domains: utilitarian, expressive, and cognitive (Knudson, 1997, p. 15).

Team leadership refers to empowered participation of institutional governance through interactive, collaborative, and shared decision-making. Team agenda are developed and negotiated by all team members (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993).

Team thinking assumes that team members see the world differently, process information differently, and make sense of life differently both within organizations and outside of them. Team thinking requires that team members develop their own thinking capacities and exercise them openly, actively, and freely, and are open to the different thinking processes of the other team members (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993, p. 57).

Theoretical models.

The literature includes several models for determining the level of simplicity or complexity in groupwork. In this study, special attention will be given to three theoretical approaches which are fundamental to the design of the study. Several related terms include the following.

Frame of reference is a conceptual map for understanding an organization and interpreting the effectiveness of others' behavior. Frames focus one's attention. They often serve as cognitive blinders, leaving what is "out of frame" unseen and unattended. Bolman and Deal (1991; 2008) identified four frames:

1. The *structural* frame focuses on organizational structure with emphases on establishing goals and priorities, systematic decision-making, efficiency, and effective communication.
2. The *human resource* frame focuses on the partnership and needs of the organization and constituents emphasizing the achievement of goals through collaboration, consensus building, problem-solving through teams, loyalty to the institution, and leading by example.
3. The *political* frame emphasizes the use of power and influence to direct resources to specific individuals or groups. It focuses on monitoring internal and external environments, utilizing influence to gather necessary resources, establishing relationships with constituents, and developing coalitions amid a compromising structure.
4. The *symbolic* frame emphasizes accurately interpreting the institution's history, maintaining its culture, and reinforcing its values to foster shared meaning (Beall et al., 2008; Bentley, Reames, Reed, & Zhao, 2004; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Eddy, 2003; Garcia, Gorosave, & Slater, 2008; Nieman, 2008; St. John, 2009).

Functional domains comprise a three-part framework for functions of leadership groups:

1. The *utilitarian* function aides in achieving a sense of rationality and maintaining control over institutional functions;
2. The *expressive* function reinforces a sense of connectedness among group members; and
3. The *cognitive* function acknowledges and enlarges the intelligence of group members to enable the team to act as a creative system (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993).

Thinking role is a thinking process or style that individual group members bring to, or induce within, a group (Knudson, 1997, p. 14). Bensimon and Neumann (1993) identified five core thinking roles frequently found within groups:

1. The *Analyst* role provides a deep examination of issues defined;
2. The *Critic* role redefines, reanalyzes, or reinterprets the issues;
3. The *Definer* role voices a view of the group's reality;
4. The *Interpreter* role translates how people outside the group are likely to see the issues; and
5. The *Synthesizer* role facilitates a summation of the group's reality.

Significance of the Study

The principal contribution of this study is that it extends the research on leadership groups in higher education both methodologically and conceptually. Because of its specific institutional sample and unique focus of inquiry, this study demonstrates a significant departure from previous research on administrative groups in higher

education. Specifically, the focus of this study will intrinsically add value to educational institutions:

1. This research contributes a new perspective on small, private college administrators, their thinking, and their function by determining whether a working group, a real team, or a combination of the two is present.
2. By employing a set of qualitative case studies for the purpose of observing the administrative group of three small, private colleges in Tennessee and comparing and contrasting those observations, this study differs from previous research.
3. Previous research indicates that the findings of the present study should allow the sample institutions to achieve greater effectiveness through their administrative group.

By discovering how administrative groups think and work in small, private colleges, this study will also add value to individuals by:

1. Enabling small, private college executives to objectively view their own individual institutions from a new perspective,
2. Inspiring small, private college presidents to regularly evaluate their leadership groups and teams, and
3. Encouraging current and future college administrators to enhance decision-making activities and to structure and manage groups and teams more effectively.

Summary

This chapter presented why this study was conducted: (a) the existing literature almost exclusively considered leadership and its effectiveness from an either/or perspective; (b) recent studies have shown that both working groups and real teams can be effective and that both can exist within a particular institution; (c) few studies have considered leadership groups within a specific institutional context or locale. The chapters that follow will describe this study in detail. Chapter two will present a review of the literature pertinent to this study of administrative groups. The review will address the literature on leadership in general along with the four concepts that form the framework of this study. Special attention will be given to three theoretical approaches for determining group simplicity and complexity which are fundamental to the design of the study. Chapter three will explain the qualitative research methodology employed in the study including the design of the study, the role of the researcher, data collection and analyses, and the limitations of the study. Chapter four will detail the results of the study, a comprehensive description of the three small, private college administrative groups, and a detailed analysis of each of the cases as they relate to all the sites. The demographic profile of all the institutions along with the observations within each group will be compared across all sites. Chapter five will present the major themes of the study along with implications for administrators, their institutions, and future research.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Qualitative Inquiry

This study will determine if the administrative officers in three, small private colleges function as working groups or real teams or elements of both. Seidman (2006) suggested that, in order to effectively investigate an organization and its processes, one must examine the people within the organization. Creswell (2007) found that people and processes are best examined through qualitative research.

Creswell (2007) detailed five distinct qualitative approaches: biographical life history, phenomenological study, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. Each approaches the subject matter from a unique perspective and is largely dependent on the investigator's focus of inquiry. This study queries how administrative groups think and function. Research that seeks to address a *how* question is generally explanatory and, as such, is typically conducted utilizing case study methodology (Yin, 2008). Consequently, the case study approach most effectively addressed the focus of inquiry.

Conceptual Framework

The qualitative researcher generally builds upon one or more existing conceptual or theoretical frameworks (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2006; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Cooper, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1997). The existing research detailed four concepts that are relevant to the underlying framework of this study:

1. Effective leadership intrinsically involves groups rather than a single leader (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Featherstone &

Brumette, 2007; Guzzo & Dickson, 1996; Katzenbach & Smith, 2006; Knudson, 1997; Kouzes and Posner, 2002; Larson and LaFasto, 2001).

2. A working group is not necessarily a real team (Katzenbach & Smith, 2006; Lawson & Eguizabal, 2009; Rubenfeld & Scheffer, 2005).
3. Leadership in teams involves both thinking and doing (Amey, 2005; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Beall et al., 2008; Bentley et al., 2004; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006; Favero, 2006; Israel & Kasper, 2004; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Kohnen, 2005; Rubenfeld & Scheffer, 2005; St. John, 2009; Weiss, 2007).
4. There are organizational venues suited for both working groups and real teams (Katzenbach & Smith, 2006). The review of the literature that follows builds upon this conceptual framework to detail existing research and findings relevant to this study.

Literature on Leadership

To evaluate administrative groups within colleges, one must consider the administrators themselves. The literature overwhelmingly refers to administrators as leaders and to their function and responsibilities as leadership. For decades, researchers have profiled and debated the concept of leadership, yet its definition, components, and measures of success remain indistinct (Hackman & Johnson, 2004; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Pfeffer, 1977). Significant discussion, even confusion, has arisen from the diverse interpretations of leadership. This confusion resulted, in part, from ambiguous terminology, such as *power*, *authority*, *management*, and *control*, which frequents the

definitions of leadership (Burns, 1978; Yukl, 1989). Consequently, attempts to define or explain leadership have yielded multifarious concepts.

Defining leadership.

Hackman and Johnson (2004) found that leaders and followers interact as "relational partners who assume complementary roles" (p. 31). Sergiovanni (1992) observed leadership in many forms and found that leadership is a shared process of leading and directing the efforts of others. While leaders exercise greater influence and accept more responsibility in the partnership, followers execute the plans and complete the work itself. Any effort to influence the performance of an individual or group, posited Hensley (1998), is leadership. Eisenscher (1999) observed that leadership is the ability to determine what must be accomplished and then motivate others to want to do it. It is a process which encourages followers to pursue the objectives shared by the leader. Evans (2007) identified leadership as creating vision, developing a strategy, enlivening followers to adopt the vision, and changing the culture of an organization.

Fielder (1967) identified leadership as "an interpersonal relationship in which power and influence are unevenly distributed so that one person is able to direct and control the actions and behaviors of others to a greater extent than they direct and control his" (p. 11). Stogdill's (1974) definition included "the process by which the leader influences his followers to achieve group objectives" (p. 28). Northouse (2010) considered leadership "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 11). While there are many definitions in the literature, nearly all researchers agree that leadership involves influence over others (Bennis & Nanus, 1997; Fielder; Gardner; 1990; Jamison, 1997; Northouse; Stogdill). However,

attempts to define leadership appear to remain incomplete or inadequate (Bennis & Nanus, 1997).

Leadership effectiveness.

While neither leadership in general nor the effectiveness of leaders is the focus of this study, team effectiveness cannot be categorically ignored as the literature overwhelmingly suggests that groups, rather than single leaders, facilitate a higher level of effectiveness. Maxwell (1993) suggested that the ultimate effectiveness of the leader-follower team is evidenced by the degree to which each party is willing to communicate, participate in lifelong learning, and function collaboratively. True leadership is "getting people to work for you when they are not obligated" (Maxwell, 1993, p. 7). Blackaby (2001) observed that the growth of leaders is essential for and is directly related to the growth of organizations. As leaders grow, they increase their capacity to lead and, thereby, the capacity of the organization to grow. Blackaby suggested that "the best thing leaders can do for their organizations is to grow personally" (p. 31).

Burns (1978) identified the traditional approach to leadership as transactional, which addresses the satisfaction of physiological and security needs. In contrast, transactional leadership is the antithesis of the more compelling approach, transformational leadership. While transactional leaders seek to meet the current needs of followers, transformational leaders emphasize self-actualization and personally ensure significant progress and effective change in groups, organizations, and institutions (Burns, 1978). Some have found that transactional leadership rewards followers and propels the maintenance of the status quo. The transactional leader often exchanges rewards or privileges for effort, good performance, or desirable outcomes. This leader

may intervene when subordinates do not meet acceptable performance levels in order to initiate corrective action and improve performance (Hackman & Johnson, 2004).

Burns (2003) contended that every leader is either transactional or transformational. Transformational leaders offer followers a sense of mission, inspiration, emotional support, and intellectual stimulation. This is evidenced in Ralph Nader's proposal that "the function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers" (Hackman & Johnson, p. 90). These visionary leaders empower and inspire followers. They build trust and respect while modeling considerate and supportive behavior.

Components and characteristics of leadership.

In recent years, researchers have begun to understand how traits, cognitive perspective, and passion contribute to leadership (Lawrence & Nohria, 2002; Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, & Damon, 2001). Kouzes and Posner (2002) set aside accomplishments in their effort to determine the values, characteristics, and attitudes that facilitate effective leadership. They found that in all effective relationships, credibility is the foundation. Followers require credibility from their leaders before they will energetically engage in the organizational vision. If they wish to be credible, leaders must solicit feedback, adopt a learning attitude, be open to influence, and promote constructive controversy. Credible leaders find common ground, resolve conflict with principle rather than position, and speak passionately on behalf of their constituents. Creating a climate for learning, inspiring confidence, and building competence through professional development all add to leader credibility (Kouzes and Posner, 2002). The

literature revealed five traits that contribute to leader credibility: vision, passion, creativity, collaboration, and empowering.

Vision.

The vision of effective leaders is both desirable and attainable. Effective vision, Hackman and Johnson (2004) observed, attracts commitment and energizes people, creates meaning, establishes a standard of excellence, and bridges the present and the future. They also found that "organizations with a well-articulated vision that permeates the company are most likely to prosper and have long-term success" (p. 102). The vision should be "specific enough to provide real guidance to people, yet vague enough to encourage initiative and remain relevant under a variety of conditions" (p. 102).

Regular communication of high expectations, focused effort, and an enhanced understanding of goals are characteristic of effective leaders. They are often organizationally innovative while encouraging intellectual problem-solving and decision-making (Hackman & Johnson, 2004; Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Individuals who struggle to arrive at a clear vision lie vulnerable to competing agendas and imposing personalities within and without the institution (McNeal, 2000). The goal of vision and planning is not to eliminate risk. Batterson (2006) asserted that "the greatest risk is taking no risks" (p. 109). Stanley (2003) added that leaders can never be more than 80 percent certain on any given matter. Consequently, waiting for greater certainty may cause one to miss a valuable opportunity.

Many problems faced by institutions of learning are perceptual rather than circumstantial. Often an individual's fear is worse than the actual problem that is feared. Visionaries understand that these problems appear daunting when leaders and their

constituents have modest faith and vision (Batterson, 2006). The faith and vision of leaders grow as leaders grow personally. Batterson (2006) suggested that "the alternative to fear is boredom. And boredom isn't just boring. Boredom is inexcusable!" (p. 57). To many seasoned executives, life's greatest regrets may be found in the risks not taken.

Passion.

In his book about the Biblical character, Benaiah, Batterson (2006) reminded the reader that leaders are proactive, and they know that even "playing it safe" is risky. Great leaders realize that opportunities regularly appear to be insurmountable obstacles. Batterson encouraged leaders toward a life of excellence through his definition of success: "Do the best you can with what you have where you are" (p. 17).

Effective leaders are passionately committed to their vision, constituents, and organizational success. Richard Chang (2001) suggested that "passion is the single most important competitive advantage an organization can have" (p. 5). Leaders focus on those things about which they can be personally and corporately passionate. Corporate executives at Gillette declared that "People who aren't passionate [. . .] are not welcome in the organization" (Hackman & Johnson, 2004, p. 110).

Creativity.

Hackman and Johnson (2004) found that "satisfaction with the status quo poses a serious threat to a group or organization's survival" (p. 91). While some argue that few individuals are blessed with creative ability, Hackman and Johnson found this to be a common misconception. They suggested that "everyone can think creatively" (p. 93) and value input and interaction from every level of their institution. Neff and Citrin (1999)

found that the ability to communicate effectively was a common trait among top-rated business leaders. These leaders clearly articulated ideas and concepts that eluded others.

Collaboration.

In order to enact change in this resistant setting, one must empathize with those who are reluctant to change and support those who are ready to discover new approaches to learning. Despite the progress of some institutions toward participatory governance and shared authority, some administrators continue to act almost alone in planning activities and decision making. Knudson (1997) observed that some administrators attempt to effect change by retreating into hibernation. Over a period of weeks, months, or even years, they personally develop a plan for educational change. She suggested that institutions must consider new approaches that involve many constituents in decision-making. The authoritarian approach of the past to administration and development has proven ineffective in recent years. Knudson added that "administrators of colleges and universities play a unique role in building and maintaining complex teams, and their cognitive frames of reference influence team effectiveness" (p. 28). Knudson also observed that a powerful gauge of campus climate is the extent to which all personnel are free to contribute to institutional planning and development. She also observed that administrators "who empower constituents, share leadership responsibilities, and insist on individual initiative and responsibility are leaders who believe in human possibilities and the power of people to review themselves and their societies" (p. 29).

Kouzes and Posner declared that "whatever the time, whatever the circumstances, leadership is relationship" (p. xxviii). Ineffective organizations, they found, do not fail because of poor innovation or technology; they fail in the arena of relationships.

Successful leaders love their people more than they value their position (Maxwell, 2003). Shields (2003) added that education is principally relational, and the relationship between the institutional leaders and constituents is a key indicator of organizational behavior.

Leaders who are proponents of lasting development must be willing to involve others in decision making and implementation. French (2001) proposed several factors that are key components for leading complex organizations:

> A successful change process requires that leaders: (a) establish a social interaction process to link people with new information, perspectives, and ideas; (b) demonstrate their openness to considering alternative views and opinions; (c) use a combination of leadership strategies and styles to fit the circumstances; (d) help others to feel ownership in an agreed-upon strategy for change. (p. 17)

Successful administrators are actively engaged in developing reciprocal trust and interdependence. Covey (2004) reminds these tentative executives that where "there is little or no trust, there is no foundation for [lasting] success" (p. 21). Featherstone and Brumette (2007) concluded that a "dedicated and continued team effort and management with vision" (p. 10) are essential to the success of developing and sustaining post-secondary institutions. McNeal (2000) suggested that "a critical intellectual capacity for twenty-first century leadership success will be the ability to build knowledge with other colleagues" (p. 131).

Empowering.

Hoy and Miskel (2008) observed that the ability to empower constituents is a critical component when defining leadership. When leaders empower others, they share information while providing a platform for collaboration, involvement, and investment.

Leadership through empowerment can often bring collaboration and trust (Kezar & Lester, 2009). Effective leaders understand the importance of empowering constituents in a way that facilitates participation and involvement. They frequently look for opportunities to give their power away and allow followers regular access to funds, materials, authority, and information necessary to make critical decisions. Hackman and Johnson (2004) found that "autonomy encourages employees to take ownership for their work" (p. 106). Kouzes and Posner (2002) asserted that, "a leader's ability to enable others to act is essential" (p. 18). Faculty and staff willingly accept ownership and take action when they implicitly trust their leaders and the organization (Featherstone & Brumette, 2007; French, 2001; Hollingsworth et al., 2002). Followers recognize that they can trust leaders when their words and actions match (Maxwell, 2003). Kouzes and Posner also observed that "people feel more important when they know that they can come to you with their ideas and be given a fair hearing, and that you consult with them and value their counsel before making decisions which may affect them" (p. 101). Kezar, Carducci, and Contreras-McGavin (2006) concluded that "effective leadership is a combination of relational and tasks skills and involves both transformational and transactional qualities" (p.135).

Literature on leadership groups.

While the literature demonstrates that the afore-mentioned characteristics consistently result in greater credibility and influence for single leaders, leadership in groups clearly has certain advantages over single-leader-led groups (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Hogan, 1994; Solansky, 2008). Bensimon and Neumann (1993) focused on the shared concept of leadership that occurs when a group of people think and

act together. Gardner (1990) suggested that leadership includes a set of shared objectives between the leader and group members. Hogan (1994) exhorted group members to exchange individual concerns with the common goal or goals of the group. Similarly, Kouzes and Posner (2002) identified leadership as the ability to mobilize others to desire shared aspirations. Solansky suggested that groups in which leadership functions are shared by group members have certain advantages over single-leader groups. While groups take on a number of differing responsibilities at varying levels of an organization, this review specifically focuses on the administrative leadership group.

Northouse (2010) suggested that leadership ability increases the influence and value of a leader within an organization. This growth of influence and value is directly related to the leadership model or style practiced by an administrator. Executives who function as a part of a bureaucratic model participate in a unidimensional structure or model (March & Simon, 1963). Conversely, a team model that is characterized by shared ideas and collaborative decision-making represents a multi-dimensional approach (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993).

Single leader vs. group leadership.

A number of researchers suggested that leadership in groups is growing in popularity in institutions of higher education (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Guskin & Bassis, 1985; Knudson, 1997; Rees, 2001). Group leadership advocates contended that, among other numerous advantages, team leadership can improve the capacity of an institution to grasp new knowledge (Bensimon, 1991; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993), generate more creativity and diversity in decision-making (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Eisenstat & Cohen, 1990), increase productivity

(Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Birnbaum, 1992), and improve overall performance (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Some even contend that a team leadership approach improves the skills, attitudes, and energy of constituents (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Guzzo & Dickson, 1996; Katzenbach & Smith, 2006; Rice & Austin, 1988; Riechmann, 1991; Wheelan, 1999).

Rees (2001) defined a team as two or more people working collaboratively to achieve an objective. Larson and LaFasto (2001) also defined a team as a group of people engaged in a coordinated effort to achieve a recognizable goal. Katzenbach and Smith (2006) identified the team as a small group of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose and performance goals for which they are mutually accountable. Thus, team leadership involves two or more persons, a team leader distinguished from team members, and the influence of that leader over the team members. Birnbaum (1989) found that the role of the president was not to manage but to facilitate the materialization of the pluralistic leadership latent within the group.

The literature on group leadership chronicles effective implementation of leadership teams in business, government, and higher education. While these venues have many functional similarities, they occasionally differ. For example, performance goals in business and government are often clearly defined; however, the same goals in higher education are often ambiguous (Bess, 1988). Along with differences in performance goals, the higher education venue presents a unique organizational barrier to group leadership. Many institutions of higher education share authority between the administration and faculty. This approach is susceptible to conflict between professional and administrative personnel (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989; Birnbaum, 1989;

Cohen & March, 1986; Roberts, 2007). While the barriers to group leadership are real, the benefits of effective leadership teams are more compelling.

Groups must be "truly empowered to organize their work and make decisions or [they] will fail" (Knudson, 1997, p. 46). Rees (2001) observed that groupwork almost always includes both task and social responsibilities. The task involves the project as assigned to the group and the individual responsibility for each group member. Social responsibilities involve the relationships between the individual group members. A group's success is dependent on how well the group both accomplishes the task and manages its relationships (Shields, 2003). Kouzes and Posner (2002) recommended enlisting "well-connected individuals who have played the greatest variety of roles in their lives" and have not been "typecast in one function, company, industry, or community" (p. 261).

Institutional executives wrestle with how to manage groups whose principal tasks include vision, advancement, problem-solving, and the introduction of new information and methodology. Featherstone and Brumette (2007) concluded that a "dedicated and continued team effort and management with vision" (p. 10) are essential to the success of developing and sustaining post-secondary institutions. Effective educational leaders skillfully perform the role of a coach with their constituents. Bornstein and Smith (1996) suggested:

> Leadership in the future will more closely reflect a process whereby a leader pursues his or her vision by intentionally seeking to influence others in the conditions in which they work, allowing them to perform to their full potential

> and thus both increasing the probability of realizing the vision and maximizing the organizational and personal development of all parties involved. (p. 283)

Regarding critical functions of the leadership group, researchers have found that substantial diversity exists between the viewpoints of group members and those of administrators. For group members, an effective group possesses a high degree of mutual respect, support, and care. Conversely, institutional administrators value "different perspectives, receiving feedback, and creative problem solving" (Knudson, 1997, p. iv). Trubowitz (2005) stated that perhaps the most evident challenge to creating an improved culture of learning is the administrative resistance to new ideas, especially resistance to outside observers or new employees. He added that "the desire for the security of the status quo will serve to reinforce customary modes of behavior and to block out ideas that are different" (pp. 175-176).

Major contemporary research regarding teams and teamwork has been primarily conducted by Larson and LaFasto (1989; 2001) and Katzenbach and Smith (2001; 2006). In their initial grounded theory study, Larson and LaFasto (1989) observed and interviewed diverse, high-performing teams to determine the attributes of highly effective teams and identified common factors that influenced team effectiveness. Larson and LaFasto subsequently tested their grounded theory with several administrative and project teams. Their findings, which were originally published in 1989, are widely accepted and have remained in print for more than 20 years. Larson and LaFasto improved on their original study in 2001 by publishing a new report with data from 600 additional teams. Their new work highlighted five dynamics for team success.

Groups vs. teams.

Katzenbach and Smith (2001; 2006) expanded upon the research of Larson and LaFasto (1989) in 1993 with their own qualitative study of hundreds of team members, consisting of more than 50 teams within 30 companies. Katzenbach and Smith (2006) focused primarily on how and where teams function best and how to increase team effectiveness. Although they did not propose new grounded theory, Katzenbach and Smith followed their original study with a second major publication in 2001 in which they focused on basic disciplines that can facilitate greater effectiveness and two critical approaches to small group settings: single-leader groups and real teams.

Bass (2008) observed:

> Before 1990, many studies of groups were actually studies of teams. Both groups and teams exhibited mutual and reciprocal influence among members. But usually there is a stronger sense of identification by members of a team than a group. Team members share common goals and tasks; group members may belong to the group for personal reasons that are in conflict with the group's objective. (p. 757)

In their subsequent work, Katzenbach and Smith (2001) distinguished between common elements of effective group work for groups in general and critical disciplines that are essential for single-leader groups and for real teams.

However, the existing research on administrative teams primarily assessed administrative decision-making and functional performance from an either/or perspective. Some examples include: single-leader working groups or real teams (Katzenbach & Smith, 2006), simple or complex teams (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993),

transactional or transformational leaders (Burns, 2003; Hackman & Johnson, 2004), and single frames of reference or multiple frames (Bolman & Deal, 2008). However, other researchers and scholars observed both simple and complex thinking and functioning concurrently within a particular organization or even within a particular team. For example, a number of studies asserted that institutions often form teams and engage in teamwork without providing sufficient training and support, without modifying the institutional structure, and without establishing an effective communication arrangement (Hackman & Johnson, 2004; Hollingsworth et al., 2002; King, 2007; Knudson, 1997; Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Thus, while a collaborative, complex team exists, much of the administrative activity is simple and primarily functional in nature. Katzenbach and Smith (2001) found that both working groups and real teams are necessary within most organizations and differentiated the common elements of effective group work for groups in general from the critical disciplines that are essential for single-leader groups and for real teams.

The utilization of groups in colleges and universities is not uncommon (Kezar, 2006). Governance issues, committees, project management, decision-making, and communication often require the use of groups (Birnbaum, 1992). The literature, however, distinguishes between groups and teams, specifically in relation to individual functions. Teams are most often characterized by involving all members in planning and decision-making. Consequently, their collaborative decisions influenced campus development. Groups, however, were characterized by involving participants primarily in actions that achieved objectives set forth by the group leader. These groups frequently

performed limited functions that generally amounted to delivering information or progress reports (Bensimon, 1991).

Although researchers may define a team similarly, the quality, style, and personality of teams are, in fact, diverse (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993). Moreover, the participation on one team may prove to be an entirely different experience than participation on another (Bennis, Spreitzer, & Cummings, 2001). Thus, Bensimon and Neumann (1993) suggested that teams are not simply a group of individuals working together for a common goal, but they are, rather, a group who lead, act, and think together.

Effective leaders can unify diverse perspectives and facilitate cooperation among diverse constituencies, as well as

> Encourage employees to be active participants in institutional governance, and to be accountable for the decisions they make. Instead of being authoritarian decision-makers, they can facilitate, coach, sponsor, and mentor future leaders and create an environment in which innovation and creativity can flourish. (Knudson, 1997, p. 33)

Frost and Gillespie (1998) observed that the lack of organizational congruity and a misunderstanding of groups, teams, and teamwork have resulted in minimal use of a team approach on college and university campuses. While many college presidents may refer to their administrative cabinet as a team, these executive groups may not necessarily function as a team with a unique identity, professional development process, or set of values and interpretations (Rubenfeld & Scheffer, 2005). Bensimon and Neumann (1993) observed that, for a team approach to be effectively implemented, the primary

objective of team development must be critical thinking of all team members. They also identified two perceptive realities of teamwork: (a) the reality of performance is generally visible to an outside observer, and (b) the reality of intent is most often invisible to an outside observer and visible only to the team members themselves. To gain a better understanding for how teams function, the team must be evaluated both internally and externally. For example, most constituents are often only able to view the visible performance of a college or university presidential team. This performance is evidenced in the quantity and regularity of correspondence and meetings, formal and informal communications among the team members and constituents, planning of activities, and decision-making (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993). Consequently, the actions of the team members as they function within the team often remain unassessed in these external observations.

Advantages of teamwork.

The literature on team leadership accents participatory leadership rather than a traditional, individual-centered model for leadership (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993). Team leadership can synthesize the experience and skill of a group of individuals in a manner which exceeds the skill and experience of a solitary leader (Katzenbach & Smith, 2006). While the existing literature provides minimal support for outlining the benefits of the team leadership approach in higher education, other organizational venues have observed a higher level of effectiveness within organizations that utilize leadership teams (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Neumann, 1991). These benefits include greater cognitive complexity of ideas, increased productivity, accountability, creativity, innovation, and more effective decision-making and problem-solving (Kezar, 1998).

Despite the many challenges, Bolman and Deal (2008) proclaimed:

> Team building at its heart is a spiritual undertaking. It is the creation of a community of believers, united by shared faith and shared culture. It is a search for the spirit within. Peak performance emerges as a team discovers its soul. (p. 44)

As teams develop and gather momentum, they are able to utilize the skills, talents, and expertise of constituents more efficiently to meet performance goals and objectives. They possess greater total knowledge, a greater number of perspectives, and more participation in problem-solving. Knudson (1997) found that "teams improve commitment, quality, and efficiency while lowering costs, absenteeism, and turnover. In addition, the value of synergy is often mentioned when describing team effectiveness—that of the whole being greater than the sum of the individual parts" (p. 46).

Knudson (1997) found that "multiple minds working together will be more complex than one mind working alone, thus enhancing leadership effectiveness" (p. 44). Teams must be "truly empowered to organize their work and make decisions or [they] will fail" (Knudson, 1997, p. 46). Eisenstat and Cohen (1990) posited that team leadership is more effective than the leadership of the single individual because: team decisions are more likely to represent diverse interests; team members with differing skills and perspectives offer more creative solutions; when team members are involved in decision-making they accept a higher level of ownership; regular interaction facilitates better organizational communication; responsibilities are distributed more evenly; and team members are more involved in professional development. Organizational teams also produce a higher level of productivity, more efficient use of resources, better

decision-making and problem-solving, and superior products and services (Bentley et al., 2004; Kogler Hill, 2010; Rubenfeld & Scheffer, 2005). When individuals are involved in teamwork they are generally motivated to engage creatively. As a result, their contribution to the team is more likely to be valued (Bentley et al.; Featherstone & Brumette, 2007; French, 2001; Hollingsworth et al., 2002; Rees, 2001; Rubenfeld & Scheffer, 2005).

The president's ability to facilitate diversity among the administrative team members significantly contributes to the successful implementation of a team leadership approach in a college or university. Diverse experiences, perspectives, and knowledge add value to leadership teams (Mangano, 2007). Consequently, the team approach to leadership encourages team members to share pain, perspectives, and expertise. This sharing of information often facilitates a higher level of understanding and commitment to the team and the institution (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993).

Disadvantages of teamwork.

While the benefits of healthy teams seem obvious, unhealthy teams often prove to be ineffective. In leadership teams that are dysfunctional, power struggles and interpersonal conflicts are prevalent. Group leadership and decision-making can become more cumbersome than individual leadership (Kezar, 1998). There are those who prefer to work independently because some team members are impatient when working with others, fear losing power and identity, and become frustrated when working to reach consensus (Rees, 2001).

Team members must set aside personal and political motivations in lieu of the personal and professional needs of each member, the team, and the organization. One's

inclination to appeal to like-minded peers erodes trust and collaboration within presidential teams. Additionally, consulting only a limited number of individuals rather than the entire team impedes open discussion and creates cognitive conflict among team members (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Kezar & Lester, 2009).

In their study of leadership teams of fifteen colleges and universities, Bensimon and Neumann (1993) found that leadership teams working closely together have a tendency to become a cognitive clique, meaning that their strong sense of internal cohesion and common identity may exclude outsiders and outside information. As a result, they often become isolated and distanced from the rest of the organization. At times, the team may perceive that they are functioning effectively; however, other constituents may have a very different perspective. Bensimon and Neumann observed that the teams were so internally cohesive that they were often aware of only their own perception of reality. Consequently, they were often ineffective leaders. This paradigm limits the flow of information to the leadership team and hinders their capacity to cognitively utilize the information in a complex manner. On the other hand, consensus-building can limit a team's potential to think critically. Leadership teams must continue to express rival viewpoints to facilitate effectiveness and lasting growth (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; St. John, 2009).

The literature offers the following cautions for current and would-be leaders. Dumaine (1994) found that teams have a tendency to fail without adequate training, communication, and support. A team's success is less likely when there is limited empowerment and trust among the team members. Because they realize that every decision to do something is a choice to decline many other opportunities, effective

leaders must regularly say no. Successful leaders pace themselves for long-term success. Blackaby and Blackaby (2001) suggested that “life is a marathon, not a sprint” (p. 206). Many leaders who find themselves overworked should review their current activities to determine if they have assumed responsibility for activities that God has not intended for them to bear. Success is not related to how much one personally accomplishes, but rather how wisely one performs his leadership responsibility (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2001).

Stanley (2003) observed that the following behaviors had a negative effect on team leadership:

1. Some leaders strive for balance in their activities and duties. Many of these areas are areas in which they will never excel.
2. Some attempt to exert authority in areas where they lack competence, frequently derailing projects and discouraging followers.
3. Successful leaders are tempted to believe that their core competencies are broader than they really are.
4. Some feel guilty about delegating tasks or projects.
5. Others attempt to get things done their own way. They forget that it is about developing people through tasks or other opportunities.

With respect to the complex nature of teams, Kogler Hill (2010) cautioned:

> Although one of the strengths of this [team leadership] model is that it takes into account the complex nature of team leadership, this very complexity is also one of the approach’s greatest weaknesses. [Team leadership] is complex and does not provide easy answers to difficult questions of the leader. With so much distributed and shared leadership in organizations today, such a complex approach

to leadership might not be practical for the growing number of team leaders (p. 259).

Knudson (1997) offered the following suggestions to avoid common pitfalls among leadership teams: (a) each individual must make a conscious decision to formulate the leadership team, (b) each team member must set aside time for team development, (c) all members must contribute adequate resources to the team, and (d) every team member must be committed to resolving conflicts appropriately. Those who seek to limit or control the functions of their team members underestimate the value of the team. When handled responsibly, leadership in teams can be considerably more effective than autocratic leadership. As team members share responsibilities, the team's effectiveness is enhanced throughout the institution (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993). Being a part of a leadership team can be a fulfilling endeavor for both the leader and the team members.

Summary.

Researchers agree that effective presidential leadership is essential to the survival of higher education. While academic leadership is observable in various leadership styles, leadership in teams has garnered considerable support in academia (Birnbaum, 1992; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Gardiner, 1988; Guskin & Bassis, 1985; Katzenbach & Smith, 2006; Knudson, 1997; Larson & LaFasto, 2001; Rees, 2001). Despite the complexity of team leadership, the literature suggested distinct advantages over the traditional or hierarchical leadership style. Because minimal research is available on the development of leadership teams, many presidents and senior administrators have few opportunities for developing basic skills necessary for leading and working with teams (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993).

In contrast, Katzenbach and Smith (2006), in their study of more than 50 teams and 30 companies, added to the body of knowledge regarding leadership groups when they found that all groups, whether they are real teams or not, can: develop a clear purpose; communicate effectively, clearly establish areas of responsibility, create a time-efficient process, and develop a system of accountability. Katzenbach and Smith posited that these are the basic fundamentals for all working groups—real team or not (See Figure 1). They observed that when a team decides to function as a real team, a higher and distinctive level of team discipline is required.

According to Katzenbach and Smith (2006), not every group should aspire to function as a real team because there are organizational venues suited for working groups and there are those best suited for real teams. Some working groups that attempt to function as teams result in pseudo-teams. Lawson and Eguizabal (2009) summarized the

findings of Katzenbach and Smith: “Instead of trying to be a team, it would be better to be a working group, where members interact to share information, identify best practices, and make decisions to help each to do his or her part best” (p. 272).

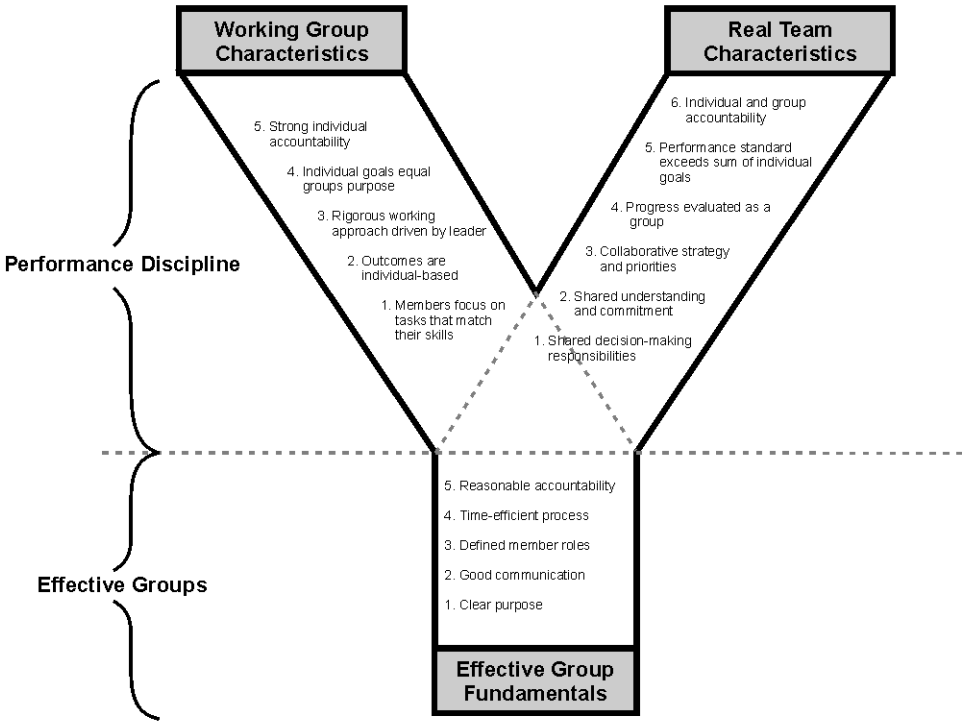

Figure 1 Climbing the Y. Effective group fundamentals vs. those of high-performing working groups and teams. Adapted from “Climbing the Y,” by J. Katzenbach and D. Smith, 2006, p. xxi. Copyright 2006 by HarperCollins.

Many working groups function effectively when following a single leader who works together with the group members to establish purpose, make decisions, oversee communication, and assess progress (See Figure 1) (Katzenbach and Smith, 2006). Lawson and Eguizabal (2009) observed that these cooperative activities allow group members to contribute individually toward achieving the common goal. While groups

require the five basic fundamentals of working groups noted above to be successful, they are not necessarily a real team.

Real teams, observed Lawson and Eguizabal (2009), differ from working groups because they also entail shared leadership and mutual accountability (See Figure 1). Specifically, complex teams include:

1. Shared decision making responsibilities by the appropriate group member, although not always the group leader. A particular decision may be made by the entire group or by the individual who possesses the appropriate skill or experience to do so. Each group member defers to the group member with expertise. Although consensus is not expected, the group leader intervenes only when the group members cannot reach a decision.
2. While the group leader may communicate vision and goals, the group ultimately debates the issues involved to arrive at a shared understanding and commitment.
3. The workload and approach are established and revised by the group in contrast to the more rigid and inflexible agenda of groups led by an individual leader.
4. The group members openly evaluate progress together because they share responsibility.
5. Because of the shared accountability and pride in their work, group members set a higher standard than is required by the organization.
6. Group members realize both individual and mutual accountability. The group succeeds or fails as a team. Katzenbach and Smith (2001) observed that

> "mutual accountability for shared purpose and goals may be *the* hallmark of the [real] team discipline" (p. 10).

Real teams require both the five basic fundamentals of working groups in conjunction with the six characteristic functions above (see Figure 1).

Katzenbach and Smith (2001) suggested that the paramount issue for groups and their leaders is to strategically determine whether a working group or real team will best achieve the needs of the institution. The group must subsequently ensure that the chosen discipline is implemented effectively. Thus, Katzenbach and Smith determined that being a real team is not *better* than being a working group. Both are required based upon organizational needs. Both types of groups require basic fundamentals along with their unique characteristic functions to perform effectively.

Literature on Leadership Groups in Higher Education

Fenby (2006) suggested that leadership in higher education is rooted in the ability to accept multiple perspectives characterized by diversity, interdependence, and differing authoritative paradigms. Effective leadership, Fenby found, combines rank or position, access to resources, and the organizational structure and culture. Leaders who are willing to heed the call to development and innovation "will surely rise to heretofore unknown levels of accomplishment" (Fenby, 2006, p. 17). "Interdependent people," according to Covey (2004), "combine their own efforts with the efforts of others to achieve their greatest success[es]" (p. 49). Kouzes and Posner (2002) added that:

> Effective leadership occurs when educational directors and their constituents: Raise one another to a higher level of motivation and morality. Their purposes which might have started out as separate . . . become fused . . . . [and raise] the

> level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both the leader and the led . . . thus it has a transforming effect on both [and on the organization]. (p. 153)

For Kouzes and Posner (2002) the solution was quite simply—"collaborate to succeed!" (p. 243). Educational executives must remember that community is critical to the success of organizational health and growth. Sanborn (2004) added that, "Only when leaders and their followers share the same values and commitment can any organization truly maximize [its] potential" (p. 80).

Bennis and Nanus (1997) found:

> Leaders have failed to instill vision, meaning, and trust in their followers. They have failed to empower them. Regardless of whether we're looking at organizations, government agencies, institutions, or small enterprises, the key and pivotal factor needed to enhance human resources is leadership. (p. 8)

The literature indicated that size and complexity of an academic institution can affect whether a leader utilizes or encourages a team approach. Bensimon and Neumann (1993) found that small institutions were more likely to have complex administrative teams, while large institutions were more likely to have simple groups. They also found that small, private, four-year colleges were more likely to use real teams than large, public universities. Bensimon and Neumann suggested that smaller institutions are more conducive to real teams; conversely, large universities are adverse to complex teamwork. Larger universities are more inclined to be bureaucratic in nature and rely on position or power rather than a collegial approach. The multifarious levels of the decision-making process in larger institutions make it more difficult to develop a collaborative atmosphere (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Keeton, 1971; Knudson, 1997).

Yet in small colleges, it is less economically and structurally sensible to operate through bureaucratic or political channels (Howell & Eidson, 1985). For leadership groups to develop effectively in any institution, time, resources, and adequate training must be allocated appropriately, and the president must understand each function of the team (Bensimon, 1991; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Keeton, 1971).

Presidential leadership groups.

Higher education and business management literature commonly advocate the theoretical significance of presidential leadership groups. However, practical data and research on leadership groups in post-secondary education is often limited and even inadequate. The existing literature on leadership groups frequently focused on team composition and functions and does not consider the relationship of team members to the institutional context. Moreover, little is known about whether presidential leadership groups are willing and able to help their presidents to access critical information, improve decision-making, and assess the institution. These groups and their members are not intended to be isolated and autonomous from the institution. They are rather to be implanted and deeply rooted within the organizational system (Kozlowski & Bell, 2003). Some scholars suggested that conventional wisdom that identifies educational executives as solitary leaders disregards the context in which these administrators must function (Bolman & Deal, 2008; House & Aditya, 1997; Shields, 2003). As such, there is still much to learn about the function of presidential leadership groups in higher education within their environment.

A few researchers, however, focused specifically on presidential teams in their studies (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Birnbaum, 1988; Birnbaum, 1992; Favero, 2006;

Katzenbach & Smith, 2006; King, 2007; Neumann & Bensimon, 1990). Neumann and Bensimon (1990) identified four differing types of presidential leadership: distant, reactionary, relational, and initiative. Birnbaum (1988) distinguished four institutional categories of presidential leadership styles: collegial, bureaucratic, political, and anarchical. He found that there is an innate resistance to leadership in higher education particularly because faculty members prefer to be identified as constituents rather than followers.

In higher education, the presidential leadership group typically refers to the administrative cabinet—the group of top-level institutional administrators officially assembled to counsel the president in decision-making actions (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993). They are generally functionally diverse, with each group member representing an institutional subunit such as development, student affairs, academic affairs, enrollment management, assessment, financial affairs, or administrative affairs. In recent years, the process of leadership is less characterized by individuality but rather as collegial relationships and shared decision-making that affect positive change (House & Aditya, 1997; Shields, 2003). This trend in post-secondary presidential leadership has resulted from an increasingly complex campus environment that has become much too difficult for any single administrator to lead alone (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Eisenstat & Cohen, 1990; Green, 1994; House & Aditya, 1997; Shields, 2003). As early as the 1960's, scholars realized that it was no longer possible for a college to be administered effectively by the heroic efforts of one man. Today's complex educational environment presents economic, demographic, and technological challenges that generally test the limits of a single administrator's intellect far beyond any amount of training and

experience. King (2007) found that most college and university presidents were previous academic affairs administrators with minimal experience in finance, development, or student affairs. Consequently, many presidents are ill-prepared for the complex issues they encounter. Institutions, then, must rely on the collaborative talent and creativity of leadership groups rather than the instinctive traits of a solitary leader.

With the rise of the information age, many educational constituents view leadership teams as more promising than single-leader models (Weber & Karman, 1989). An information society functions more on knowledge processing than data gathering. Interpreting and organizing the data into useful, decision-making information produces lasting results and requires collaborative teamwork (Gardiner, 1988; Shields, 2003). As a result, many college and university presidents are turning to leadership groups to access information and improve decision-making. These leadership teams are often more effective in facilitating innovation and creativity among highly educated personnel (Guskin & Bassis, 1985). The complex nature of institutions of higher education facilitates the team leadership approach that improves administrative level decision-making. The diversity of knowledge and multiple perspectives that are brought to the group makes this type of organizational arrangement more appropriate than transactional models of leadership (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Bentley et al., 2004). When teams are engaged in administrative functions, they are more likely to realize a higher level of performance and more relevant and innovative solutions than may be achieved by a single administrator (Bentley et al., 2004; Kezar et al., 2006).

Those who define leaders as solitary persons disregard the context in which leaders function (Bolman & Deal, 2008). The role of the leader now involves

collaborative efforts founded in shared values that lead to communal action to effect positive change (House & Aditya, 1997). This change to collegiality in the literature demonstrates that presidential leadership in post-secondary education has become progressively more complex. As a result, colleges and universities are much too multifarious for any individual executive to lead alone (Green, 1994). While some higher education literature addressed the inherent value of leadership teams, empirical research on such teams was minimal and focused primarily on the internal function of the teams.

College presidents.

Managing the institution, creating the campus climate, and interpreting and communicating the college mission are three major functions of college leaders (Knudson, 1997). Baker (1995) contended that the president must articulate vision, develop trust, be committed to quality, promote organizational learning, and model their beliefs. Knudson added:

> They must demonstrate commitment, reinforce the common vision, and participate in learning about and from the institution. They must share their power for making decisions and creating change with the leadership team and encourage teamwork. Presidents must also coach, support, and develop team skills in order for the team to accomplish a complex mission. (p. 32)

Knudson suggested that "collegial bureaucracies should be transformed by restructuring and realigning the channels of communication and personnel into interactive groups or teams" (pp. 39-40). However, she found that institutional pressures often direct the attention of the administration toward external adaptation, creating barriers to teamwork. Many administrators find themselves guarding against potential threats instead of seizing

current opportunities. Consequently, the institutional culture is deprived of administrative attention as executives grow more isolated from their constituents.

Baker (1995) suggested that the president must set the tone for the institution, particularly in team development. Additionally, educational executives must model their values by demonstrating commitment, learning about and from the institution and constituents, sharing their power, creating collaborative change, and encouraging teamwork (Knudson, 1997). According to Baker, the president's success is evidenced by the effectiveness of the presidential leadership team. Thus, the president must empower the leadership team to perform effectively. Duncan and Harlacher (1991) posited that future college leaders will command less and coach more. They will unify diverse perspectives, facilitate cooperation among constituents, encourage personnel to actively participate in governance, and hold them accountable for decision-making. Rather than devise and execute authoritative decisions, college presidents of tomorrow will mentor future leaders within innovative and creative environments.

Ibbotson (2005) found that many small, private college campuses and programs include a sampling of features characteristic of other colleges and universities. They offer graduate degrees, specific professional training, selective transfer programs, and general post-secondary education. Consequently, small, private college presidents are challenged with addressing diverse educational goals, government and accreditation standards, and internal and external constituency demands. Executives of small, private institutions experience similar challenges to those that are present in all institutions of higher education (Ibbotson, 2005). Governance, planning, budgeting, student life, assessment, recruiting, retention, and academic issues all exist on the small, private

college campus (Dearborn, 2005). For example, while many college presidents and executives serve primarily in an administrative capacity, a significant number of them also teach in the classroom. Ross & Green (2000) found that in specialized institutions, such as small, private colleges, nearly 50% of presidents are involved in teaching and nearly all small, private college presidents travel conducting college business. As such, there are significant external demands for time that may rightfully belong to leading the institution.

Administrative group members.

Many administrators today are faced with managing complicated economic, demographic, and technological changes. The convolution of these issues often poses an insurmountable obstruction to a president's knowledge, professional training, and individual capacity (Dean, 2008). Kouzes and Posner (2002) recommended enlisting "well-connected individuals who have played the greatest variety of roles in their lives" and have not been "typecast in one function, company, industry or community" (p. 261).

Navigating a small, private college through today's cultural, organizational, and financial pressures is not for the faint of heart. While administrators in all institutions of higher education face numerous institutional challenges, the same concerns are magnified in small colleges. Faculty retention, waning endowments, declining enrollment, and growing competition are each pressing concerns in small colleges (Bonvillian & Murphy, 1996; Lang, 1999). Executives of small colleges are increasingly pressured to improve administrative and management functions to adequately address these complex realities (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Bonvillian & Murphy, 1996; Knudson, 1997).

Organization, leadership, and management scholars have studied top management teams for more than three decades, yet the line of research often neglected to consider college leadership teams. Although the research of leadership teams in post-secondary education may be minimal, the knowledge base in other contexts provides ample opportunities for investigation. Kouzes and Posner (2002) suggested that one cannot lead from someone else's experience. A leader can only lead from his personal experience (Bennis et al., 2001). A successful track record often confirms one's competence. Institutional executives wrestle with how to manage teams whose principal tasks include vision, advancement, problem-solving, and the introduction of new information and methodology.

There are those who contend that decision-making should be entrusted to the lowest possible level. Knudson (1997) challenged administrators to "create an environment free of institutional bureaucracy in which team members feel free to offer creative solutions to problems and even disagree" (p. 33). Addressing these issues requires an ongoing collaborative effort by the entire organizational community. Senge (1990) observed that effective institutions will no longer look to top-level administrators to set the strategy for all constituents to follow. Colleges and universities that desire to achieve lasting growth in the future will value commitment and creativity of constituents at all levels within an organization.

Leaders who are proponents of lasting development must be willing to involve others in decision making and implementation (Featherstone & Brumette, 2007; French, 2001; Hollingsworth et al., 2002). French proposed several factors that are critical activities for leading complex organizations:

> A successful change process requires that leaders: (a) establish a social interaction process to link people with new information, perspectives, and ideas; (b) demonstrate their openness to considering alternative views and opinions; (c) use a combination of leadership strategies and styles to fit the circumstances; (d) help others to feel ownership in an agreed-upon strategy for change. (p. 17)

Featherstone and Brumette concluded that a "dedicated and continued team effort and management with vision" (p. 10) are essential to the success of developing and sustaining post-secondary institutions. McNeal (2000) suggested that "a critical intellectual capacity for twenty-first century leadership success will be the ability to build knowledge with other colleagues" (p. 131).

In their study of more than 600 teams and 6000 team members, Larson and LaFasto (2001) identified several attributes of a good team member, including problem-solving ability, experience in the task, openness in communication, supportiveness of others on the team, positive and energetic personal style, and fun to work with. Lawson and Eguizabal (2009) added that "some are better potential team members than others, but all can develop greater competencies to some degree" (p. 269). Consequently, Larson and LaFasto developed a process for building and sustaining team relationships.

Group simplicity and complexity.

While leadership groups exist structurally on nearly all college and university campuses, many do not necessarily perform as real teams as defined in the literature. The research on presidential leadership groups suggested that complex teams do, however, exist in higher education (Amey, 2005; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Dewey, 1998; Eddy, 2003; Favero, 2006; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Knudson, 1997; McClellan & Stringer,

2009). Though many studies have contributed to the body of knowledge concerning cognitive and functional complexity in institutions of higher education, studies by Bensimon and Neumann (1993) and Bolman and Deal (1991; 1997; 2008) are cited most frequently. In recent years, Favero, Katzenbach and Smith (2006), Larson and LaFasto (2001), and Northouse (2010) have also significantly contributed to the literature.

The presidential leadership group is frequently synonymous with the president's cabinet—the top-tier institutional administrators that advise the president. While a president's leadership group generally includes an administrative cabinet of multiple personnel, it can be as small as two individuals—the president and vice president (Birnbaum, 1992; Knudson, 1997). The literature indicated that two ongoing processes characteristically occur within leadership groups—thinking and doing. Furthermore, the level at which these processes occur ultimately determines the effectiveness of the group and success of the organization.

Thinking.

Occasionally, scholars referred to leadership groups as cognitive (or thinking or decision-making) teams within which some administrative cabinet team members may not have been included. Conversely, some cognitive teams include the administrative cabinet along with other key constituents. A number of studies indicated that groups who think together are more likely to be successful in complex educational environments than executives who choose to work alone (Kezar & Lester, 2009; Knudson; McClellan & Stringer, 2009; Neumann, 1991; Roberts, 2007; Rubenfeld & Scheffer, 2005). Favero (2006) found that "cognitive complexity, or the ability to apply multiple perspectives in

assessing organizational events and others' behaviors, is an important leader capability as it has been linked to leader effectiveness" (p. 289-90).

Constructing a real team differs from how one typically structures presidential cabinets, task forces, and other strategic groups. Complex teams require ongoing thinking, assessment, and decision making. They necessitate deferring to the worldview, organizational perspective, and cognitive orientation of each team member as opposed to relying on organizational and reporting structures (Amey, 2005; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; McClellan & Stringer, 2009). Amey (2005) observed the need for a higher level of transforming leadership in today's multifarious organizational environments. She added that being able to frame a situation for constituents is altogether different than being a charismatic communicator. A leader must be able to personally envision and frame the situation before communicating it to others (Eddy, 2003). The ability to do so demonstrates a deeper level of personal and team cognitive development (Amey).

Bensimon, Neumann, and Birnbaum (1989) conducted a comprehensive review of the theories and models of leadership within higher education. They categorized the theories into six categories: trait theories, power and influence theories, behavioral theories, contingency theories, cultural and symbolic theories, and cognitive theories. The cognitive theories are particularly relevant to college and university leadership team discussions and to this study (Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006; Kezar & Lester, 2009; McClellan & Stringer, 2009; Roberts, 2007).

A fundamental observation relating to teams and their role in educational administration is that teams facilitate more cognitively complex decisions than solitary leaders (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Favero, 2006; Kezar et al., 2006; Kezar & Lester,

2009). Rubenfeld and Scheffer (2005) developed a continuum to illustrate different thinking types and the resulting teams and characteristics (see Figure 2). The ideal team thinking scenario is found at the far right of the continuum. Bensimon and Neumann (1993) observed that decision-making is only improved within teams that are complex and not within teams that are simple. They identified key thinking roles that help develop complex teams (Favero, 2006; Higgins, 2008; Kezar et al., 2006; Knudson, 1997).

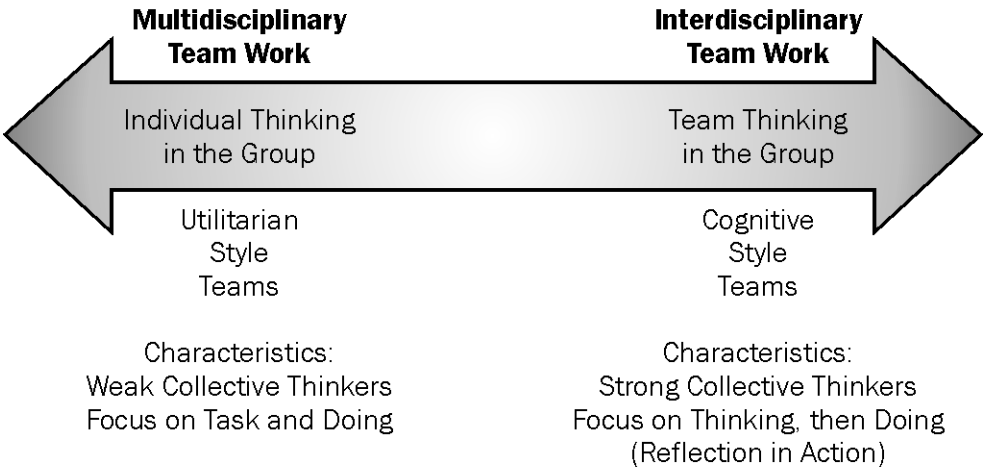

Figure 2 Continuum of thinking in teams. Adapted from "Continuum of thinking in teams," by M. Rubenfeld and B. Scheffer, 2005, p. 130. Copyright 2005 by Jones and Bartlett.

Because team members typically offer differing thinking processes or styles, Bensimon and Neumann (1993) purposely considered the potential role of each team member within the leadership team. In doing so, they identified eight prototypical roles:

1. The *definer*, typically the president, voices a view of the team's reality.
2. The *analyst* provides a deep examination of issues defined.
3. The *interpreter* translates how people outside the team are likely to see the issues.

4. The *critic* redefines, reanalyzes, or reinterprets the issues.
5. The *synthesizer* facilitates a summation of the team's reality.
6. The *disparity monitor* assesses how people outside the team make sense of the team's actions.
7. The *emotional monitor* establishes and maintains the human and emotional context within which team thinking occurs.
8. The *task monitor* strives to remove obstacles to team thinking and facilitates the team's work. Rubenfeld and Scheffer (2005) observed that "the more thinking roles that are present the better the team thinks" (p. 131).

Of the eight thinking roles, five are core roles and three are supporting roles. The core roles represent critical team thinking and involve selecting, creating, elaborating, and shaping the issues addressed. The supporting roles support, facilitate, maintain, and redirect the core functions of a team (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Favero, 2006; Kezar et al., 2006; Knudson, 1997). Bensimon and Neumann (1993) observed that each role type constructively contributes to team function: (a) since team members are unique, no two teams are exactly alike in their role configuration; (b) each team member may assume various roles throughout a discussion or project; (c) some roles may not be represented while others may be prominent; and (d) some team members may perform their role well, while other team members may not (Neumann, 1991; Kezar et al., 2006; Knudson, 1997; Roberts, 2007). Rubenfeld and Scheffer (2005) added that "attention to these roles helps team members become aware of the group's thinking processes, what is helping, and what is hindering achievement" (p. 131).

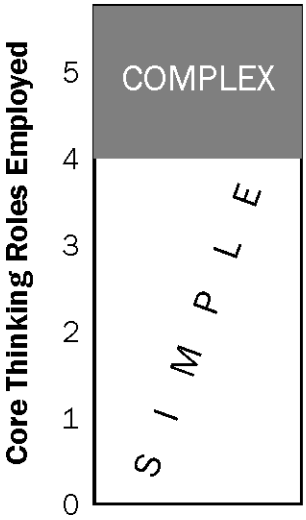

Figure 3 Team cognitive complexity. When a group employs 4 or more of the core thinking roles, it is considered cognitively complex (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993).

These thinking roles that identify the team's cognitive activity may shift from one team member to another and may be shared by more than one team member (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Favero, 2006; Kezar et al., 2006; Knudson, 1997). Additionally, a team member may perform multiple thinking roles or no thinking roles at all. A team may be considered cognitively complex, according to Bensimon and Neumann (1993), when the team demonstrates at least four of the five core thinking roles (see Figure 3). Because leader effectiveness has been linked to the ability to apply multiple perspectives to the evaluation of organizational events and constituent behavior (Favero, 2006; Knudson, 1997), Kezar et al. (2006) found that administrative team leaders must consider these thinking roles when selecting team members.

Bensimon & Neumann's (1993) team approach employs distinct, thinking roles that each team member performs and, as such, differs from others identified in a review of other literature (Favero, 2006; Kezar et al., 2006; Knudson, 1997; Rubenfeld & Scheffer, 2005; Roberts, 2007). The thinking role may remain the same for each team

member, or a team member may switch roles as the discussion, issue, or team environment changes. A team is able to construct its own vision and strategy by understanding and implementing these roles. Real teams are more likely to succeed in complex, unstable settings, than are solitary leaders or groups who ignore the benefits of diverse thinking roles within the group (Amey, 2005; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Dewey, 1998; Eddy, 2003; Favero, 2006; Knudson, 1997; McClellan & Stringer, 2009).

Over the past several decades, researchers have questioned the assumption of universality in leadership in light of both cultural and cognitive theories of leadership. Cognitive theorists proposed that leaders utilized differing perspectives or lenses (Bensimon et al., 1989; Kezar, 2002; Kohnen, 2005). Bolman and Deal (2008) observed that leaders view situations through their own frame of reference. Each situation may require a differing perspective. The ability of a leader to think critically is predicated upon an appropriate level of self-understanding by the administrator. Consequently, the self-perspective of leaders influences their leadership of the entire campus (Eddy, 2003). However, leadership theory, in general, has not addressed the manner in which leaders function. Thus, differing influences have formed conventional leadership theory (Hollingsworth et al., 2002).

Bolman and Deal (1997; 2008) sought to bring harmony to the theoretical turmoil found among leadership research. Utilizing the theory of conceptual pluralism, Bolman and Deal synthesized disparate leadership perspectives and organizational thought into four frames of reference (Garcia et al., 2008; Kezar, 2002; Kohnen, 2005). The term “frames” was chosen as an allusion to the windows of society that facilitate differing perspectives resulting in distinct courses of action. Eddy (2003) suggested that framing

involves the leader's choice of a particular perspective over another (or others). Managers and leaders gather information, make judgments, and accomplish tasks through a personal frame of reference.

Bolman and Deal's (1991; 2008) frames of reference address distinct issues and needs within higher education. Their four frames address aspects of both thinking and doing in effective groupwork:

1. The *structural* frame focuses on organizational structure with emphases on establishing goals and priorities, systematic decision-making, efficiency, and effective communication. Problems arise in institutions when a given situation does not fit the existing structure. Consequently, the leadership is often called upon to analyze and evaluate the situation in or to determine some form of reorganization to appropriately address the issue (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Weiss, 2007).
2. The *human resource* frame focuses on the partnership and needs of the organization and constituents emphasizing the achievement of goals through collaboration, consensus building, problem-solving through teams, loyalty to the institution, and leading by example. This perspective allows the leader to shape the organization to its constituency in a way that enables personnel to function effectively while feeling good about their jobs (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Weiss observed that troubles arise within an organization when personnel do not feel appreciated. When faced with this situation, a leader may need to realign the organization with personnel needs.

3. The *political* frame emphasizes the use of power and influence to direct resources to specific individuals or groups. It focuses on monitoring internal and external environments, utilizing influence to gather necessary resources, establishing relationships with constituents, and developing coalitions amid a compromising structure. Bolman and Deal realized that organizational conflict is everywhere. Conflicts within an institution often result when power is concentrated in the wrong location or is so broadly dispersed that performance is poor. Leaders are often able to remedy these issues by developing a basis of power and focused agenda (Weiss, 2007).
4. The *symbolic* frame emphasizes accurately interpreting the institution's history, maintaining its culture, and reinforcing its values to foster shared meaning (Beall et al., 2008; Bolman and Deal, 2008; Eddy, 2003). In doing so, the symbolic frame discards the other three frames of reference to view the organization as a carnival or theatre (Hollingsworth et al., 2002). Weiss observed that customs, ceremonial events, legends, champions, and traditions are deeply rooted within organizational culture. Difficulty arises when the organizational symbols lose meaning or when ceremonial events lose their appeal. The leadership is then called upon to reintroduce the culture or to develop new culture (Bentley et al., 2004; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Garcia et al., 2008; Nieman, 2008; St. John, 2009; Weiss, 2007).

Numerous researchers have since applied Bolman and Deal's (1997; 2008) theory of frames in a variety of leadership studies (Amey & Brown, 2000; Beall et al., 2008; Bentley et al., 2004; Birnbaum, 1992; Garcia et al., 2008; Hollingsworth et al., 2002;

Israel & Kasper, 2004; Nieman, 2008; Ricci, 2001; St. John, 2009; Weiss, 2007). For example, Ricci conducted a case study of policy-making functions among the faculty senate at St. John's University using a frames analysis. Redmond utilized the frames analysis in a relational study of American and Japanese educational administrators. Israel and Kasper conducted case studies to determine how two school administrators successfully reframed leadership to initiate organizational change. Weiss (2007) challenged pastors and principals to resolve differences utilizing Bolman and Deal's (1997; 2008) multi-frame organizational theory. Amey and Brown (2000) analyzed post-secondary interdisciplinary collaboration by employing a frames approach. Beall et al. (2008) sought to determine whether professionalism in pharmacy education could be assessed utilizing Bolman and Deal's frames. Birnbaum (1992) identified a president's frame of reference as a conceptual map for understanding an organization and interpreting the effectiveness of others' behavior.

In their study, Bolman and Deal (1991) found that when employing a frames analysis, the use of multiple frames was a strong indication of leadership effectiveness (see Figure 4) (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Birnbaum, 1992; Bolman and Deal, 2008; Eddy, 2003; Favero, 2006; Hollingsworth et al., 2002; Israel & Kasper, 2004; Knudson, 1997; Kohnen, 2005; Nieman, 2008; St. John, 2009; Weiss, 2007). For college administrators, their effectiveness, or functional complexity, is directly related to the number of frames they employ (see Figure 4) (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Eddy, 2003; Kohnen, 2005). Favero (2006) suggested that leader effectiveness is linked to the ability to apply multiple perspectives to organizational events and constituent behavior. Frames

focus the attention of individuals and can also serve as cognitive blinders, leaving what is out of frame unseen and unattended" (Birnbaum, 1992, p. 63).

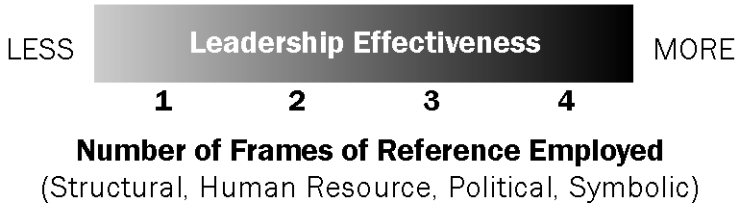

Figure 4 Multiframe organizational theory. The effectiveness of a leader, or functional complexity, is directly related to the number of frames of reference employed by the leader (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993).

The reframing theory provides educational leaders with a conceptual framework that connects leadership theory with practice (Israel & Kasper, 2004). "Positive portrayals of the often complex reframing process," Israel and Kasper found, "provide current and future leaders with concrete examples of artistry and skill when using reframing to chart a course for meaningful [educational] reform" (p. 25). Kohnen (2005) agreed that leaders must be able to view situations from more than one perspective, and that the four frames of reference identified by Bolman and Deal (2008) appropriately address differing perspectives for understanding organizations.

Each of Bolman and Deal's (2008) four frames emphasizes one individual component of the college or university. Researchers found that administrators who view their institution primarily through one of the four frames substantially limit their understanding and influence within and without the institution. Yet, when administrative team members view the institution through multiple frames, they are able to better understand the institution (Israel & Kasper, 2004; St. John, 2009; Weiss, 2007). The improved understanding then allows them to consider alternative solutions in decision-

making and problem-solving. Beall et al. (2008) added that when an institution achieves balance in utilizing each of the four frames it will more effectively identify and solve problems. The literature refers to teams that employ a multi-frame perspective as highly effective (Beall et al., 2008; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Birnbaum, 1992; Eddy, 2003; Favero, 2006; Garcia et al., 2008; Kohnen, 2005; St. John, 2009; Weiss, 2007). This effectiveness allows them to be a valuable resource for their peers and portrays the collective perspectives of the administrative team members (Beall et al., 2008; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Birnbaum, 1992; Eddy, 2003; Favero, 2006; Kohnen, 2005; St. John, 2009).

Bolman and Deal (2008) found that it is impossible for educational leaders to address adequately every problem and decision. College and university administrators must filter events and circumstances through multiple frames of reference (Beall et al., 2008; Favero, 2006; Israel & Kasper, 2004; Kohnen, 2005; St. John, 2009). Thus, Bolman and Deal specifically applied their theory of cognitive frames to administrative teams in education. They found that the existing empirical research on teamwork often overlooked internal and external power and conflict that frequently prevent team effectiveness. In their study, Bolman and Deal observed that the effectiveness of a manager is often linked to the structural frame of reference; however, the effectiveness of a leader is often indicated by the use of the symbolic frame of reference. They concluded that many teams are over-managed, but few teams are adequately led.

Knudson (1997) suggested that as the academic environment becomes increasingly more complex, it is necessary to be able to view the institution from multiple perspectives. Israel and Kasper (2004) observed that effective educational leadership

demands reframing and reflection. Educational executives are called upon to function in various roles, and those who are able to think critically and act decisively by using multiple frames of reference are more likely to successfully address their multifarious responsibilities (Beall et al., 2008; Favero, 2006; Israel & Kasper; Kohnen, 2005; St. John, 2009; Weiss, 2007). Weiss (2007) added that effective organizational leadership requires the flexibility to view the organization from multiple perspectives. Bolman and Deal (1997; 2008) describe this skill as a leader's ability to use various lenses to reframe experiences. Since organizational life is often ambiguous, effective leadership and management requires a leader to possess the ability to reframe.

Doing.

Bensimon and Neumann (1993) identified complex teams on the basis of the three functional domains: utilitarian, expressive, and cognitive. The utilitarian function focuses on the accomplishment of tasks including necessary organizational activities such as communications, planning, and decision-making. The utilitarian function was more formal in structure, allowing the team members to provide information and coordinate institutional goals and strategic planning together. Utilizing a consensus approach encouraged team members to provide their opinions particularly in critical fiscal and policy matters (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993). A team’s expressive function involved social and relational connections among team members such as providing communal support to peers and counsel to the president. The cognitive function enabled the team to think critically and view problems from multiple perspectives, engage in healthy discussions, and act as an assessment team. Bensimon and Neumann (1993) also found the cognitive function more challenging and problematic to implement. As teams

functioned effectively, the intelligence of the individual team members and the collective team was enlarged. Thus, the team was more cognitively suited to perceive, analyze, and learn how to best operate the complex institution. Jointly, the three functional domains enabled the administrative team to respond appropriately to important administrative, relational, and intellectual needs of the institution (Amey, 2005; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006; Favero, 2006; St. John, 2009).

Bensimon and Neumann (1993) discovered that administrators who envisioned all three categories, rather than just one or two, were more likely to facilitate complex teams (see Figure 5). Conversely, those institutions with simple teams (or working groups) saw their groups function in only one or two of the categories (see Figure 5).

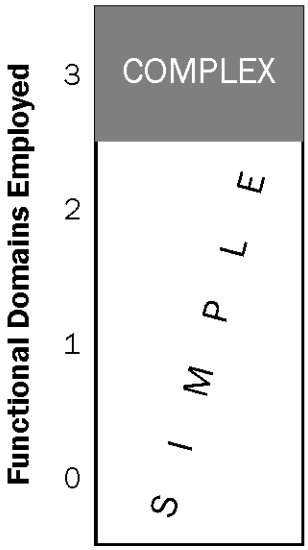

Figure 5 Team functional complexity. When a group performs meaningful activities in all 3 functional domains, it is considered functionally complex (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993).

According to Knudson (1997), in a complex team, the cognitive function is the fundamental task, rather than the utilitarian or expressive domains (see Figure 6).

Consequently, complex team members both think well together and exhibit a high level of performance (Amey, 2005; Bentley et al., 2004; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006; Favero, 2006; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Rubenfeld & Scheffer, 2005).

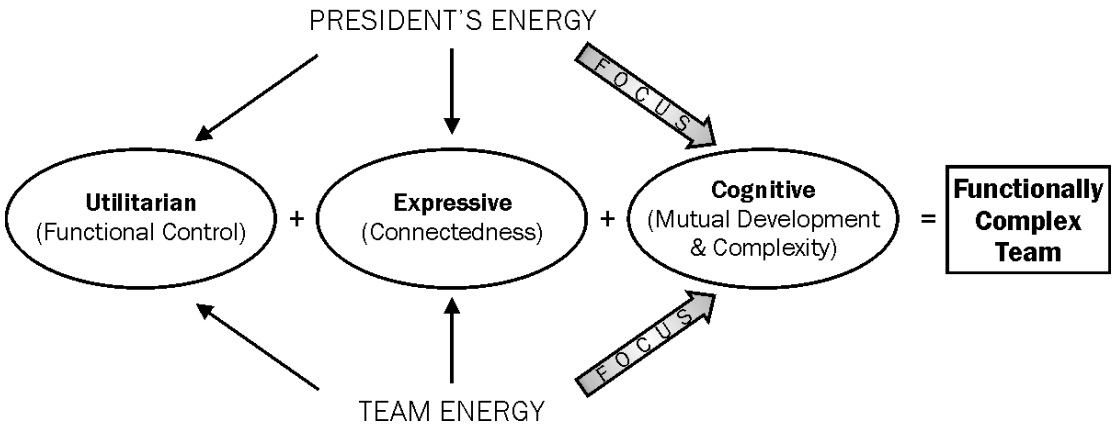

Figure 6 Relationship of team energy to functional complexity. In a functionally complex team, the cognitive function is the fundamental task, rather than the utilitarian or expressive domains (Knudson, 1997).

The utilitarian and cognitive domains functioning together allow complex team members to share information, rather than convey it exclusively to the president. These collegial efforts provide opportunities for team members to hear multiple perspectives prior to making a decision (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Bentley et al., 2004). Teams that process information from multiple perspectives often have a positive impact on organizational effectiveness (Amey, 2005; Dewey, 1998; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Rubenfeld & Scheffer, 2005). Although this structure of diversity may appear problematic, multiple solutions to complex institutional issues are often a byproduct (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993). Among real team members, decisions improve as the team gains a more complete perspective of a given situation (Amey, 2005; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006; Favero, 2006; Kezar & Lester, 2009;

Neumann, 1991). A team's ability to consider different perspectives may in fact be the deciding difference between an effective and ineffective leadership team (Amey, 2005; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Dewey, 1998).

As noted previously, Katzenbach and Smith (2006) found that all groups, whether they are real teams or not, can develop a clear purpose, coordinate effectively, clearly establish areas of responsibility, create a time-efficient process, and develop a system of accountability. Katzenbach and Smith posited that these are the basic fundamentals for all working groups—real team or not. They observed that when a team decides to function as a real team, a higher and distinctive level of team discipline is required.

Katzenbach and Smith (2006) cautioned that all groups should not aspire to function as real teams. They discovered that there are organizational venues suited for both working groups and real teams. Moreover, some groups that attempt to function as teams result in pseudo-teams in which the sum achievements of the whole are less than the potential of the individual group members (see Figure 7). Lawson and Eguizabal (2009) summarized their findings: "Instead of trying to be a team, it would be better to be a working group, where members interact to share information, identify best practices, and make decisions to help each to do his or her part best" (p. 272).

The performance and subsequent achievement of any group depends largely on its approach to groupwork. Katzenbach and Smith (2006) observed:

> Unlike teams, working groups rely on the sum of 'individual bests' for their performance. They pursue no collective work products requiring joint effort. By choosing the team path instead of the working group, people commit to take the risk of conflict . . . and collective action necessary to build a common purpose, set

of goals, approach, and mutual accountability. People who call themselves teams but take no such risks are at best pseudo-teams. (p. 85) (see Figure 7)

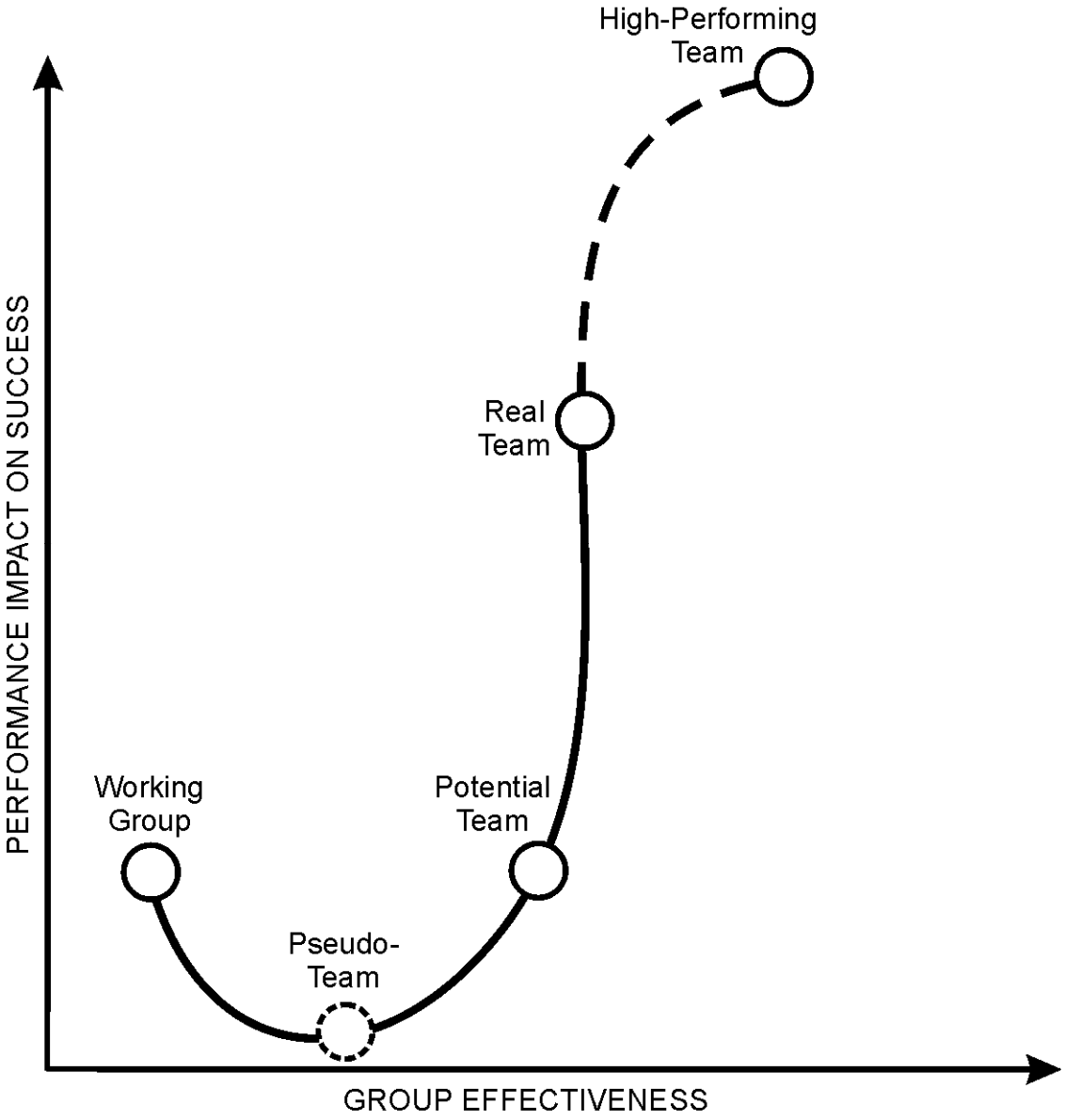

Figure 7 Team performance curve. Groups that attempt to function as teams result in pseudo-teams in which the sum achievements of the whole are less than the potential of the individual group members. Adapted from "Team Performance Curve," by J. Katzenbach and D. Smith, 2006, p. 84. Copyright 2006 by HarperCollins.

Those groups that do assume and accept the risks noted above immediately become potential teams. According to Katzenbach and Smith (2006), as the group makes their way around the performance curve (Figure 7) their team effectiveness and resulting performance increase. Consequently, the inevitability of obstacles also increases. Some teams stall when faced with obstacles, yet others overcome them and continue toward becoming a real team. Katzenbach and Smith observed that the worst response for a stalled team is to abandon the basic fundamentals for effective groupwork (Figure 1). They also found that only higher levels of performance will help pseudo-teams and potential teams navigate the curve toward real teamwork, not a focus on higher levels of teamwork.

The life of a team inevitably comes to an end. However, Katzenbach and Smith (2006) observed that perpetual performance is possible as the team adds or replaces members, passes on recommendations, and replaces the team leader. They summarized their findings by suggesting that most teams who successfully carry out these three actions will "exploit the performance potential even further, whether or not the team comes to an end" (p. 85).

A major function of administrative work (or doing) is communication. In their study, Bensimon and Neumann (1993) observed that institutions that functioned collegially campus wide generally made better decisions and realized more effective outcomes. McClellan and Stringer (2009) added that organizational complexity often resulted from the sharing of information between departments and open communication. Consequently, the institutions were better positioned to more effectively serve

constituents, experience greater efficiency, and increase effectiveness (Higgins, 2008; Kezar & Lester, 2009; McClellan & Stringer, 2009; Roberts, 2007).

Dewey (1998) found that these teams can positively influence the organization. McClellan and Stringer (2009) added:

> Working collaboratively in cross-functional teams creates cognitive complexity, innovation, and learning between units and improves organizational functioning. Cognitive complexity relates to the ability of decision makers to come up with better decisions because they have more perspectives to bring to bear on an issue. (p. 410-411)

Knudson (1997) found that presidential leadership teams also benefit significantly from the expressive domain, particularly in the areas of communication, trust, respect, and interaction. Complex teams require a reciprocal respectful venue for team members to provide candid feedback and to consider appropriate courses of action (Amey, 2005; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006; Favero, 2006; Kezar & Lester, 2009). While presidents often place higher value on the cognitive contributions of the team, Knudson found that team members place higher value on the expressive function of a team. This function compels team members to set aside political motivations in lieu of the personal and professional needs of each member, the team, and the organization.

In their study of leadership teams of fifteen colleges and universities, Bensimon and Neumann (1993) found that leadership teams working closely together have a tendency to become a cognitive clique, meaning that their strong sense of internal cohesion and common identity may exclude outsiders and outside information. As a

result, they often become isolated and distanced from the rest of the organization. Bensimon and Neumann observed that the teams were so internally cohesive that they were often aware of only their own perception of reality. This paradigm limits the flow of information to the leadership team and hinders their capacity to utilize information in a complex manner causing the leader to become ineffective (Amey, 2005; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006; Favero, 2006).

Summary

The role of the president in developing and maintaining complex leadership teams is addressed in abundance in the literature (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Burns, 2003; Corrigan, 2002; Dean, 2008; Eddy, 2003; Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006; Evans, 2007; Green, 1994; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Kezar & Lester, 2009; King, 2007; Knudson, 1997; Mangano, 2007; Neumann, 1991). Researchers have found that the complexity of leadership teams often depends on the decision-making and ability of the team leader in selecting team members and facilitating their collaboration (Neumann, 1991). The president must consider skills and experience when selecting members of the administrative team; yet, must also lead the team in establishing trust in defining clear boundaries for teamwork (Burns, 2003; Eisenstat & Cohen, 1990). To function effectively as a complex team, all team members, particularly the president, must exhibit respect and appreciation even in matters of difference (Neumann, 1991). This type of collegial atmosphere is essential to ensure that the contributions of all team members are considered valuable.

Bensimon and Neumann (1993) studied whether a simple or a complex team was more likely to improve an institution. They found that while the effects of individual

leadership are not always apparent or determinable, the existence of complex teams often indicates that a college as a whole is moving toward complex thinking and actions. Bensimon and Neumann concluded that complex team leadership facilitates shared responsibility and improves the team's involvement in campus life.

As teams develop and gather momentum, they are able to utilize the skills, talents, and expertise of constituents more efficiently to meet performance goals and objectives. They possess greater total knowledge, a greater number of perspectives, and more participation in problem-solving. Despite the many challenges, Bolman and Deal (2008) proclaimed:

> Team building at its heart is a spiritual undertaking. It is the creation of a community of believers, united by shared faith and shared culture. It is a search for the spirit within. Peak performance emerges as a team discovers its soul. (p. 44)

A review of the literature revealed that leadership groups can help organizations address a wide range of issues through increased access to information and an expanded ability to process information from multiple perspectives (Amey, 2005; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Bentley et al., 2004; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Knudson, 1997; Kogler Hill, 2010; Morgan, 1986; Rubenfeld & Scheffer, 2005). Specifically, leadership groups in higher education are most effective when they incorporate both functional and cognitive complexity into a team structure that effectively communicates with constituents.

Bensimon and Neumann (1993) offered a unique framework for presidential leadership groups that included both functional and cognitive complexity. They observed that when all three functional domains are utilized within a team, the team is more

capable of responding to the complex needs of the institution. Conversely, simple teams generally exhibit only the utilitarian function. They also found that cognitively complex teams possess four of the five thinking roles at a minimum, while cognitively simple teams lack two or more of these thinking roles (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

The presidents which led complex teams in Bensimon and Neumann's (1993) study stated that the team performed at least one useful action from each of the three functional domains and emphasized planning and decision-making. On the contrary, simple teams utilized only one or two of the three functional domains, primarily focusing on the utilitarian functions and largely disregarding cognitive functions. Presidents of these simple teams rarely identified cognitive tasks as a part of the administrative team functions (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993).

In her study of administrative teams in three community colleges, Knudson (1997) found, after conducting interviews and observations, that each of the presidential teams were cognitively and functionally complex. Additionally, she concluded that the presidents "placed greater value on activities performed in the cognitive functional domain, such as surfacing creativity and providing different perspectives, while team members placed the greatest value on activities performed in the expressive domain, including communication and providing mutual support" (Knudson, 1997, p. 190). Both the teams and the presidents rated their overall effectiveness as high, although the team members indicated a slightly higher rating than did the presidents. The team members emphasized that team success is directly related to the collective desire to be a team. The president and each of the team members frequently played multiple thinking roles.

While existing research gave significant attention to the demographics and duties of American college presidents (Green, 1988), few studies include the administrative groups of small, private colleges in their studies. Research does exist in which small, private colleges are considered along with a broader study of private or independent, specialized institutions (Ross, Green, & Henderson, 1993). Additionally, there is considerable research available regarding American institutions of higher education and their presidents. Yet minimal research exists that addresses the distinct demands and functions of small, private college presidents and their teams. A search of the literature on small, private college team leadership revealed that no major studies and few research articles have been written addressing governance in the educational context of small, private colleges.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Design of the Study

This study examined how administrative officers in three small private colleges functioned, whether as working groups, real teams, or a combination of both. Seidman (2006) suggested that, in order to effectively investigate an organization and its processes, one must examine the people within the organization. For Creswell (2007), people and processes are best evaluated through qualitative research. The review of the literature in a study which employs qualitative research design is generally inductive in nature. Qualitative methods of inquiry permitted the researcher to probe deeply into the environment and influences that govern behavior (Holliday, 2007).

Conceptual framework and qualitative inquiry.

The qualitative researcher generally builds upon one or more existing conceptual or theoretical frameworks (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2006; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Cooper, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1997). The existing research detailed four concepts that are relevant to the underlying framework of this study:

1. Effective leadership intrinsically involves teams rather than a single leader (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Featherstone and Brumette, 2007; Guzzo & Dickson, 1996; Katzenbach & Smith, 2006; Knudson, 1997; Kouzes and Posner, 2002; Larson and LaFasto, 2001).
2. A working group is not necessarily a real team (Katzenbach & Smith, 2006; Lawson & Eguizabal, 2009; Rubenfeld & Scheffer, 2005).

3. Leadership in teams involves both thinking and doing (Amey, 2005; Beall et al., 2008; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Bentley et al., 2004; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006; Favero, 2006; Israel & Kasper, 2004; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Kohnen, 2005; Rubenfeld & Scheffer, 2005; St. John, 2009; Weiss, 2007).
4. There are organizational venues suited for both working groups and real teams (Katzenbach & Smith, 2006).

To evaluate administrative groups within colleges, one must consider the administrators themselves. The performance of these individuals, Seidman (2006) found, can be observed and evaluated only through qualitative inquiry. Patton (2001) observed that qualitative methods provide depth and detail about strengths and weaknesses, effectiveness, and perceptions. Because this study sought to determine the type of administrative group or team that lead a particular institution, the researcher examined the experiences, performance, and perspectives of the group members. Consequently, the researcher collected and analyzed data from several institutions, and their administrators in particular, through interviews, observations, and document analysis.

Case study research.

Creswell (2007) detailed five distinct qualitative approaches: biographical life history, phenomenological study, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. Each approaches the subject matter from a unique perspective and is largely dependent on the investigator's focus of inquiry. This study queried how administrative groups think and function. Yin (2008) suggested that research that seeks to address a *how* question is generally explanatory and, as such, is typically conducted utilizing case study

methodology. Additionally, Yin posed two qualifying conditions for determining the qualitative approach: the control the researcher exercises over participant behavior and whether the events observed are contemporary or historical. This study did not exert control over participant behavior and examined contemporary phenomena. Consequently, the case study approach most effectively addressed the focus of inquiry.

Qualitative case study research emphasizes process rather than pragmatics and assumes that multiple, subjective phenomena require interpretation rather than measurement (Ary et al., 2006; Merriam, 1997). Belief, rather than fact, forms the foundation of perception. Case study research involves a naturalistic inquiry in which the researcher observes occurrences in their natural environment (Ary et al., 2006; Merriam, 1997) and answers the questions “how” and “why” for those interested in insight, discovery, and interpretation, rather than simply testing hypotheses (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

To gain a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon, researchers will often utilize a multiple-site case study in which data is collected and analyzed from several locations. Each site is first treated individually as a case. The data is gathered in a manner in which as much as possible is learned about the contextual variables that might influence the case (Merriam, 1997). Each case is then compared and contrasted with the other sites to discover commonalities and differences. Analysis of a multiple-site case study can take the form of a fused description across the cases. It can also construct categories, themes, or typologies that conceptualize the data from all cases. Additionally, multiple-site case study research can produce substantive theory which provides an integrated framework for future cases (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The analysis of this

study included a description within the individual cases, a description across all cases, and themes which addressed the focus of the inquiry. The researcher collected and analyzed data from several institutions, and their administrators in particular, through interviews, observations, and document analysis. Although numerous types of qualitative approaches exist, the multiple-site case study method was employed in this study. This qualitative approach was selected to facilitate a naturalistic inquiry in which the researcher observed the composition and function of college presidential leadership groups in their natural environments.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher is the primary instrument for collecting and analyzing data in a qualitative case study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 1997). Because any research instrument, particularly a human instrument, is fallible, the researcher must amass meaningful data. In preparation for this study, the researcher conducted a number of naturalistic observations and interviews: in partial fulfillment of course requirements for doctoral level courses; for research associated with a master's thesis; and for strategic vocational research and planning.

In this study, the role of the researcher was primarily that of investigator to uncover and collect data that adequately accomplished the purpose of the research. The triangulation method was used to gather data from historical and organizational documents, interviews, and observations. The researcher selected the institutions, determined the documents to be analyzed, and determined the data collection and analysis methods of the study. All necessary documentation was requested and acquired by the researcher, including the demographic data, organizational structure, position

descriptions, and résumés for each participating institution and team member. Moreover, the researcher observed the team members in naturalistic settings during leadership team meetings as well as during individual interviews of the team members.

The researcher attempted to control personal bias as evidenced by the following:

1. Neither the presidents nor their team members were personally known by the researcher.
2. The researcher had limited knowledge of the participating institutions included in this study.
3. The researcher had no prior knowledge concerning the organizational structure of the institutions, the culture of the institutions, or the leadership style of the presidents.

However, the researcher is a college administrator who, based on personal experience, contends that group leadership is an intriguing leadership model that can positively affect the health of all institutions of higher education.

Data Collection

Research sample.

In their study of four-year colleges, Bensimon and Neumann (1993) considered institutional size and type to influence team function. Thus, the research sample for this study included the administrative teams of three small, private colleges of similar size in the state of Tennessee. Three sites, rather than one or two, were selected to provide more substantive data and conclusions (Creswell, 2007). In an attempt to control disparity in team size, structure, and function, the researcher selected three institutions each with (a) a similar institutional mission and vision, (b) an administrative leadership group of five to

nine members with similar demographic composition led by an active president, (c) an on-campus student population of 700 to 1,500 students, (d) regional accreditation, and (e) a minimum of ten academic majors. The researcher selected institutions at which the current president had served for a minimum of two years and that represented three distinct geographic locales: a semi-rural setting, a suburban setting, and a small city setting.

Each of the participants was solicited via telephone and letter (Appendix A and B) to participate in this study. The researcher requested the names of the administrative team members from each president. The researcher interviewed all of the members of each college administrative team. A total of 22 participants were interviewed.

Geographic and demographic data.

The researcher obtained the following documentation from each institution: (a) an organizational chart; (b) a position description of each team member interviewed; (c) a résumé for each team member interviewed; (d) a demographic survey completed by each president that includes the name of the team, size of the team, and size of the college including number students enrolled; and (e) a demographic survey completed by each team member including gender, age, ethnicity, highest degree earned, number of years at the institution, number of years in the current position, and number of years on the administrative leadership team. Complete demographic data is reported and summarized in Chapter 4 as compiled from surveys, documents, interviews, and notations regarding similarities and differences among the groups and institutions.

Observation.

After selecting a sample and participants, Creswell (2007) suggested that the researcher determine the role to be assumed as an observer. The researcher's role can range from transient observer to direct participant. Consequently, the researcher assumed a transient role to observe an actual administrative team meeting at which all team members were present for each site. Creswell recommended utilizing an observational protocol to record both descriptive and reflective field notes. Thus, a team observation checklist (Appendix C) was used to establish (a) the frames of reference observed, (b) the thinking roles observed, (c) team interactions and communication, (d) actual topics and matters addressed, and (e) the cognitive and functional complexity of the team. The researcher then compared and contrasted the observed behaviors with the data obtained in the interviews.

Following the procedures outlined by Creswell (2007), the researcher obtained permission to interview the presidents and administrative team members, to observe an administrative team meeting, to conduct the scheduling of interviews and team observations, and to collect documentation about the institutions. Each participant was asked to give permission to be interviewed by completing a Consent Form (Appendix A and B). This form also served to ensure that confidentiality was maintained for all interview responses and observations, that the identity of each institution or participant was not revealed in the published dissertation, that participants had the opportunity to review individual interview transcripts and suggest revisions, and that each participant received a summary of the results upon completion of the study.

Interviewing.

Creswell (2007) found it helpful to approach interviewing as a procedural list of steps that begins with selecting the interviewees purposefully based on the focus of the inquiry. Several types of interview methods exist such as telephone interview, focus group interview, and one-on-one interviews. Since this study required detailed responses and benefited significantly from participant observation, one-on-one interviews were conducted with each group member. The interviews were electronically recorded with permission of the participants to ensure accurate transcription and to allow the researcher to observe and notate the facial expressions and body language of the participants. During the interviews, field notes were made which referenced emergent themes particularly as they related to indications of thinking roles, team functional domains, and frames of reference.

Creswell (2007) also suggested that the researcher develop a four to five page interview protocol that consists of approximately six open-ended questions and ample space for noting participant responses and reactions. The questions should relate directly to the focus of inquiry and strategically narrow to related subquestions within the study. These questions, in Creswell's view, form the core of the interview, bound at the opening of the interview by questions encouraging the participant to relax and open up and at the closing by questions about whom to contact for more information and comments thanking them for their participation. The researcher developed and utilized an Interview Protocol (Appendix D) for this purpose.

In an effort to preserve the researcher's initial impressions and to appropriately compare participant responses, the participant interviews for each site were conducted

within a three-day period. The researcher attempted to interview the president first, followed by the administrative group members. The observation of each administrative meeting was scheduled within one day of the interviews to further preserve initial impressions of the researcher and provide for comparisons of functions within the group and apart from the group. The participants were given the opportunity to examine transcripts of the individual interviews and suggest revisions.

Data Analyses

Analyses of the data were conducted utilizing several methods. Following the recommendation of Creswell (2007), a case study database was assembled that included interview transcripts, field notes, collected documentation, observation notes, and reflective notes for each group. The goal of the data analyses was to compile reasonable conclusions and generalizations based on themes in the data (Ary et al., 2006; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1997). These conclusions, posited Creswell, result from an analytical process involving a detailed description of each case, a written analysis of themes across cases, and interpretation or assertions by the researcher in light of personal views or those found in the review of the literature.

Following the completion of the interviews, the audio recordings were transcribed precisely. The participants were given the opportunity to examine transcripts of the individual interviews and to suggest revisions. The field notes and the transcribed interviews were compared and contrasted for theme congruence. The transcripts were analyzed for themes within the cases and across the cases to identify similarities and differences.

Coding and analyses.

The group's frame(s) of reference, thinking roles, and functional categories were determined by coding interactions and responses during the group observation and interviews. Creswell (2007) believed that coding "represents the heart of data analysis" (p. 151). The coding process involves detailed descriptions, theme development, and interpretation from the perspective of the researcher and observations within the review of the literature. During this process, the researcher develops and/or utilizes codes to classify data. The list of codes, in Creswell's view, should remain relatively short – 12 or so. He recommended beginning with 5 or 6 abbreviated labels and expanding them as the analysis requires. The researcher should continue to reduce the list of codes into five or six themes from which to write the narrative (Creswell, 2007).

Creswell (2007) identified two basic approaches to coding: prefigured and emergent. Prefigured codes limit the analysis to pre-existing set of codes rather than "opening up the codes to reflect the views of participants in a traditional qualitative way" (p. 152). Creswell encourages researchers who begin with prefigured coding to look for additional codes that emerge during the analysis phase.

A blended coding scheme that considers both prefigured and emergent codes was used in this study to determine the thinking roles, the functional domain(s), and frame(s) of reference. This blended coding scheme increased the credibility of the study by reducing researcher bias (Creswell, 2007). The analysis began with a prefigured coding scheme (Appendix E), and no additional codes emerged during the analysis phase. The focus of this study was regularly considered during the analysis phase to ensure that the research focus was sufficiently addressed in the data and findings. A peer review of

transcripts, field notes, and findings was conducted to confirm that the data have been accurately represented by the researcher in the findings.

Following the direct observation of an administrative group meeting at each site, the team observation checklist (Appendix C) was analyzed to establish (a) the frames of reference observed, (b) the thinking roles observed, (c) team interactions and communication, (d) actual topics and matters addressed, and (e) the cognitive and functional complexity of the team. The researcher then compared and contrasted the observed behaviors with the data obtained in the interviews.

Credibility and dependability.

An underlying assumption in case study is that reality is multidimensional and dynamic (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1997). The researcher's observations or perceptions are often constructed realities of the participants. Thus, the researcher is compelled to attempt to portray the phenomena observed just as it appears to the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). For the purposes of case study, what appears to be true is more pertinent than that which is actually true (Merriam, 1997).

Credibility.

Merriam (1997) suggested that the responsibility for case study credibility belongs to the researcher to appropriately and credibly represent the diverse perspectives of the sites and participants as originally intended. In qualitative research, this view of reality will facilitate internal credibility (Merriam, 1997) or validation (Creswell, 2007). In Creswell's (2007) view, credibility (or validation) (a) is the "attempt to assess the accuracy of the findings" (p. 206), (b) confirms detailed, thick description indicative of significant time spent in the field, and (c) is a process rather than a point-in-time

validation. He observed that credibility does not appear in some qualitative approaches (e.g., Stake, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 2008). However, Creswell recommends the use of validation in all qualitative inquiries.

To ensure credibility, the researcher: (a) employed triangulation across cases and participants to collect and analyzed data from historical and organizational documents, interviews, and observations; (b) requested peer review of findings to determine if the conclusions of the researcher are appropriate; (c) clearly acknowledged researcher bias prior to the study, (d) requested member checks to allow the participants to review interview transcripts to ensure accuracy and reduce researcher bias; and (e) provided a detailed, rich, thick description to allow readers to determine transferability (Creswell, 2007).

Dependability.

Ary et al. (2006) suggested that demanding dependability (or reliability) in qualitative research is not nearly as sensible as peer-confirmation that the findings agree with the observations. Creswell (2007) seemed to agree when he suggested that dependability refers to the stability of coding responses by multiple individuals. Thus, qualitative inquiry emphasizes completeness and consistency in analyses rather than pragmatics.

Nevertheless, to ensure internal dependability, the researcher: (a) maintained detailed field notes to accurately document observable facts, (b) electronically recorded the interviews to substantially reduce the loss of details, (c) outlined the conceptual framework that supported the research approach and data analysis, and (d) requested peer

review of coding to determine if the conclusions of the researcher were appropriate (Creswell, 2007).

Limitations of the Study

Governance, culture, and administrative leadership styles can differ significantly among colleges. Although some college organizational structures can be very authoritarian and bureaucratic, others are profoundly engaged in collegial leadership. These fundamental institutional differences, in fact, limit the generalization of the findings of this study from being applicable to colleges not included in the study.

As in many qualitative studies, the conclusions of the researcher are largely dependent upon data collected during interviews and observations. These conclusions could be affected should the participants withhold information (Creswell, 2007). Consequently, the researcher must purposefully establish trust and rapport with the participants to facilitate accuracy in the gathering of data. To do so, the researcher employed the highest standard of ethics at every level of this study, including, but not limited to: (a) complete confidentiality, (b) recording of interviews and observations to ensure accuracy, (c) use of field notes to accurately record the observations of the researcher, (d) participant and peer review, and (e) strict adherence to the Confidentiality Statement outlined by the Liberty University Committee on the Use of Human Research Subjects.

Since this study considered only three private colleges and a relatively small number of administrative team members, the generalization of this study and its conclusions is limited. It is possible that greater generality may be achieved by utilizing a larger sample size. The design of this study is further limited since it was conducted in

a relatively short period of time and produced only a snapshot of the institution, rather than a long-term ethnographic perspective. Additionally, since the principal data (interviews and observations) were gathered solely by the researcher, triangulation was limited. Participant review, peer review, and review by dissertation committee members provided limited triangulation.

Summary

This chapter described the process by which the researcher examined the overall function of administrative groups in three, small private colleges whether as working groups, real teams, or a combination of both. A multiple-case study was conducted in three small, private colleges in the state of Tennessee. Members of the administrative group at each site were interviewed. An on-site observation of an administrative group meeting was conducted, and relevant organizational documents were reviewed. Data collected from these evidential sources was analyzed and coded into both prefigured categories and emergent categories that arose from the analysis. The findings from those data were organized and are presented in narrative form in the following chapter.

Chapter Four: Results of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore administrative groups in post-secondary education to determine the type of administrative groups or teams that directed the institutions. Specifically, the intent was to examine how college presidents and their executive officers think and work together. The study distinctively assessed administrative team leadership in three small, private colleges in the state of Tennessee. Consequently, the focus of this study was to determine if the administrative officers functioned as working groups, real teams, or employed elements of both.

This chapter presents a rich, full description of the results of the multiple-site case study. The results reported in this chapter are organized according to participant site and include a summation of the demographic data, the qualitative analysis of each site, and a cross-site qualitative analysis of the three institutions.

Demographic Data

Qualitative research methods were utilized to conduct a naturalistic inquiry and gain a comprehensive understanding of the administrative groups in small, private college settings. Through a full and rich description, comparison, and contrast, this multiple-site case study attempts to portray a realistic snapshot of the composition and function of the presidential leadership groups in their natural environment (Merriam, 1997).

Three small, private colleges of similar size were selected to participate in the study. Pseudonyms were assigned both to the institutions and to the administrators who participated in the interviews. Trident College is located in a semi-rural community with a population of 37,000, Earnhardt College is located in the suburbs of a metropolitan area

with a population of 183,000, and Charlestown College is located in a small city with a population of 36,000 in the immediate surrounding area.

In order to compile demographic data, documentation was collected in the form of surveys, organizational charts, position descriptions, and resumes. On-site interviews were conducted with the presidents of the three institutions and the members of their administrative groups (a total of 22 individuals across the three sites) using a semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix D). Each team was also observed in an on-site, regularly-scheduled administrative meeting. An Observation Checklist (Appendix C) was completed during the meeting to accurately document observed interactions, behaviors, and themes.

The analysis of the interviews and group observations focused on identifying references to individual components of three group models (core cognitive roles, frames of reference, and functional domains) to identify the groups as working groups, real teams, or a combination of both. A manual Coding Scheme (Appendix E) was employed in the analysis of the interview transcripts and field notes to identify references to the individual components of the three group models. The data were subsequently analyzed, both within each case and across the cases, for additional themes and categories. The results of the study reported in this chapter include a summation of the demographic data and a qualitative analysis of each case to answer the focus of this inquiry – to determine if the administrative officers functioned as a working group, a real team, or a combination of both.

Tables 1 through 3 represent the demographic data collected for each institution and administrative group through surveys, documentation, and interview questions. As

demonstrated in Table 1, there were similarities in the institutional type, group name, and enrollment. However, the institutions varied in institutional setting, number of members of the administrative group, and community population.

Table 1 *Demographic Data of Institutions*

Category	Trident College	Earnhardt College	Charlestown College
Institutional Setting	Semi-Rural	Suburban	Small City
Institutional Type	Single Campus	Single Campus	Single Campus
Group Name	Cabinet	Cabinet	Cabinet
Group Members	9	7	6
FA09 Enrollment	1100	779	1103
Community Population	37,585	183,546	36,314

Table 2 illustrates similarities among the presidents in gender and ethnicity. There was, however, variation in several categories. Although the ages of the presidents were similar, the youngest president, who held a master's degree, had the longest tenure at his institution. There was significant variation in the years in their position as president, although the president with the shortest tenure had worked in higher education nearly as many years as the president with the longest tenure. All three presidents had significant experience in higher education.

Table 3 displays demographic data about the 19 group members. All of the group members were Caucasian and men outnumbered women two to one. Thirty-seven percent of the group members held a doctoral degree. Notable variations existed in the

number of group members within the group, age of the group members, years at the institution, and years in current position.

Table 2 *Demographic Data of Presidents*

Category	Trident College	Earnhardt College	Charlestown College
Age	64	66	72
Gender	M	M	M
Ethnicity	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian
Highest Degree	M.Div.	Ph.D.	Ph.D.
Years at College	18	10	16
Years in Position	13	3	16
Years in Higher Education	30	43	45

None of the three institutions had consistent titles for the group members. The Trident College administrative group was the largest of the three groups, and its average age was significantly higher than the other two colleges. Charlestown College had the fewest group members. The group members at Charlestown College had the fewest mean years in their current positions; however, the group had the highest mean years in higher education.

Case Studies

Each of the three following case studies will present a detailed analysis of the group's milieu which will include historical and background information about the college, the group members, and the structure of the group meetings. Additionally, each

case study will include an analysis of the cognitive roles of the group members, the frames of reference employed by the group, and the group's functional domains. The descriptions of each case will include the extent to which the group reflected a working group, a real team, or elements of both.

Table 3 *Demographic Data for Group Members*

Category	Trident College	Earnhardt College	Charlestown College
Team Composition	6 Vice Presidents 1 Assistant Dean 1 Director	4 Vice Presidents 1 Dean 1 Director	4 Vice Presidents 1 Faculty Chair
Ages	66, 37, 58, 37, 47, 51, 64, 39	52, 58, 48, 50, 66, 45	55, 42, 45, 57, 57
Mean Age	50	53	51
Gender	4 Female, 4 Male	6 Male	2 Female, 3 Male
Ethnicity	8 Caucasian	6 Caucasian	5 Caucasian
Highest Degree	2 Doctorates 4 Masters 2 Bachelors	3 Doctorates 3 Masters	2 Doctorates 2 Masters 1 Bachelors
Years at College	30, 16, 15, 15, 15, 12, 20, 4	20, 7, 3, 14, 32, 11	2, 6, 13, 2, 14
Mean Years at College	16	15	7
Years in Position	12, 3, 11, 6, 3, 12, 20, 4	7, 6, 3, 8, 15, 3	2, 2, 1, 2, 6
Mean Years in Position	9	7	3
Years in Higher Education	30, 16, 25, 15, 15, 12, 20, 4	20, 10, 17, 14, 35, 11	15, 9, 18, 24, 24
Mean Years in Higher Education	17	18	18

Trident College.

Group milieu.

Trident College is located in a semi-rural East Tennessee setting. The small town in which Trident is located had a total population of 37,000. Founded in 1866, the college had grown to a student population of 1,100 in fall 2009. Its president had been with the college for 18 years and had served as president for 13 years. The president had earned a master's degree, although he had received an honorary doctoral degree. The Administrative Cabinet at Trident was comprised of six vice presidents, one assistant dean, and one director. The group members were evenly split with four females and four males. The vice president for enrollment was a relatively new position created three years ago. The current vice president for enrollment was moved to the current role from another administrative position on campus. The director of admissions, who reported to the vice president for enrollment, also served as a member of the Cabinet. Only one vice president had fewer than 12 years experience in higher education—the vice president for finance, who came from a corporate position to serve at Trident. Four years earlier, this position was created by separating responsibilities from the vice president for business position.

Group meetings were held weekly in the president's office around a large conference table. The meeting agenda were compiled from submissions by the group members to the administrative assistant. The administrative assistant brought the agenda to the meetings and recorded the minutes during the meetings. The group meetings usually did not have a time limit. One group member described the importance of the meetings as "what collaboration does occur between team members occurs in those

meetings." Another group member acknowledged that "without the meetings it would become easier to make decisions on your own without the group."

The group meeting observed by the researcher was approximately one hour and 45 minutes in duration. The meeting was largely utilitarian in nature and appeared to address primarily non-substantive issues. The president opened the meeting and moderated the meeting from item to item on the agenda. The president also spoke most frequently, sometimes asking questions, but most often to give his opinion or clarify his position. At one point the president acknowledged that he preferred for the group to be able to reach consensus except on issues where he had a strong opinion. One group member said about the meeting, "The main importance [of the meeting] is that the president considers them important. So I think it's important because it is his meeting." Of the group members, the vice president for academic affairs spoke the most frequently, often providing an alternative perspective or asking questions of the other group members. The director of admissions, vice president for finance, and assistant dean seemed to be left out of the discussion. One member of the group confessed that "the president often has his mind made up on a particular issue before he comes into the meeting." However, in the interviews, all of the group members and the president mentioned the importance of sharing information in the meetings.

Over the past few months, the group had been working on a number of key issues including establishing the budget for the coming year and making changes to adult and graduate academic programs. Several group members mentioned that the academic conversations had been ongoing for many months, possibly for a number of years. Consequently, one member believed that, due to a reluctance to settle on decisions,

“we've missed the opportunity to be first to market in these areas.” This single issue seemed to be a source of frustration with the majority of the group members. One group member summarized the situation:

> One of my biggest disappointments is that we did not grapple with this issue in a more aggressive way. Even today we have group members having to pick up the slack [for the group member who has oversight] in this area so we can press forward for the betterment of the college.

Thinking role analysis.

Although the Trident group perceived their roles functionally rather than cognitively, the researcher utilized the interview questions and responses to elicit evidence of the thinking roles for each group member. Bensimon and Neumann (1993) identified five core thinking roles frequently found within groups: definer, analyst, interpreter, critic, and synthesizer. All five roles were observed within the group. However, two group members did not perform a thinking role in the group meeting nor did one surface in their interview responses. Three of the administrators played multiple roles within the group.

The president was clearly the chief definer of the Trident group. Nearly every group member confirmed his defining role in the individual interviews. The president and his assistant were responsible for compiling the agenda for the meeting, yet agenda items were also solicited from each of the group members. Five of the nine group members presented agenda items in the group meeting. The president spoke most often, guiding the discussion in the meeting and leading the group through the list of agenda items. One group member said of the president's defining role:

> He is a good leader, and he is passionate about the institution. He is absolutely committed to the mission of the college and is not willing to waiver from that. I think that's first and foremost key to being the college leader. He has really done remarkable things for the institution during the time of his presidency and has transformed the institution during the last decade.

The president affirmed her observation when he acknowledged:

> Sometimes I'm impatient and want to get it done overnight. Occasionally, I get into micromanaging, but that's usually when something affects the institution. For example, with the campus, we've changed the entire appearance over the last seven years and I have been very involved in that.

When asked to describe the president as the group's leader, one group member responded, “He is a very strong and confident leader. You never have to wonder where he stands. He's very open and transparent.”

The definer role was performed by another group member as observed both in the group meeting and in her individual interview. When addressing her role as a definer, she offered:

> I'm constantly working with every member of the team on a variety of different things because if something happens I need to be aware. I'm not necessarily involved in all the details, but if there are big issues that affect [my area] then I have the opportunity to interact.

Both she and the president performed multiple roles, and both performed the same roles – definer and synthesizer. Synthesizers facilitate a summation of the group’s reality. As a synthesizer, the vice president observed, “It's essential that I have good working

relationships with the group members. Because everything they do affects me, and everything I do affects them." Directly addressing the synthesizer role, she added:

> If it's going to fall through the cracks, and I know that's going to happen, I'll pick it up and take responsibility. I think it's fairly well known I'm the go-to person for making something happen or for pulling all the people in the room together to confront an issue.

When responding to the question, "For what purpose does the group meet," she offered a constructive observation from the synthesizer role: "I would like to see us all provide updates, if not weekly, at least on a regular basis from our own areas. This would allow us to better see how things are truly tied together." Summarizing his synthesizer role within the group, the president acknowledged:

> From nearly every circumstance or situation we encounter, we learn of areas that we did not anticipate. When you collectively deal with it, there are issues that other group members would think of and add to the discussion.

Two female administrators performed the analyst role within the group providing a deep examination of issues. Both individuals had highly analytical responsibilities and, as such, were decidedly aware when more data or better data were needed to improve decision-making. Neither of the analysts spoke often in the group meeting; however, one raised a critical question regarding a budget item and subsequently led a detailed discussion of the issue. In the interview, she acknowledged that she speaks less than other group members because she is relatively new to the group and is still learning the group and campus cultures. Having served at Trident College for more than 30 years, the other analyst had a deep understanding of the campus culture. When asked about her role

within the group, she stated, “I'm the first one they come to if they want information, and if they want to help support a decision they're trying to make. I am the data person.” Her detailed and inclusive interview responses affirm her predisposition to analytics as was evidenced in her response to the question, “What are your concerns about how the group functions?”

> When there is someone doing something that could be detrimental to the group or the institution, we struggle with how to accurately express our concern and change their direction. Because we work by consensus, it's difficult to address these areas of conflicting viewpoint. There is one particular cabinet member that continually puts us in this position (or we allow ourselves to be put in that position). While we may have strong opposition to that individual, we don't express it directly.

The interpreter role translates how people outside the group are likely to see the issues. The researcher observed that three members of the group performed the role of interpreter. The interpretive members had lengthy tenure within the group and the institution. When asked about her role within the group, one of the interpreters replied:

> Because I have the longest tenure here, and I am the oldest member of the group, they sort of look to me for wisdom that's based on a historic perspective. So I think I bring a lot of that to the group, and I'm often asked my opinion - either privately or in a group setting.

One of the interpreters was responsible for student life. When asked the same question he acknowledged, “I'm an advocate for our students and their parents partly because of where I am in my life - I just had two kids graduate from college, and I interact more with

students on campus." The president also acted as an interpreter within the group meeting when he led a discussion regarding municipal leaders in Trident's local area.

Two administrators were critics within the group redefining, reanalyzing, and reinterpreting issues for the group. The critical role was readily apparent for one of the group members in the group meeting as he openly questioned and reanalyzed key discussions of agenda items. His role was confirmed in the individual interview as he relayed what he had learned from an important decision of the group:

> If anyone of us had been willing to risk political capital we might have moved it from dithering to a real decision. I'm not sure that anyone was willing to invest a lot of political capital and go out on a limb. And this goes back to the tendency to not participate in disagreement. I think all of us agree that we need to do something, but I don't think any of us are prepared to really argue for it passionately.

Ironically, the issue he was discussing was his responsibility. Each of the group members mentioned the fact that this critic often ignored his area of responsibility. The other critic of the group was determined:

> . . . to make sure that no one ever has to pick up a ball that I dropped. I now know how much resentment that can cause and how much disfunctionality that can cause. I've also learned that if you're aware that something is not being done, then you need to speak up quickly and loudly and make sure that it does get done.

Although both had high value within the group, it was apparent that the two critics occasionally focused on one another's roles rather than constructively addressing the issues at hand.

Frames of reference analysis.

Frames of reference serve as conceptual maps for understanding an organization and interpreting the effectiveness of others' behavior. Bolman and Deal (1991; 2008) identified four frames of reference: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. The president's primary frame of reference appeared to be the structural frame which focuses on organizational structure with emphases on establishing structure, organization, goals, and priorities in conjunction with systematic decision-making, efficiency, and effective communication. In the individual interview, the president admitted, "There are times when I have to make a decision that I feel is in the best interest of the school whether or not everyone else on the cabinet agrees with it." When discussing budget cuts in the cabinet meeting, the president cautioned, "If they don't make enough cuts, I'll do it for them." Nearly every time the president spoke in the meeting, he referred to structural, organizational, or operational functions. When asked to describe himself as a group's leader, the president responded, "Sometimes I'm impatient and want to get it done overnight. Occasionally, I get into micromanaging, but that's usually when something affects the institution."

The president's observed frame of reference was affirmed by one of the vice presidents who acknowledged:

> There are times when he has brought in his own opinion, and on a couple occasions shut a person down by saying, "No, you are totally off base. That's not the direction we are going." But I've only heard that a couple times and it's only when it's something he deeply believes in.

When asked to describe the president as the leader of the group, another vice president responded:

> He's very strong as an individual. At times it may be overly strong. He likes things done in an orderly way. He doesn't like chaos and doesn't like things coming out of the blue and erupting on him. He's clear about what he wants. He readily expresses irritation or disfavor on certain issues.

The structural frame was also the primary frame employed by other group members at Trident both in the meetings and in the interview responses. Nearly all of the group members made multiple mentions of the importance of achieving the vision, mission, and goals of the institution. One group member recognized that administrative meetings were generally approached from a structural perspective by the group. She acknowledged that the meetings "generally involve policy changes, items that may need to go to the Board of Trustees, annual recognitions, budget issues, enrollment updates, academic updates, advancement, and student life. Sometimes it's just day-to-day stuff." While the structural frame was the primary frame employed by both the president and the group members, only two of the nine group members use the frame when asked, "What ways do you find your leadership group to be most useful?" Similarly, when asked, "What ways do you find your leadership group to be least useful," none of the nine group members employed the structural frame.

The president also employed the human resource frame of reference which focuses on the partnership and needs of the organization and constituents, emphasizing the achievement of goals through collaboration, consensus building, problem-solving through teams, loyalty to the institution, and leading by example. Bensimon (1989)

found it unusual for an individual to employ both the structural and human resource frames of reference. The researcher observed that the president referenced the human resource frame in the individual interview more often than the group members attributed it to him. It is plausible that the president was working to overcome his tendency toward the structural frame. For example, when asked what he gets personally from interacting with the administrative group, the president responded from both the human resource and structural frames:

> I enjoy being around them. I think we have a good relationship. I do think that they all understand that I'm the president. I don't get heartburn about whether or not they are going to get their jobs done. So because they are successful I look good. I get a lot of satisfaction in seeing them succeed.

The president employed both frames when asked to define the most important functions of the leadership group:

> They need to have a good understanding of the vision, mission, and strategy of the institution and have a commitment to carry it out but also a sense of cooperation. I don't feel that I have anyone on the cabinet that is trying to make himself or herself look better at the expense of anyone else. I think they all have good relationships.

The human resource frame was also the secondary frame for the group as a whole. Every group member responded from the human resource frame when asked how they personally benefited from membership in the administrative group. One group member replied, “I enjoy the relationships and connections – the camaraderie within the group.

There are things that we are able to talk about within the group that we cannot necessarily discuss with our staff or other faculty on campus."

Two group members, when describing the president as the team leader, referred to his occasional use of the political frame. Emphasizing the use of power and influence to direct resources to specific individuals or groups, the political frame focuses on monitoring internal and external environments, utilizing influence to gather necessary resources, establishing relationships with constituents, and developing coalitions amid a compromising structure. One group member observed that, prior to the president taking office, "many things were overlooked so it really took a leader that could really focus in on all the details over an extended period of time to make sure that everything [came] together." The president also referred to his occasional use of the political frame when he acknowledged, "When someone comes to me with a question, I will send them back to the person who handles that area." In the group meeting, the researcher observed the president function from the political frame of reference on one occasion. Several other group members seemed to employ the political frame when defining "leadership" and "team." Four of the group members, when questioned about their role within the leadership group, responded from the political frame. However, the researcher observed only one other group member employ the political frame in the group meeting.

The symbolic frame, which emphasizes accurately interpreting the institution's history, maintaining its culture, and reinforcing its values to foster shared meaning, was least observed within the group at Trident. In fact, it was used only to describe the president as the leader of the group. One of the group members related the president's use of the symbolic frame when she acknowledged:

He has done remarkable things for the institution during the time of his presidency and has transformed the institution during the last decade. He is committed to the academic quality. It's because he is so passionate and because he is very familiar with the institution, he's not going to let things slide.

Functional domain analysis.

The Trident College group members performed constructive activities in each of the three functional domains: utilitarian, expressive, and cognitive. The utilitarian function aides in achieving a sense of rationality and maintaining control over institutional functions. The expressive function reinforces a sense of connectedness among group members, while the cognitive function acknowledges and enlarges the intelligence of group members to enable the team to act as a creative system (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993).

When questioned about the ways he found the leadership group to be most useful, the Trident president responded: “They are very good at carrying out their responsibilities. I've never had to fire a cabinet member. They are great leaders in their areas.” His response was entirely utilitarian in nature. When asked about his role within the group, the president once again employed the utilitarian domain: “I am the facilitator and ultimately the decision maker . . . . It is my responsibility to bring the group together and set the tone.”

The group meeting was almost entirely utilitarian and the discussions appeared to lack substance. Though there were three items on the written agenda, several informal items were added in the meeting. Only one member briefly performed useful functions in the expressive and cognitive domains in the meeting. This same member was considered

by several of his colleagues to be “strong-willed,” “argumentative,” “irresponsible,” “inflexible,” and “opinionated,” often adversely affecting the group. Primarily, the group members referred to a key issue in which he had been very slow to act. One administrator believed that the institution could have been “first to market” in the area but lost the opportunity because of the individual’s reluctance to move forward. Ironically, when asked how the group handled the situation, the administrator replied:

> My personal tendency would be, it's better to make a mistake and to go ahead and move forward then to be too hesitant. I think we tend to be too hesitant on some financial and administrative issues . . . . I guess I would have liked, at some point, for us to make the decision that we are either going to do it or not do it and move forward. I think we live in an in-between land a bit too long.

Only when asked about the importance of the group meetings did the president utilize the expressive domain:

> We have a lot of frivolity. There's usually something that we kid everybody about. It really helps us build relationships. In the 13 years I've been here, there have been very few cases where someone will get very upset about something.

He then added, “I enjoy being around them. I think we have a good relationship,” when addressing how he benefits from membership within the group. All of the other administrators referenced the expressive domain in their responses to the interview questions. Another group member described his appreciation for the expressive functions in the group meetings by stating: “My ego gets stroked. We each try to recognize one another's successes. I get encouragement when things are tough.”

Each group member also employed the cognitive domain at least once in their interview responses. However, from the perspective of at least one group member, there seemed to be a hesitancy to invoke the cognitive function: “Those of us who desire input from the group members will bring the issues in the meeting. If there's something that we feel needs institutional discussion, we will do so.” Describing the usefulness of the group from a cognitive perspective, one group member stated:

> When I have a problem that needs to be addressed that is primarily in my area, I may need the insight of the whole group before I make a decision that could have an effect on the whole institution . . . . Most everything happens by consensus. [The President] is not a dictator. Now he has strong opinions, and he expresses his opinions, but he has good opinions. Consensus is the rule. All of us use the group to bounce ideas off each other either about the functions of our area or about functions throughout the institution.

The president summarized the group’s use of the cognitive function by explaining: “I think from nearly every circumstance or situation . . . we learn of areas that we did not anticipate. When you collectively deal with it, there are issues that other group members would think of and add to the discussion.”

The group and the models.

The Trident College administrative group met the criteria for functional and cognitive complexity as defined in the three models. The group possessed at least four of the five core cognitive roles, performed at least one constructive function in each of the three functional domains, and employed all four frames of reference. Consequently, the

group could be categorized according to the theoretical models as a functionally and cognitively complex team.

The president's primary cognitive frames of reference were the structural and political frames. While the president had been absolutely committed to the mission of the college in achieving it together with the team, he also brought together and motivated internal and external constituents throughout his presidency. One team member believed that he had been responsible for transforming the institution during the last decade. He placed high value on academic quality and was intimately familiar with nearly every facet of the institution. Though his primary frames were structural and political, it was apparent that the president made an effort to accommodate the human resource and symbolic frames. The group meeting, although convened in his office, was held around a large conference table to facilitate a more inclusive seating arrangement for the group members. Although the president facilitated the group meeting, he occasionally sat quietly as group members questioned their colleagues regarding various agenda items. The president and group members did not seem to be hurried, and the mood appeared to be lighthearted. Laughter and joking surrounded non-work related dialogue prior to the official start of the meeting.

Although each of the four frames of reference was represented within the group, the group meeting and the interview responses were overwhelmingly structural in nature. Only the president and one other group member employed the political frame in the group meeting, and the human resource and symbolic frames were not utilized. Similarly, each of the three functional domains was observed in the group meeting; however, only one group member performed both the expressive and cognitive functions.

This same member, as mentioned earlier, was considered by several of his colleagues to be “strong-willed,” “argumentative,” “inflexible,” and “opinionated,” often adversely affecting the group. Though all three domains were referenced repeatedly in the individual interviews, the mentions appeared to be largely theoretical. Each of the five core cognitive roles were performed by group members, although no role was identified for two of the members, and three of the group members performed multiple roles. In the group meeting, the researcher observed that the thinking roles were performed by three of the nine group members. Two of the roles were performed only by the president. Additionally, one group member seemed to be left almost entirely out of the discussions. It is possible that this may have been due to the fact that her superior was also a member of the administrative group. According to the three models of cognitive and functional complexity, the group was identified as a complex team. However, when considered holistically, the above observations are strong indicators of a working group.

Earnhardt College.

Group milieu.

Earnhardt College was located in the suburbs of a small metropolitan area in East Tennessee. The small city in which Earnhardt was located had a total population of 183,000. Founded in 1893, the college is the second oldest college in the country of its kind. In fall 2009, Earnhardt College had a student population of 779. The president had been with the college for a total of 10 years; however, he was in his third year as president. The president had an earned Doctor of Philosophy degree and had been serving in higher education for 43 years. The Administrative Cabinet at Earnhardt was comprised of four vice presidents, one dean, and one director. The group members were

all male. The dean for enrollment services was a relatively new position, created less than three years ago. The current dean for enrollment services was moved to the current role from another administrative position on campus. All of the group members had more than 10 years experience in higher education, yet only one had served as a member of the administrative group for more than eight years.

Group meetings were scheduled biweekly in the president's conference room around a large conference table. However, the group members indicated that the meetings were often canceled or postponed largely due to the president's travel schedule. The group members also met with the president individually once a month. The president stated that these individual meetings provide "a time when we can deal with issues in their areas or personal issues." The meeting agenda were compiled from submissions by the group members to the administrative assistant. The administrative assistant brought the agenda to the meetings and recorded the minutes during the meetings. The group meetings usually did not have a time limit. Addressing the importance of the group meetings, one group member found that the meetings "help facilitate communication and either making collective decisions or getting buy-in or approval on decisions." Another group member acknowledged that the meetings "help us work together more effectively and give us a sense of team."

The group meeting observed by the researcher was approximately one hour and 15 minutes in duration. The researcher was invited to sit at the conference table with the team. The meeting began informally with a discussion about enrollment and applications. The formal meeting began with a devotional which was largely lectural in nature and appeared to be approached as any other agenda item. The devotional was

followed by a substantive time of prayer in which detailed requests were shared by at least three of the group members. The president opened the functional portion of the meeting and moderated the meeting from item to item on the agenda. The president spoke most frequently, sometimes asking questions, but most often to move between agenda items and to provide a summation of each agenda item. A couple of discussion items were informally added to the agenda by the president and group members.

In the individual interviews, nearly all of the group members mentioned that the president enjoys debating because his educational background is in rhetoric. The president himself acknowledged:

> I may occasionally argue a point that I don't necessarily believe in but I'm trying to think out loud about the consequences of a particular action. I think it's taken a while for the group members to figure that out. On some levels I just enjoy exploring issues in that way to ensure that I have not missed some component of an issue.

The group members seemed very free to make decisions within their areas of responsibility. One group member said about the president's approach to the group members and to the meetings:

> He is someone who thinks out loud which means that we get to participate in his thought process. I think that he's open. I think that he genuinely cares for the people who are part of the team in his own way.

All of the group members spoke during the meeting, yet none seemed to speak more frequently than the others. In the interviews, several of the group members and the president mentioned that the group struggles at times with communication. One member

of the group confessed that, “The group does not handle interpersonal relationship and reconciliation well. Additionally, when the group makes a faulty decision they find it very difficult to go back and admit that they were wrong.”

For a number of months, the president had been collecting data and developing a proposal for evaluating the mission of the college. The president spent a significant amount of time briefing me on the process and the current status of the project. From his perspective, he is leading the group to consider how they can stay true to the mission while remaining innovative and competitive. However, one group member in particular acknowledged:

> I suspect that the president has an agenda and has an outcome in mind. He may be presenting material in such a way to lead to that outcome. However, the way it's presented is that we're all on a journey together, yet none of us knows for sure where it's going to go.

Another group member seemed to have a differing perspective:

> Discussions about broadening our curriculum, yet remaining true to our mission and name, have fostered lively discussion. Although no one necessarily raised their voice, I think it's the single biggest thing the college has to deal with right now. The group wants to be sure that we're doing it for the right reasons, so we're not going to do it hastily. It will be very intentional and very well thought out.

Thinking role analysis.

Bensimon and Neumann (1993) identified five core thinking roles frequently found within groups: definer, analyst, interpreter, critic, and synthesizer. Although only three of the roles were observed in the group meeting: definer, analyst, and synthesizer,

all five roles were observed in the responses of the group members to the interview questions. While he had served for fewer than three years, the president was the primary definer for the group as observed both in the group meeting and in the individual interview. When describing himself as the leader of the group, the president admitted, “I am very dominant. [The administrators] would certainly see me that way. Although I think they see me as a team player. I hope they see me as committed to the mission of the institution.” Both the group observation and the individual interviews indicated that the group was not yet comfortable with the president. Although it was apparent that they were still learning how to interact and work effectively together, the most tenured member of the group affirmed the president's defining role: “He's clearly in charge. I've seen leaders that were more led by the group then they were leading the group, but he is the leader. He is a visionary. He's in charge but is not authoritarian.” Perhaps the best description of the president as a definer was offered by the vice president for student services who acknowledged:

> He is someone who thinks out loud which means that we get to participate in his thought process. I think that he's open. I think that he genuinely cares for the people who are part of the team in his own way. I believe that he genuinely wants to help the college successfully transition into the future. I don't think that he views his administration as a caretaker administration in any way. He sees it as an opportunity to move ahead.

The vice president for business and finance also significantly contributed to the defining role in the group meeting by presenting three agenda items. All were either new policies or changes in established policies. The researcher observed that the team

members were highly competent and experienced in their areas of responsibility. Although the vice president for business and finance had served at Earnhardt for less than three years, it was apparent that, of all the group members, he had facilitated the most notable improvements to the institution during his tenure. His effectiveness resulted from his performance of both a defining role and an analyst role which enabled him to engage in a deep examination of issues. The vice president suggested that he was able to accomplish his roles effectively because he had worked at multiple schools before coming to Earnhardt. He believed that the prior experience gave him "a broader perspective than the other group members." Several administrators had never worked for another institution. Additionally, his finance background was very diverse both in corporate and educational settings.

The director of institutional effectiveness also served as an analyst for the group. The role was a natural fit for his analytical nature. When asked about his role within the group, he responded:

> I bring information to bear on organizational problems. I think that's my role. Since people make decisions based on the best information that they have at the time, it's my job to make sure that this group has the best information available.

The president and vice president for development also briefly performed the role of analyst in the meeting by providing a thorough examination of and presenting alternative perspectives for two agenda items.

The interview responses revealed that three group members perform the interpreter role: the vice president for student services, the vice president for development, and the vice president for academics. Although all three felt adept at

translating how people outside the group are likely to see the issues, each offered a differing rationale to their role based on their job function. The vice president for student services believed that he, alone in the Earnhardt group, was the one to consider the impact on others. However, the researcher did not observe him performing the role of interpreter in the group meeting or in the interview responses.

It was readily apparent that both the vice president for development and the vice president for academics performed the interpreting role. The vice president for development believed that his background with the institution was largely responsible for his role as interpreter. When specifically questioned about his role within the group, he responded, “I grew up at this organization so I have a lot of history here. I probably bring a strong appreciation for what's come before. I understand the culture of the college and how things might affect constituents.” Similarly, the vice president for academics, the senior member of the group, viewed himself as the “traditionalist and the one that's most concerned about staying true to the mission and not succumbing to mission drift.” He referred to himself as the preserver of the mission of the institution for students, alumni, and other constituents.

The researcher observed only one critic within the group who quite effectively redefined, re-analyzed, and reinterpreted institutional issues. The group member, when questioned about his role within the group, lightheartedly referred to himself as “the irritant.” He explained further:

> I consider that being an irritant to the system when you express something that is contrary to what others are thinking. But I know that is a vital role that each of us

> must play at times so that the group avoids groupthink. I may play that role too often.

This group member appeared to be quite proficient at viewing institutional issues from multiple perspectives and acknowledging concerns that the other group members could not envision or were reluctant to address. The researcher observed that several of the group members did not have an appreciation for the importance of this role within the group. Consequently, there existed tension between several group members although the strain appeared to be largely ignored and repressed. In fact, only one group member directly referred to the group tension in the individual interviews.

The president also performed the synthesizer role within the group, a responsibility which he considered essential within the group. The researcher observed that the president frequently summarized each discussion in the group meeting. Initially, the president found this role to be quite challenging because the previous president had served at Earnhardt for nearly 40 years. He explained that the former president "was and is an icon. Because of the power and personality of his presence there was reluctance to really debate issues. So administrators did not frequently engage in debate or actively question the direction of the institution." The group appeared to be making progress, and when questioned about the usefulness of the team, the president responded, "We are still learning how to work together with each other."

Frames of reference analysis.

Frames of reference serve as conceptual maps for understanding an organization and interpreting the effectiveness of others' behavior. Bolman and Deal (1991; 2008) identified four frames of reference: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic.

The Earnhardt group's primary frame of reference, as observed in the administrative meeting, was the structural frame. Only three of the nine group members, including the president, presented agenda items. The agenda items seem to be presented in an informational manner as there was very little discussion between the group members. The observation that every group member, with the exception of the president, employed the structural frame of reference in the meeting may be attributed to the fact that each administrator seemed to be free to make any decision necessary in his particular area without approval from the group. Consequently, the other frames, which involve significant relational aspects, were not necessary in the meetings. Similarly, the president utilized the structural frame throughout his individual interview.

While the group's primary frame of reference was the structural frame, each group member utilized multiple frames of reference in their responses in the individual interviews. The human resource appeared to be the secondary frame employed by the group members and was observed in the responses of the group members to several of the interview questions. Elaborating on his definition of good leadership, one included, “When I became an administrator here, I determined that I would never make a decision without first considering how that decision affects followers.” Another posited that good leadership is “not authoritarian, but by example, and by gaining the confidence of the people who you are leading.” Even the administrator who considered himself to be the “curmudgeon” of the group admitted, “We're all friends, and we all trust each other.” When asked what they get personally from membership within the group, two of the administrators acknowledged that they receive “a lot of emotional and spiritual support from the group” because they “get a great deal of satisfaction from seeing others grow.”

One group member suggested, “I, alone in this group, am the one to consider the impact on others. Once I realized this I mentioned it to the others and try to remind us of this occasionally.” Additionally, the interview responses of one administrator indicated deep hurt and unresolved interpersonal conflict with other group members. However, none of his colleagues mentioned any negative interpersonal issue within the group, although, to the affected group member, the hurt appeared significant.

The most apparent limitation within the group at Earnhardt College was the reluctance of the group members to adequately address conflict. When asked what gets in the way of effective teamwork, one group member responded,

> There's not much conflict [within the group] because, under the previous administration, there was only one way to do things – disagreeing with the president was like disagreeing with God. So for a long period of years conflict was either buried under the surface or was not expressed. The current president brings it out more.

The current president confirmed that “there's still a reluctance to put conflict on the table.” Another group member added,

> The nature of most of the personalities of the group members is to not want to get into much conflict. Sometimes conflict is handled by keeping your mouth shut. If it's a minor conflict with another group member I may go talk with them directly. Rarely do we get into open conflict in the meetings. Occasionally, we will present our opposing view if we feel strong enough about it.

Responding to the question in a more direct manner, one group member declared that conflict is handled “pretty poorly in my opinion. I don't think conflict has been handled

very well both personally and professionally. We have very messy interpersonal relationships."

The symbolic frame, which emphasizes accurately interpreting the institution's history, maintaining its culture, and reinforcing its values to foster shared meaning, was the least used frame of reference by the group. It was used only once by three administrators, primarily as it related to reevaluating the institutional mission. One group member, who had served in his current position for less than three years, observed,

> We have old-timers in the group who are worried about mission drift. Discussions about broadening our curriculum, yet remaining true to our mission and name, have fostered lively discussion . . . . I think it's the single biggest thing the school has to deal with right now.

An administrator who had served at the college for nearly 15 years and had been a member of the administrative group for eight years employed the symbolic frame when questioned about his role within the leadership group. His response indicated that he had grown up at the organization and, thus, had an intimate understanding of the historical background of the institution. He added, "I probably bring a strong appreciation for what's come before. I understand the culture of the college and how things might affect constituents."

The president made a passing reference to the political frame only once in the interview. When asked to define the concept of leadership, the president responded, "To lead a group of people banded together toward common ends and to help them identify and move toward the achievement of those ends by maximizing their strengths and minimizing their weaknesses." In the group meeting the president twice employed the

political frame when dealing with two agenda items: (a) in reference to adding a board member whose background was outside of the historical profile of a board member and (b) when discussing the evaluation of the institutional mission. Although the president seemed to principally function from the structural frame of reference, there was no indication in the observation or in the interview that he wielded power and control in an overbearing or bureaucratic manner. However, the president was only in his third year and, as his tenure increases, he may become more bureaucratic through his primary use of the structural frame.

The political frame of reference was employed by each of the group members; however, it was utilized primarily in a theoretical manner when responding to general questions about leadership and teamwork. Only one group member mentioned the group's functional use of the political frame. When asked how the group was most useful, he responded, "I think we do create an environment in which the mission of the school can be carried out. We secure and allocate resources, identify tasks that must be done, and offer support to staff, faculty, and students."

Functional domain analysis.

The administrative group at Earnhardt performed constructive activities in each of the three functional domains identified by Bensimon and Neumann (1993): utilitarian, expressive, and cognitive. The utilitarian function aides in achieving a sense of rationality and maintaining control over institutional functions. The expressive function reinforces a sense of connectedness among group members, while the cognitive function acknowledges and enlarges the intelligence of group members to enable the team to act as a creative system (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993).

When questioned about the usefulness of the group, the Earnhardt president responded: “They generally represent their areas well. They are knowledgeable and are aware of the needs in other areas that affect their accomplishment of the mission.” His reply acknowledged the group's utilitarian function which involves maintaining control over institutional functions, taking action, and making decisions. Similarly, every group member believed that the most important function of a leadership group involved accomplishing the mission and vision of the institution. Only one of the group members expanded their response to include the expressive and cognitive domains:

> Beyond [the mission and vision], it's important for the group to work together and have the freedom and ability within the team to think out loud and comment on whatever process we are working on. So it's not individuals working on a specific area but a collective thinking.

When asked, “In what ways do you find your leadership group to be most useful” two of the group members referenced the expressive domain in their responses. The expressive function reinforces a sense of connectedness among group members. The vice president for student services said of the group:

> The ability to think out loud and to consult with each other provides a very supportive environment. It's evolved to that; it wasn't always that way. I think we feel very comfortable working with each other. I suppose it's possible to be too comfortable with one another, but in this case, I think it's a healthy level of comfort. We feel free to challenge each other as well as encourage.

The vice president for academics acknowledged: “I think [the group is] useful in helping us sort through the differences that we have. We are in a transitional period right now so we're all trying to come together regarding where were going.”

When questioned about the group meetings, nearly every administrator referred to the expressive domain primarily as it related to communication within the group. The president, summarizing the responses, stated:

> For the time in the meeting we have access to one another and we can be aware of issues that one another are facing. For example, right now we are facing some really tough issues and student life - some vexing issues. These issues can really take a toll on the vice president for student affairs so we're able to discuss those and encourage and support him. There are a lot of issues that impact every area.

The vice president for academics lauded the value of the group meetings in his response:

> Although I could meet with the other administrators in their offices to resolve issues, we are able to discuss them openly [in the meeting] with all the members of the group present. In addition to the group meetings, we also have face-to-face meetings with the president. But if we only did that we would lose some cohesion. So the meetings help us work together more effectively.

Although it was apparent that the group placed high value on communication, there was a strong undercurrent of strained relations within the group. One group member openly discussed the influences on and the condition of the strained relationships among the administrators. However, the other group members did not broach the personal issues.

When questioned about how the president ensures that every voice is heard, every group member referenced his use of the cognitive domain. The cognitive function

acknowledges and enlarges the intelligence of group members to enable the team to act as a creative system. Although the group members appeared to unanimously acknowledge the president's use of the cognitive function, the researcher did not observe this to be true in a group meeting. Only one group member performed an activity in the cognitive domain during the group meeting. Four of the seven group members performed utilitarian functions, while three performed expressive functions. Although the group members seemed very free to make decisions in their area of responsibility, they avoided the tendency to function only in a utilitarian manner. Instead, they performed a wide variety of activities in the expressive domain.

The group and the models.

The administrative group at Earnhardt College met the criteria for functional and cognitive complexity as defined by the three models. The group possessed at least four of the five core cognitive roles, performed at least one constructive function in each of the three functional domains, and employed all four frames of reference. Consequently, the group could be categorized according to the theoretical models as a functionally and cognitively complex team, although the observation of the group meeting did not necessarily support this conclusion.

The president's primary cognitive frame of reference was the structural frame. In fact, only once in the individual interview did he refer to an alternative frame. In his interview, the president made a passing theoretical reference to the political frame when asked to define leadership. Additionally, when the group members were asked to describe the president as the leader of the group, every group member described his administration, personality, and vision utilizing the structural frame. When the group

members were asked how they found their group to be most useful, the researcher observed the most diverse utilization of frames of reference. All four frames were employed, although the structural frame was utilized by four of the group members.

In the group meeting, the president employed both the structural and political frames of reference. However, the instances in which the political frame was engaged were transitory. Although the human resource and symbolic frames were observed in the interview responses, they were not utilized in the group interactions during the meeting. While the atmosphere within the group meeting appeared to be largely structural and functional in nature, some non-work related banter did occur between three of the group members prior to the official start of the meeting. The president spoke most often in the meeting primarily to summarize the discussion of each agenda item. The most consistent theme that emerged from the interview responses was the president's penchant for open debate. The group members acknowledged that if one of the group members did not take up the opposite side of an issue then the president would. He exhibited great skill when thinking all the way around an issue before arriving at a decision. The president expected the group members to present opposing views for nearly every discussion. This practice was significant because “real teams,” Bensimon and Neumann (1993) found, “must address even the most subtle conflict.”

Each of the three functional domains was observed in the group meeting. Three group members briefly performed expressive functions, while only one team member briefly performed a useful cognitive function. Though all three domains were referenced repeatedly in the individual interviews, the mentions appeared to be largely theoretical. In fact, the responses of the group members to questions about their meeting appeared to

directly contradict the observation of the researcher. When asked what made the meetings important, every group member referenced the expressive domain in their response. However, the utilitarian domain was most employed in the group meeting. Similarly, when asked what the president did to make sure that every voice was heard, every group member referenced the cognitive domain in their response. However, only one team member briefly performed a useful cognitive function in the meeting.

All five core cognitive roles were performed by group members, although the president performed two roles. In the group meeting, the researcher observed that the thinking roles were performed by four of the seven group members. The synthesizer role was performed only by the president. Additionally, one group member seemed to be left almost entirely out of the discussions in the group meeting. According to the three models of cognitive and functional complexity, the group was identified as a complex team. However, when considered holistically, the above observations indicate that strong characteristics of a working group also exist within the Earnhardt group.

Charlestown College.

Group milieu.

Charlestown College was located in a small city just a few miles from a small metropolitan area in East Tennessee. The small city and surrounding area in which the college was located had a total population of 36,000. In the fall of 2009, Charlestown College had a student population of 1103. The college had recently completed a multi-million-dollar Civic Center. The new building appeared to be the most prominent facility on the campus.

The president had been with the college as president for 16 years and had been serving in higher education for more than 45 years. He had earned a Doctor of Philosophy degree. The Administrative Cabinet at Charlestown was comprised of four vice presidents and one faculty chair. There were two female and three male group members. The faculty chair position was elected by the faculty each year. It had been a common practice to reelect the faculty chair for a one year following the initial year. The current faculty chair was serving his first year term. The vice president for student services had served in her role for nearly 6 years. However, she was the only group member who had been at the college for more than two years. The president offered that he had worked with 24 different vice presidents in 16 years at the college. Additionally, one position, that of the vice president for enrollment, was vacant at the time of the observation and interviews. In contrast, only one of the group members had less than 15 years experience in higher education.

Group meetings were scheduled weekly in the president's conference room around a large conference table with the president seated at one end of the table. The group members also met individually with the president once a week. The faculty chair, however, did not have an individual weekly meeting scheduled with the president. Yet he acknowledged that the president's "door is always open, and I have been able to meet with him on occasion to discuss an important issue." One vice president mentioned that the group members also get together as needed to discuss day-to-day campus issues.

The meeting agenda were compiled from submissions by the group members to the administrative assistant. The administrative assistant compiled the agenda and generally submitted it to the group members via electronic mail a day or two before the

meeting. The administrative assistant attended the meetings and recorded the minutes of the meeting. The group meetings usually did not have a time limit. Addressing the construction of the meeting agenda, the president explained:

> We have three categories of topics, and the group members can place an agenda item in any of those categories. The first category is decisions. We know going in that our intent is to take whatever the topic is and ultimately make a decision. The second category is discussion which means we don't put these items on the table with a view to decide anything. However, we are simply going to talk about the pros and cons. The third category is information – items which the cabinet members are simply providing as information to the other group members. There are times, when we're trying to make a decision, that the discussion will cause us to realize that we need more information in order to make a decision and we will make a decision later on when we have more information available. Our policy on decisions is that each group member must first go to the other group members outside the cabinet meeting and have an individual conversation with each of them so that there's an opportunity for them to discover each other's perspective. Once the group member has completed their conversations with the other group members, the item may be placed on the agenda for a decision. This is a way to avoid having conflict in cabinet meetings. But it's also a way to ensure that the discussions and decisions within the group meeting are substantive, rather than a group member trying to influence someone else or playing to their peers.

The group meeting observed by the researcher was approximately 35 minutes in duration. The researcher was invited to sit at the conference table with the group

members. Two agenda items were presented for decision, one item was presented for discussion, and four agenda items were presented for information. The group members appeared to freely present agenda items during the meeting. Each of the group members seemed to participate in the discussions equally. It appeared that the president spoke least often primarily to ask questions or summarize the discussion. During an interview, one vice president acknowledged:

> We have very few decision items come through the cabinet. However, we have a lot of discussion items that facilitate the decisions by the individual vice presidents. We don't have to make very many decisions because our decisions are primarily decided by the strategic plan.

The president of Charlestown College had resigned for retirement and was serving out the remainder of the year. A new president had been selected but had not yet taken office. Consequently, several corresponding issues surfaced in the interviews. The administrative group had decided that, rather than developing a new five-year strategic plan, they would craft a two-year bridge plan. Their decision was based primarily on the fact that they did not wish to constrain the new president from casting new vision shortly after taking office, yet there was a need to provide some stability during the transition. At least two group members mentioned that, as the current president’s departure nears, there seems to be an ongoing struggle to determine who will take the lead among the group members. Another acknowledged that, since the current president was such a remarkable leader, some group members feel as if they are losing a parent.

Thinking role analysis.

Bensimon and Neumann (1993) discovered that the thinking roles within an administrative group may be dynamic, occasionally both alternating between group members as well as being shared by group members. Additionally, any individual group member may perform multiple roles or no role at all. The five thinking roles are each a thinking process or style that individual group members bring to, or induce within, a group (Knudson, 1997). Bensimon and Neumann identified five core thinking roles frequently found within groups: definer, analyst, interpreter, critic, and synthesizer. For the team of six members at Charlestown College to be considered cognitively complex, the group members may need to perform multiple cognitive roles, particularly if there were a group member who performed no role.

Though the individual thinking roles were apparent in both the group observation and in the individual interviews, the researcher determined that no thinking role could be identified for two of the group members from the interview responses. However, all five thinking roles were observed within the group, particularly in the group meeting. The definer role, which voices a view of the group's reality, was shared by four of the six group members at Charlestown. The performance of this role was most apparent in the group meeting in the presentation of agenda items. Ironically, the president did not perform the definer role in the meeting. He did, however, attribute the role to himself when answering the question, "How would you describe yourself as the group's leader?" "My major role here is to not let the group forget where we're going. It's easy for the group members to become totally focused on their area, but I have to be above all that." The president provided additional indication of his definer role by stating, "When we are

together as a team, I'm usually moderating." However, the group members are noticing the president retreat from actively performing this role. They attributed his behavior to his "lame-duck" presidency. One group member tentatively posited, "I am seeing him at the end of his career. So I'm not sure if his mode of leadership today is typical of his 17 years leading this group or if it's something that has evolved within the last couple of years." The senior member of the group observed, "As the president has begun transitioning out of office, he has become less engaged in what's going on in each of the divisions." Another added, "The president is more hands-off and allows the group members to run their areas. Now this may be related to the fact that he has announced his retirement."

The researcher observed that all of the members of the group performed the analyst role in the cabinet meeting by providing a deep examination of issues defined within the group. The president's most substantive interactions occurred while questioning the presentation of one agenda item in particular. The president specifically acknowledged that he must regularly conduct a holistic evaluation of the overall direction of the institution to ensure that it is following the mission, vision, and strategic plan. The best illustration of the analyst role may have been that, when the researcher questioned how the administrators viewed the group as least useful, every group member paused for a significant amount of time. It appeared that each member was deeply analyzing either how to constructively answer the question, or if the group was, in fact, "least useful" in any area.

The president also performed the interpreter role within the group translating how people outside the group are likely to view institutional issues. When questioned about

how he views the leadership group as least useful, the president admitted that from time to time the staff in the individual offices do not have a clear picture of where the institution is headed because the group members have not yet learned how to communicate effectively with their constituents. The faculty chair suggested that this deficiency may be the byproduct of an administrative group whose average tenure within the group is less than three years. He questioned whether the rich history and culture of the institution could be transmitted to the relatively new members of the group. He did, however, acknowledge that "the new individuals may have ideas that help the college move forward in a new direction." It appeared that the faculty chair regularly interpreted the issues through the eyes of the faculty. Another vice president functioned as an interpreter in the group meeting when addressing a particular agenda item that involved losing employee due to economic concerns in the life of the particular employee.

The lone critic within the group regularly surfaced challenging questions. When asked how the leadership group was least useful, she freely offered:

> I think we are suffering a little bit from the "lame duck" presidency. It's ironic that we have fallen into so many predictable traps. Although we talk a lot about the tendencies of a lame duck presidency and purpose to avoid the pitfalls, we've not done a very good job. I think it's because of some external pressures that we've had. What that means is, the president's mode of management has been to hire good people and get out of their way and let them do their job. That mode of leadership may work when the president sits in a very strong position of leadership; however, when the presidency is not so strong, the approach can become disparate. In that way we have become dysfunctional. I don't worry too

> much about it because I really do think that these issues will fall away when the new president takes office.

Later, she confessed:

> I try to maintain a balance understanding that, though many of the group members are short timers, they are all very competent in their areas. So I learned to be quiet and listen and appreciate the fact that I don't have a more valuable perspective than the other group members.

No group member performed the critic role in the group meeting. This could have been due, in part, to the fact that (a) the president's structure for the agenda provided that many conversations regarding significant decisions were held outside of and prior to the meeting, and (b) they lone critic was absent from the meeting which the researcher observed.

The president was a synthesizer in the group meeting, facilitating a summation of the group's reality, particularly as it related to two agenda items. One related to a budgetary concern and the other to a personnel issue. When questioned about his synthesizer role within the group, the president confirmed: "My primary role is to ensure that I know where we're going and communicate that to them and get them thinking actively about how we accomplish those things." The individual interviews revealed that one of the vice presidents also regularly performed the synthesizer role. She offered:

> I am in a unique position because I have done things on behalf of nearly every department on the campus so I understand most everyone's perspective. I was a debater in high school and college so I can argue either way for nearly every

> issue. I often find myself smoothing feathers and functioning as a glue to keep everyone together amid strong opinions.

Frames of reference analysis.

Frames of reference serve as conceptual maps for understanding an organization and interpreting the effectiveness of others' behavior. Bolman and Deal (1991; 2008) identified four frames of reference: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. The primary frame of reference espoused by the Charlestown president was the political frame. Focusing on monitoring internal and external environments, the political frame utilizes influence to gather necessary resources, establishes relationships with constituents, and develops coalitions amid a compromising structure. The political frame emphasizes the use of power and influence to direct resources to specific individuals or groups. The president at Charlestown College defined leadership from the political perspective as "the ability to mobilize people to accomplish a common goal that they all are pursuing together." When asked to define his role within the group, the president responded:

> My major role here is to not let the group forget where we're going. It's easy for the group members to become totally focused on their area, but I have to be above all that and be able to see what's happening to the organization as a whole and see whether the various divisions are moving in such a way that the overall direction of the institution is right. Although our strategic planning sets the direction for every area, I have to be constantly aware if each of the areas is moving toward the established goals.

Although the group members had differing opinions regarding the president's cognitive frame(s), they appeared to confirm his primary use of the political frame. This may have been due, in part, to the fact some of the administrators viewed that the president had chosen a more hands-off approach as he transitioned out of office at Charlestown. One group member acknowledged that "the president is more hands-off and allows the group members to run their areas." He added that the president's laissez-faire approach "may be related to the fact that he has announced his retirement" and a new president has been selected. The administrator with the most tenure within the group confessed that she "would like to see him be more hands-on and manage the group dynamic particularly when there's misbehavior. However, that's not his style." In addition to the president, the researcher observed that only one other group member briefly employed the political frame.

The group member's responses to the interview questions appeared to reference the structural frame most often. The structural frame of reference focuses on organizational configuration with emphases on establishing goals and priorities, systematic decision-making, efficiency, and effective communication. One group member observed:

> We have really talented people on this team with varied experience. We have people who are quite successful within their own realms. Since we have had four vice president changes in three years, this team has not yet gelled together. As the transition continues [from the current president] to the new president, I think the team will continue to gel together better, primarily because of the talent that is on the team.

One group member admitted that they group was occasionally deficient in the area of communication because they do not “let information flow [from the group] back down to the rest of the campus.” Displaying strong advocacy for the structural frame, one administrator acknowledged what he had learned from a recent group decision:

> You have to be able to remove yourself from the emotional attachment to things. I saw the stress on the other group members, and I tried to encourage them. But when you are under that kind of pressure and you're making decisions of that magnitude, you've got to be able to step away from the emotions of the issues.

The researcher observed that the structural frame was also employed in the group meeting. All of the Charlestown College group members presented at least one of the seven agenda items. Two group members jointly presented one item. Although the president presented one agenda item, it was not formally on the written agenda prior to the meeting.

Though the group presented many of the agenda items from the structural frame of reference, the researcher observed a high level of interaction, collaboration, discussion, and problem solving in the discussion each item on the agenda. This interaction effectively demonstrated that the group espoused the human resource frame, which focuses on the partnership and needs of the organization and constituents emphasizing the achievement of goals through collaboration, consensus building, problem-solving through teams, loyalty to the institution, and leading by example. Specifically, each of the administrators indicated that providing a role model and leading by example were essential characteristics of leadership. When asked, “In what ways do you find your leadership group to be most useful” one member of the group replied:

> This is the best team I've ever worked with. Before we bring anything to the cabinet meetings, we are expected to confer with one another so that we are able to come in to the meeting and use the time wisely. So a significant amount of interaction occurs outside of the meetings. I hate the fact that we're losing the president because he is the quintessential leader in that he does not infuse his own agenda onto the team. He will guide and facilitate and mentor, but he will not direct.

Another group member added, “I think the atmosphere or the environment that he has worked hard to create facilitates collegiality and collaboration of items that are not necessarily on the agenda.” When asked about how conflict was handled within the group at Charlestown, the president’s response demonstrated that he had intentionally worked to develop the human resource frame of reference within the group:

> In your dealings with people you always start out making a choice between trusting them and mistrusting them. Everything else follows that decision. Your behavior comes out of the trust or mistrust. If you trust each other, you will care about each other, confront problems together, and cooperate to solve those problems. If you're in mistrust mode, you operate from a win-lose assumption. You assess every situation wondering if you are winning or if you are losing. So I occasionally go over this paradigm with our group members. It's very apparent when someone chooses to view a particular individual through the lens of mistrust rather than trust. Nothing productive ever comes out of mistrust mode.

The symbolic frame, which emphasizes accurately interpreting the institution’s history, maintaining its culture, and reinforcing its values to foster shared meaning, was

not observed at all in the group meeting and was referenced only in the individual interviews. When questioned about his concerns with how the group functions, the group member responded:

> The very rich tradition here is a vital part of this college. So there is always a curiosity when you have so many in the room who have not been part of the historical culture. The question becomes, "Can culture be transmitted to the folks within the administrative group?" But the new individuals may have ideas that help the college move forward in a new direction. Other than the president, only two group members have more than five years experience at the college.

Functional domain analysis.

The administrative group at Charlestown College performed practical activities in all three functional domains: utilitarian, expressive, and cognitive. The utilitarian function aides in achieving a sense of rationality and maintaining control over institutional functions. The expressive function reinforces a sense of connectedness among group members, while the cognitive function acknowledges and enlarges the intelligence of group members to enable the team to act as a creative system (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993).

When questioned about the most important roles of a leadership group, the Charlestown president responded primarily in a utilitarian manner:

> Because they are a leadership group, each of them has followers that they need to mobilize toward the common goal. I count on our group members to do that. They know that we have annual goals every year so they know where we are going and we work all that out together as a team before the year even starts.

> Their job is to go back into their division and mobilize their people, inspire them, and direct them to accomplish the goals that have been set forth for the year.

In contrast, the president utilized the expressive domain when asked about how conflict is handled within the group.

Although the group appeared to function both from the utilitarian and cognitive domains equally in the group meeting, when asked about how the group is most useful, all but two of the group members referenced the utilitarian domain. One group member alluded to the expressive domain acknowledging that “a significant amount of interaction occurs outside of the meetings.” The other referenced both the expressive and cognitive domains in her response:

> The group helps us to have a broader view of how our decisions affect the broader campus and not just our own area. We are often sounding boards for each other both in the meeting and outside of the meeting which I think is helpful. We also provide support for each other.

However, the researcher did not observe the expressive domain in use in the group meeting. It is possible that the group's expressive functions occur outside of the group meetings due to the structure of the meeting agenda and decision-making policies. All members of the group did engage in utilitarian functions in the group meeting, and the researcher observed that all but one performed cognitive functions in the meeting.

When questioned about their individual role within the leadership group, four of the six administrators referenced the utilitarian domain. One referred to the expressive function by responding: “I often find myself smoothing feathers and functioning as a glue

to keep everyone together amid strong opinions." The other group member replied from the cognitive domain:

> I try to be an advocate for my 80 colleagues as the only group member who is not employed by the president. This allows me to be a voice for the employee base. It is a challenge trying to decide when to speak as chair of the faculty and when to function as an employee of the academic dean.

The group members had the most functional diversity when responding to what makes the group meetings important. Each of the three functional domains was mentioned collectively by the group with one group member including all three:

> The group members have to be aware of the decisions of all the areas. On many campuses there are divisions which are perceived as the favorite divisions. This paradigm breeds animosity among the other divisions. We make a purposeful effort not to let that happen here. We have tried to all be ambassadors of the college and be involved in enrollment efforts. I need to be out of my office as much as I am in my office so that I am in tune with what's going on around campus. We have very few decision items come through the cabinet. However, we have a lot of discussion items that facilitate the decisions by the individual vice presidents. We don't have to make very many decisions because our decisions are primarily decided by the strategic plan.

The group and the models.

The administrative group at Charlestown College met the criteria for functional and cognitive complexity as defined by the three models. The group possessed at least four of the five core cognitive roles, performed at least one constructive function in each

of the three functional domains, and employed all four frames of reference. Consequently, the group could be categorized according to the theoretical models as a functionally and cognitively complex team. The observation of the group meeting and the interactions in the group meeting supported this conclusion.

The president employed three of the four frames of reference and appeared to be an unusually gifted leader. His interview responses were immediate, yet substantive. His purposeful communication and behavior was paired with an equally purposeful resolve to abstain from distractions that would cause him to be ineffective as a leader. It was apparent that the president had not only worked to personally develop multiple perspectives, but that he was leading his administrative group to do the same. The president did not utilize the symbolic frame in the group meeting in his responses to the interview questions. It was not apparent in the group meeting that the president utilized the political frame of reference, in part, because he spoke less often than the group members. However, the interview responses demonstrated that the president had established a human resource and political structure that facilitated interactions among the group members from these frames of reference both in the meetings and outside the meetings. The researcher observed highly interactive, complex discussions in the group meeting. Only the president's frames of reference, structural and human resource, were evident in the meeting. However, all four frames were engaged in the interview responses. It was apparent that the group members came to the meeting expecting to make progress and finalize decisions. Consequently, the fast-paced, complex discussions facilitated a high level of achievement in the meeting.

The researcher made three significant observations:

1. The symbolic frame was engaged only briefly by one administrator in the interview responses.
2. Each of the three functional domains appeared to be employed equally by the group members in the interview responses.
3. Most of the administrators paused conspicuously when questioned about how the team is least useful.

It seemed that the members of the group may have been averse to openly expressing their criticism. It is also possible that they may have been trying to recall if conflict actually existed within the group.

The utilitarian and cognitive domains were observed in the group meeting, although the expressive domain was not noted. However, all three domains were referenced repeatedly in the individual interviews. All of the group members except one performed utilitarian functions in the meeting. Additionally, all of the members performed at least one useful cognitive function in the meeting. In their responses to the interview questions, every group member utilized all three domains. When asked to score their personal groupwork and the groupwork of the group holistically, all of the Charlestown group members related the assessed score to their functions and areas of responsibilities indicating that the group approached groupwork primarily from the utilitarian domain. As mentioned above, the substance of the interview responses differed significantly from the highly interactive, complex discussions observed in the group meeting.

All five core cognitive roles were performed by group members. In the group meeting, the researcher observed that the thinking roles were performed by all of the

group members. Moreover, the synthesizer role was performed only by the president, the interpreter role was performed by just one member of the group, and no one performed the role of critic. Additionally, no one group member dominated the interactions, although one individual spoke much less often than the others in the group meeting.

When the interview responses were combined with the group observation field notes, the researcher observed:

1. Recent significant financial strain had affected the qualitative and quantitative health of the institution.
2. The president's impending retirement had influenced the behavior and decision-making processes of the administrative group.
3. The president performed three thinking roles: definer, interpreter, and synthesizer.
4. No role was identified for one of the group members.
5. Only one thinking role was identified for each of the other group members.

According to the three models of cognitive and functional complexity, the group was identified as a real team. Moreover, the above observations also indicate that strong characteristics of a real team exist within the administrative group at Charlestown College.

Cross Site Analysis.

To discover commonalities, differences, and themes from all the cases, the cross-site analysis considers the administrative group from each of the three institutions. The analysis of the groups includes group milieu, cognitive frames of reference, functional domains, and an evaluation of the groups as compared to the three models.

Group milieus.

The three educational institutions included in this study were all small, private colleges in East Tennessee with student populations from 779 to 1103 and a minimum of 10 programs of study. All three colleges were single-campus institutions with distinctive geographic settings. Trident College was in a semi-rural community, Earnhardt College was in a suburban community of a metropolitan area, and Charlestown College was located in the heart of a small city.

Each of the three campuses had striking similarities in campus amenities and development. The three institutions had experienced significant facility and campus improvements in the recent past. All three institutions seemed to be financially stable although Charlestown College was emerging from a period of significant financial hardship. Earnhardt College appeared to be the most financially stable as a result of an unusually high endowment. Consequently, each of the administrators appeared to be adequately resourced in their areas of responsibility.

The administrative groups appear to be structured similarly, although they ranged from a total of 6 to 9 members including the presidents. The variation in the size of the groups appeared to be related to the college's organizational structure. As such, it is difficult to determine the ideal size of an administrative group. It seems reasonable that a larger administrative group would contribute to a higher level of group functional and cognitive complexity. For example, the five thinking roles were shared between the president and five group members at Charlestown College, the smallest of the three administrative groups, whereas the thinking roles were shared between nine individuals at Trident College, the largest of the three groups. In this study, however, the researcher

found that the smallest group (the group at Charlestown College) appeared to be the most complex of the three administrative groups.

A total of 22 group members participated in the study. Every participant was Caucasian. There were six female members and 16 male members. The presidents in this study were notably similar. All were Caucasian males from 64 to 72 years of age, and all had more than 30 years in higher education and had served at their institution for more than 10 years. Two had served as presidents for more than 13 years while the third was in his third year of presidency. One held a Master of Divinity degree while the other two presidents held Doctor of Philosophy degrees.

The groups were also similar in terms of structure, age, education, and years in higher education. Each of the groups consisted of a combination of a president and vice presidents, deans, and/or directors, although one group also included a faculty chairperson. There did not appear to be a strategically designed rationale for the assignment of position titles at any of the three institutions. The average age of the three groups ranged from 50 to 53. Three of the 22 group members had earned a bachelor's degree while the majority of the group members had earned either a master's or doctoral degree. The average number of years each group had served in higher education was 17 or 18.

One group consisted of all male members while the other two groups included male and female group members more equally. There was significant diversity among the group members in both the number of years at the institution and a number of years in current position. The group members at Charlestown College had significantly fewer years at the institution and in their current positions; however, it appeared that the group

members at Charlestown were more experienced in their areas of responsibility and better prepared to achieve the mission of the institution.

Team building was considered by Bensimon and Neumann (1993) to be a never ending endeavor. As tenured administrators leave the groups and new members are introduced, a lengthy amalgamation process ensues. Consequently, the groups at the three institutions could have been still learning to function as a unit. Every group had members who had been part of the group fewer than three years. Four of the six administrators at Charlestown had been part of the group fewer than three years. At Earnhardt College, the president had served for fewer than three years. The newest administrative group member in this study acknowledged that, "The very rich tradition here is a vital part of [Charlestown] College. So there is always a curiosity when you have so many in the room who have not been part of the historical culture." The most tenured vice president at Charlestown shared her approach to the junior group members:

> Though many of the group members are short timers, they are all very competent in their areas. So I learned to be quiet and listen and appreciate the fact that I don't have a more valuable perspective than the other group members.

Thus, the turnover within administrative groups may actually aid the group members in achieving the mission and goals of the institution. For example, in this study, the group with the lowest average number of years both at the institution and as group members appeared to be the most cognitively and functionally complex of the three administrative groups.

The three colleges in this study did not appear to be facing any impending crises. As mentioned above, Charlestown College was emerging from a period of significant

financial hardship. The group observation and interviews indicated that the group and the institution had successfully navigated the situation. In fact, the college had recently completed the construction of a new $47 million performing arts facility. Charlestown College was also faced with the retirement of the current president.

The majority of the presidents and group members spoke positively about their groups. Only one of the 22 group members voiced notable concern for the relationships within the group to the point of considering transitioning to employment at a new institution. Many of the group members indicated that they had learned or were learning the importance of working through conflict and debate rather than internalizing disagreement. A number of the group members also mentioned that addressing the complex issues on a small college campus requires patience and time. Each of the groups acknowledged that change is possible and is necessary provided that the institution does not succumb to mission-drift.

Thinking role analysis.

Bensimon and Neumann (1993) identified five core thinking roles frequently found within groups: definer, analyst, interpreter, critic, and synthesizer. The thinking roles within each of the three administrative groups were dynamic and performed by multiple group members. Several of the administrators performed multiple roles, although no role was identified for three of the 22 group members. Since the specific thinking roles were largely, if not entirely, unknown to the group members, most discussed their role within the group in functional terms as it related to their area of responsibility. When combining the observation of the roles played within the group meeting with those referenced in the interview responses, there was sufficient evidence to

suggest the existence of all five core thinking roles within each of the three administrative groups.

The core thinking roles form the foundation for thinking within the group which allows the group to effectively select, create, and address group issues (Knudson, 1997). The core thinking roles are definer, analyst, critic, interpreter, and synthesizer (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993). The three presidents who participated in this study performed multiple thinking roles within their groups. All three presidents performed the definer and synthesizer roles while the president at Charlestown College added the interpreter role. Additionally, the presidents of all three institutions expected that the group members would contribute to defining the group's agenda and strategy. To do so, each president purposefully structured the group meetings and administrative personnel accordingly. The agenda, in every case, was jointly constructed by the president and the group members. One group member expressed appreciation for this approach by acknowledging: “I like . . . being able to contribute to the agenda.”

The primary analysts of the three groups also performed analytical functions within their respective institutions. Two of the analysts were involved in institutional research and effectiveness and three were responsible for business and finance. One of the groups had one analyst while the other two groups each had two analysts.

The occupational functions and responsibilities of those who were identified as primary interpreters were more diverse. For example, one president, two student services administrators, one academic administrator, one advancement administrator, and one faculty chair performed the interpreter role for their group. Each group had at least two interpreters while the Earnhardt group had three. The diversity of group members who

performed the interpreter role indicates complex thinking and functioning within the groups. The presidents are supported by a number of group members who are capable of identifying how constituents perceived individual issues and how the issues correspond with the mission and history of the institution. Since none of the presidents were directly promoted from within the institutions, it became important for other administrators to assume the role of the interpreter for the group.

The role of critic appeared to be equally diverse within the administrative groups. One primary critic was a female and the most tenured within her group and two male primary critics were the least tenured members of their respective groups. Two of the groups had one primary critic and the third group had two primary critics. As one might expect, the two critics who served together readily admitted occasional frustration with one another.

The primary synthesizer on each of the teams was their president, although the enrollment management administrator also served as a synthesizer for one of the groups. In the group meetings, the president often summarized the discussions and interactions facilitating consensus and collaborative decisions. Presidents often naturally gravitate to the synthesizer role because they are ultimately responsible to the governing board for the actions of the group (Knudson, 1997). As the groups are brought together by the synthesizer they become more unified around institutional mission and vision. The vice president who performed the synthesizer role described how she viewed her essential responsibility:

> I play the role of tying pieces together and part of that is because of my area of responsibility. I am the one that thinks of organizing a variety of things including

initiatives. If it's going to fall through the cracks and I know that's going to happen then I'll pick it up and take responsibility. I think it's fairly well known that I am the go-to person for making something happen or for pulling all the people the room together to confront an issue.

Frames of reference analysis.

The three presidents in this study displayed diversity in the number and type of cognitive frames of reference that each employed: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. Each of the three presidents utilized the structural and political frames, although only two added the human resource frame. None of the president's employed the symbolic frame in the group meetings or the individual interview responses. In the Charlestown College administrative meeting, the political frame was noticeably absent. The researchers assumed that the absence of this key frame resulted from the strategic structure and procedures of the group. Many group interactions and decisions were made outside of the Charlestown meetings at the request of the president. Thus, political negotiation and influencing was not necessary in the group meetings.

The president at Trident College employed the structural/political/human resource combination; however, his structural perspective was utilized far more than the other two. As a result, the internal tension between his espoused theory and his behavior occasionally resulted in statements such as, “I want them to develop their own budgets. But if they don't make enough cuts, I'll do it for them.” In the Trident and Earnhardt meetings, the human resource and symbolic frames were not employed. It would have been difficult for the group members to employ these two frames because the meetings moved at a steady pace and it appeared that the presidents were actively facilitating the

meetings and moving the groups from item to item on the agenda. Additionally, the interview responses of the Trident and Earnhardt group members were principally structural in nature. The interview responses of the Charlestown group members were more evenly distributed between the structural, political, and human resource frames of reference while the symbolic frame was only briefly employed.

Functional domain analysis.

The administrative groups at Trident and Earnhardt demonstrated useful activities in each of the three functional domains (utilitarian, expressive, and cognitive) both in the group meetings and in their individual interview responses. However, the Charlestown group did not engage the expressive domain in their group meeting. It appeared that the Charlestown group's expressive functions occurred outside of the group meetings due to the strategic structure of the meeting agenda and decision-making policies. The Charlestown group was the most functionally diverse group in their meeting, with all members of the group engaging in utilitarian functions and all but one performing cognitive functions. The Charlestown group members also demonstrated the highest level of functional diversity when responding to what makes the group meetings important. Each of the three functional domains was mentioned collectively by the group with one group member including all three.

The Earnhardt group appeared to be the most expressive of the three and a group meeting. Moreover, when questioned about the group meetings, nearly every administrator referred to the expressive domain primarily as it related to communication within the group. Although it was apparent that the group placed high value on communication, there was a strong undercurrent of strained relations within the group.

One group member openly discussed several strained relationships among the administrators. However, the other group members did not broach the interpersonal issues. Only one group member performed an activity in the cognitive domain during the Earnhardt group meeting. Four of the seven group members performed utilitarian functions, while three performed expressive functions.

When questioned about the ways he found the Trident group to be most useful, the president's response was entirely utilitarian in nature. When asked about his role within the group, the president once again employed the utilitarian domain. The group meeting was almost entirely utilitarian and the discussions appeared to lack substance. The group began the meeting with only three items on the written agenda, although several informal items were added in the meeting. Only one member briefly performed useful functions in the expressive and cognitive domains in the meeting. This same member was considered by several of his colleagues to be "strong-willed," "argumentative," "irresponsible," "inflexible," and "opinionated," often adversely affecting the group. Primarily, the group member had received these labels as the result of his inability to act on a key issue.

The researcher asked each of the 22 administrators to assign a score to their personal level of group work and to that of the group using a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest. The scores were totaled and averaged. The resulting averages are included below in Table 4. There did not appear to be any correlation between the assessed scores of the group members and what was observed in the meetings and interview responses. For example, the Charlestown College administrative group appeared to be the most functionally and cognitively complex of the three groups. Yet

the average personal score was the lowest of the three groups, and the average group score was in the middle of the three colleges. The Trident group appeared to be the most utilitarian and bureaucratic of the three colleges, yet it received the highest average group score. It is possible that as a group learns to think and act in a more complex manner they become more modest in their self-assessment.

Table 4 *Average Groupwork Score on a Scale of 1 to 10*

Category	**Trident College**	**Earnhardt College**	**Charlestown College**
Score Assigned to Personal Groupwork	7.2	7.3	6.6
Score Assigned to Groupwork of the Group	7.9	7.6	7.7

The groups and the models.

Each of the three administrative groups met the criteria for functional and cognitive complexity. The groups possessed at least four of the five core cognitive roles, performed at least one constructive function in each of the three functional domains, and employed all four frames of reference. Consequently, the groups could each be categorized according to the theoretical models as a functionally and cognitively complex team. However, only the interactions and groupwork of the Charlestown group supported the conclusion that the group functioned as a real team. The Trident and Earnhardt groups appeared to function primarily as working groups rather than real teams.

The group meetings were each convened around a large conference table to facilitate a more inclusive seating arrangement for the group members, although the Trident meeting occurred around a conference table in the president's office. Although each of the four frames of reference was represented within the Trident group, the group meeting and the interview responses were overwhelmingly structural in nature. When the Earnhardt group members were asked how they found their group to be most useful, the researcher observed the most diverse utilization of frames of reference. All four frames were employed, although the structural frame was utilized by four of the group members. The president at Charlestown College employed three of the four frames of reference and appeared to be an unusually gifted leader. His interview responses were immediate, yet substantive. His purposeful communication and behavior was paired with an equally purposeful resolve to abstain from distractions that would cause him to be ineffective as a leader. It was apparent that the Charlestown president had not only worked to personally develop multiple perspectives, but that he was leading his administrative group to do the same.

Each of the three functional domains was observed in the Trident group meeting; however, only one group member performed both the expressive and cognitive functions. This same member, as mentioned earlier, was considered by several of his colleagues to be "strong-willed," "argumentative," "inflexible," and "opinionated," often adversely affecting the group. Though all three domains were referenced repeatedly by the Earnhardt administrators in the individual interviews, the mentions appeared to be largely theoretical. In fact, the responses of the group members to questions about their meeting appeared to directly contradict the observation of the researcher. The utilitarian domain

was most employed in the group meeting. Although every Earnhardt group member referenced the cognitive domain when asked what the president did to make sure that every voice was heard, only one team member briefly performed a useful cognitive function in the meeting. The utilitarian and cognitive domains were observed in the Charlestown group meeting, although the expressive domain was not. However, all three domains were referenced repeatedly in the individual interviews.

Each of the five core cognitive roles was performed by all three groups. However, no role was identified for one Charlestown member and two Trident members. Multiple thinking roles were performed by the three presidents and two other Trident members. One Trident group member and one Charlestown member seemed to be left almost entirely out of the discussions in their respective group meetings.

Summary

According to the three models of cognitive and functional complexity, the administrative groups of all three colleges were identified as complex teams. However, when considered holistically, the observations of the group meetings and analysis of the interview responses at Trident and Earnhardt strongly demonstrated characteristics representative of working groups. In contrast, the observation and interview responses of the administrative team at Charlestown College confirmed the existence of a real team.

Chapter Five: Discussion

This study explored administrative groups of three small, private colleges in the state of Tennessee in post-secondary education to examine how college presidents and their executive officers think and work together. The focus of this study was to determine if the administrative officers functioned as working groups, real teams, or if elements of both existed. This final chapter restates the focus of this study, reviews the methodology utilized in the study, summarizes the results, and presents practical implications for educational leaders and for future research.

Overview of the Study

Previous research revealed that leadership groups can help organizations address a wide range of issues through increased access to information and an expanded ability to process information from multiple perspectives. Specifically, leadership groups in higher education are most effective when they incorporate both functional and cognitive complexity into a team structure that effectively communicates with constituents (Amey, 2005; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Bentley et al., 2004; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Knudson, 1997; Kogler Hill, 2010; Morgan, 1986; Rubenfeld & Scheffer, 2005).

This study utilized three existing models to assess functional and cognitive complexity within groups. Bensimon and Neumann (1993) offered a unique framework for presidential leadership groups that included both functional and cognitive complexity. In the functional domain model, they observed that when all three functional domains are utilized within a group, the group is more capable of responding to the complex needs of the institution. On the contrary, simple teams utilized only one or two of the three

functional domains, primarily focusing on the utilitarian functions and largely disregarding cognitive functions. They pioneered a second model in which they found that cognitively complex teams possess at least four of the five thinking roles, while cognitively simple teams lack two or more of these thinking roles (Bolman & Deal, 2008). The five core cognitive roles were definer, analyst, critic, interpreter, and synthesizer.

Utilizing the theory of conceptual pluralism, Bolman and Deal (2008) synthesized disparate leadership perspectives and organizational thought into a third model: the four frames of reference which included structural, human resource, symbolic, and political frames. Bolman and Deal found that when employing a frames analysis, the use of multiple frames was a strong indication of functional complexity (see Figure 4). A significant number of more recent studies have utilized Bolman and Deal's frames theory (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Birnbaum, 1992; Eddy, 2003; Favero, 2006; Garcia et al., 2008; Hollingsworth et al., 2002; Israel & Kasper, 2004; Kezar, 2002; Knudson, 1997; Kohnen, 2005; Nieman, 2008; St. John, 2009; Weiss, 2007). For college administrators, their effectiveness, or functional complexity, was directly related to the number of frames they employed (see Figure 4) (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Eddy, 2003; Kohnen, 2005).

Previous research principally focused on comparing diverse types of institutions and administrative teams to one another. In contrast, this study explored the commonalities and differences within the characteristics and functions of administrative groups in a sample of similar institutions. Previous studies primarily categorized leadership groups from an either/or perspective – a working group or a real team, a simple team or a complex team, etc. Additionally, prior studies determined that real (or

complex) teams yield a higher level of effectiveness. However, Katzenbach and Smith (2006) cautioned that not all groups should aspire to function as real (or complex) teams. They discovered that there are organizational venues suited for both working groups and real teams, and leadership groups, whether they are simple or complex, can still achieve high levels of performance. Consequently, this study sought to determine if the administrative groups in the three small, private Tennessee colleges functioned as working groups, real teams, or a combination of both.

Methodological Review

A multiple-site case study was conducted in three small, private colleges of similar size in the state of Tennessee. A total of 22 administrators participated in in-depth interviews. An on-site observation of an administrative group meeting was conducted at each of the three sites and pertinent organizational documents were examined. Data collected from these evidential sources were analyzed and coded into both prefigured categories and emergent categories that arose from the analysis. The categories were primarily derived from three models for determining functional and cognitive complexity in groups. The three models evaluated the core thinking roles, frames of reference, and functional domains of the group. Analyses of the data were conducted utilizing several methods. A case study database was assembled that included interview transcripts, field notes, collected documentation, observation notes, and reflective notes for each group. The researcher compiled reasonable conclusions based on themes in the data. The findings were organized into a rich, full description in narrative form presented in Chapter 4. This study sought to discover themes from the

data that could assist other small, private college leaders in developing and maintaining high performing teams.

Summary and Discussion of the Results

The results of the study are summarized according to the focus of the inquiry utilizing categories which considered the composition of each administrative group and core components of the three models of group functional and cognitive complexity. The framework for the three models is specifically founded upon core thinking roles, cognitive frames of reference, and functional domains respectively.

Composition of administrative groups.

The personal characteristics of the three small, private college presidents in this study were similar. They were all Caucasian males in their mid-60s to early 70s, two of the three held an earned doctoral degree, and all had more than 30 years experience in higher education. An average of seven group members comprised each of the administrative groups in the study. The group members were all Caucasian with two thirds of them being male. Each of the group members were referred to as vice president, dean, or director and represented the following institutional areas: academic programs, student services, administrative services, and enrollment services. The average length of service in higher education for the group members was 18 years with two of the groups serving at their current institution for an average of 15 years (see Tables 1-3).

Group thinking roles.

The three small, private college administrative groups in this study were determined to be cognitively complex because they demonstrated at least four of the five core thinking roles. The thinking roles within each of the three administrative groups

were dynamic and performed by multiple group members. Several of the administrators performed multiple roles, although no role was identified for three of the 22 group members. Since the specific thinking roles were largely, if not entirely, unknown to the group members, most discussed their role within the group in functional terms as it related to their area of responsibility. When combining the observation of the roles played within the group meeting with those referenced in the interview responses, there was sufficient evidence to suggest the existence of all five core thinking roles within each of the three administrative groups.

The core thinking roles form the foundation for thinking within the group which allows the group to effectively select, create, and address group issues (Knudson, 1997). The core thinking roles are definer, analyst, critic, interpreter, and synthesizer (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993). The three presidents who participated in this study performed multiple thinking roles within their groups. All three presidents performed the definer and synthesizer roles while one president added the interpreter role. Additionally, the presidents of all three institutions expected that the group members would contribute to defining the group's agenda and strategy. To do so, each president purposefully structured the group meetings and administrative personnel accordingly. The agenda, in every case, was jointly constructed by the president and the group members.

The primary analysts of the three groups each performed analytical job functions within their respective institutions. Two of the analysts were involved in institutional research and effectiveness and three were responsible for business and finance. One of the groups had one analyst while the other two groups each had two analysts.

The occupational functions and responsibilities of those who were identified as primary interpreters were more diverse. For example, one president, two student services administrators, one academic administrator, one advancement administrator, and one faculty chair performed the interpreter role for their group. Each group had at least two interpreters. This diversity of group members performing the interpreter role indicated complex thinking and functioning within the groups. Since none of the presidents were directly promoted from within the institutions, it became important for other administrators to assume the role of the interpreter for the group.

The role of critic appeared to be equally diverse within the groups. One primary critic was a female and the most tenured within her group while the primary critics in the other institutions were male and the least tenured members of their respective groups. Two of the groups had one primary critic and the third group had two primary critics.

The primary synthesizer on each of the teams was their president, although the enrollment management administrator also served as a synthesizer for one of the groups. In the group meetings, the president often summarized the discussions and interactions facilitating consensus and collaborative decisions. Presidents often naturally gravitate to the synthesizer role because they are ultimately responsible to the governing board for the actions of the group (Knudson, 1997). As the groups are brought together by the synthesizer they become more unified around institutional mission and vision.

Group frames of reference.

The three groups in this study displayed diversity in the number and type of cognitive frames of reference that each employed—structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. Bensimon and Neumann (1993) found that multiple frames of reference

allow a president to alter responses to diverse issues and circumstances. Presidents who employ multiple frames of reference typically have more than five years in their positions. In contrast to the findings of Bensimon and Neumann, the presidents at two of the institutions had served more than 13 years in their respective positions while the third president was only three years into his first presidency. All of the small, private college presidents in this study utilized multiple cognitive frames of reference. Two of the president's employed three frames of reference and one employed two frames of reference. The structural and political frames were used by all three presidents, although only two added the human resource frame. The two presidents that employed three of the four cognitive frames of reference were those who had served in their current positions for more than 13 years; however, the paired-frame president was only in his third year.

In one of the administrative meetings observed by the researcher, the political frame was noticeably absent. The researcher assumed that the absence of this key frame resulted from the strategic structure and procedures of the group and their meetings. At the request of the president, many group interactions and decisions were made outside of the group meetings. Thus, political negotiation and influencing was not necessary in the group meetings. This group appeared to be more functionally and cognitively complex, particularly in the group meeting. In the other two group meetings, the human resource and symbolic frames were not employed. It appeared that the presidents were actively facilitating the meetings and moving the groups from item to item on the agenda which made it difficult for the group members to employ these two frames.

When a leader utilizes multiple frames, the frames typically complement one another to facilitate greater effectiveness and performance. In contrast, when an

administrator employs only the bureaucratic frame, teambuilding and group work are difficult because the bureaucratic frame focuses on power, control, and bureaucracy (Knudson, 1997). Moreover, a president occasionally experiences internal tension between the espoused theories and his behavior when he employs multiple frames. The researcher found this to be true in this study. As the presidents employed frame combinations, the internal tension occasionally resulted in conflicting statements and actions. As presidents become more comfortable in their roles, they are able to more naturally and more effectively incorporate the human resource and symbolic frames into their thinking and behavior (Knudson, 1997).

Previous studies found that many presidents of small and midsize institutions did not employ the structural frame of reference as one might expect, but rather employed the human resource and symbolic frames most frequently. However, in this study the researcher found that all of the presidents utilized more than one frame, and the symbolic frame was not utilized by any of the presidents. This seems to indicate that leadership in small, private colleges may be evolving to a more collegial approach.

Group functional domains.

The cognitive frames of reference employed by the group members appear to parallel their use of functional domains. The presidents in this study all employed multiple frames of reference, and all performed useful activities in all three functional domains: utilitarian, expressive, and cognitive. In contrast, Knudson (1997) observed that leaders functioning from a single frame of reference might only perform group functions in one or two of the domains.

The administrative groups at two of the three institutions demonstrated useful activities in each of the three functional domains both in the group meetings and in their individual interview responses. However, the third group did not engage the expressive domain in their group meeting. It appeared that expressive functions performed by this group occurred outside of the group meetings due to the strategic structure of the meeting agenda and decision-making policies because the group was the most functionally diverse group in their meeting, with all members of the group engaging in utilitarian functions and all but one performing cognitive functions. The members of this group demonstrated a much higher level of functional diversity than the other two institutions when responding to what makes the group meetings important. Each of the three functional domains was mentioned collectively by the group with one group member including all three.

Each of the 22 administrators assessed a score to their personal level of group work and to that of the group (see Table 4). Ironically, the scores assessed by the group members appeared to contradict what was actually observed in the meetings and interview responses. For example, of the three groups, the group that appeared to be the most functionally and cognitively complex had the lowest average personal score of the three groups, and their average group score was in the middle of the three colleges. The group that appeared to be the most utilitarian of the three received the highest average group score. It is possible that as a group learns to think and act in a more complex manner they become more modest in their self-assessment.

The groups and the models.

The administrative groups at each of the three small, private colleges met the criteria for functional and cognitive complexity. According to the three complexity models, the groups possessed at least four of the five core cognitive roles, performed at least one constructive function in each of the three functional domains, and employed all four frames of reference. Consequently, the groups could each be categorized according to the theoretical models as a functionally and cognitively complex team. However, only the interactions and groupwork of one group supported the conclusion that the group performed as a real team. Two of the groups appeared to function primarily as working groups rather than real teams.

One president employed three of the four frames of reference and appeared to be an unusually gifted leader. His interview responses were immediate, yet substantive. His purposeful communication and behavior was paired with an equally purposeful resolve to abstain from distractions that would cause him to be ineffective as a leader. It was apparent that this president had not only worked to personally develop multiple perspectives, but that he was leading his administrative group to do the same.

Combining the group meeting with the interview responses, each of the administrative groups performed at least one useful function in each of the three functional domains. Though all three domains were referenced repeatedly in the individual interviews by the administrators, the mentions by one of the groups appeared to be largely theoretical. In fact, the responses of the group members to questions about their meeting appeared to directly contradict the observation of the researcher. Although the group members referenced the cognitive domain often when responding to the

interview questions, only one team member briefly performed a useful cognitive function in the meeting.

Each of the five core cognitive roles was performed by all three groups. However, no role was identified for three of the administrators. Multiple thinking roles were performed by the three presidents and two other group members. In two of the three group meetings, one group member seemed to be left almost entirely out of the discussions.

This study examined administrative group leadership in three small, private colleges to determine if the administrative officers functioned as working groups, real teams, or if elements of both existed. According to the three models of cognitive and functional complexity, the administrative groups of all three colleges were identified as real teams. However, determining whether a group performed as a working group, real team, or a combination of both was not as simple as identifying whether or not the teams demonstrated the components of the three models. In the previous study in which two of the models were developed, Bensimon and Neumann (1993) did not observe the administrative groups in action. This study observed a meeting of the groups at each of the three sites to determine if the interview responses of the group members matched the observation of the group interactions in their natural settings. When considered holistically, the observations of the group meetings and analysis of the interview responses at two of the three small, private colleges posed significant differences. While the interview responses of the two groups indicated functional and cognitive complexity, the observations of the group meetings demonstrated characteristics representative of working groups. Consequently, there appeared to be strong evidence that the

administrative groups of these two institutions combined simple elements of working groups with complex interactions characteristic of real teams. In contrast, the group observation and interview responses of the administrative team at the third institution confirmed the existence of a real team.

Limitations of the Study

As in many qualitative studies, the conclusions of the researcher are largely dependent upon data collected during interviews and observations. These conclusions could be affected if the participants withheld information (Creswell, 2007). The researcher purposefully established trust and rapport with the participants to facilitate accuracy in the gathering of data. To do so, the researcher employed the highest standard of ethics at every level of this study, including, but not limited to: complete confidentiality, recording of interviews and observations to ensure accuracy, use of field notes to accurately record the observations of the researcher, participant and peer review, and strict adherence to the Confidentiality Statement outlined by the Liberty University Committee on the Use of Human Research Subjects.

Since this study considered only three private colleges and a relatively small number of administrative team members, the generalization of this study and its conclusions is limited. It is possible that greater generality may be achieved by utilizing a larger sample size. The design of this study is further limited since it was conducted in a relatively short period of time and produced only a snapshot of the institution, rather than a long-term ethnographic perspective. Additionally, since the principal data (interviews and observations) were gathered solely by the researcher, participant review,

peer review, and review by dissertation committee members provided limited triangulation.

Implications for Administrative Groups

While a single qualitative study does not necessarily provide a sound basis for rigid assertions, several implications for administrative groups and their leaders were suggested in the results of the study. These opportunities for practical application are described below.

1. Thinking and functioning as a real team is the result of purposeful and strategic structure and communication. It is not enough for the team members to understand principles of high performing teams. They must each actively and intentionally engage those principles in their cognitive and functional interactions. To fully understand the dynamics of effective group leadership, administrative groups and their leaders should develop an appropriate administrative structure and a professional development process that integrates the knowledge into group practices.
2. When new members come to the group, group dynamics change. Consequently, as new members are added the group must reassess individual thinking and functioning roles within the group.
3. Cognitive and functional complexity within leadership groups requires a considerable amount of time because group members and their leaders must fully understand the roles of each group member, how those roles relate to the mission and vision of the institution, and the training and development process that must occur for the group to become high performing.

4. Conflict can contribute to individual and group health as well as higher levels of performance. Administrative leadership groups should implement a structure for managing conflict and differences of opinion in a manner in which facilitates institutional growth.
5. Administrative groups should place high value on every thinking role within their particular group. Specifically, group members must acknowledge the significance of the role of the Critic. The critic often voices essential concerns when other group members are reluctant to do so. Conversely, the critic must also acknowledge and support the valuable roles performed by the other group members.
6. Administrative group members must interact with their colleagues from the foundation of a high level of trust. Group members that trust each other will care about one another, confront problems together, and collaborate to solve problems.
7. It is not necessary for leaders to force their current groups into becoming cognitively and functionally complex teams. Working groups, like real teams, can achieve a high level of performance. It is more important for a leader to determine the type of team that is present and then to focus on developing the group members accordingly.

Implications for Research

Several implications for further research, particularly for administrative groups within small, private colleges, were identified in this study. These opportunities for further investigation are described below.

1. Purposeful and strategic structure and communication regarding group administrative structure and professional development processes should be explored. What are the roles of the group members? What are the principles and best practices for developing leadership groups into high performing teams? What role should the group members play in the professional development process?
2. An investigation of the impact of new group members on leadership groups in small, private colleges is needed to specifically address how group dynamics change when new members come to the group. What can be done to prepare group members for these changes?
3. How does gender and ethnicity impact group leadership in small, private colleges? How would this study differ if the leadership groups had higher levels of gender and ethnic diversity? Does gender or ethnicity influence cognitive roles, functional domains, and frames of reference within leadership groups?
4. Can cognitive and functional complexity be developed within simple leadership groups in small, private colleges? What are the leadership characteristics that are required to effectively facilitate this transformation?
5. Specifically, how is conflict handled within small, private college leadership groups? How can conflict contribute to individual and group health and higher levels of performance?

6. What role does trust play within administrative leadership groups? How is it measured and how can it be developed? How does it affect the accomplishment of the mission, vision, and goals of the leadership group?
7. Should leaders ever attempt to lead their current groups to become more cognitively and functionally complex? Is it more profitable for a leader to accept and develop the current working group to achieve a high level of performance, or for the leader to replace the members with those with the aptitude to form a real team? What level of simplicity and/or complexity is necessary to maximize group performance?
8. Is it imperative that the leader of a small, private college leadership group understand whether the group is a working group or a real team? Can a leadership group function effectively, or even at a high level of performance, if the group type has not been determined?
9. Is a particular institutional type or size better suited for a real leadership team? Is there a particular institutional type or size that is better suited for an administrative group which functions as a working group?

Summary

This study distinctively assessed administrative group leadership in three small, private colleges to determine if the administrative officers functioned as working groups, real teams, or if elements of both existed. According to three models of cognitive and functional complexity, the administrative groups of all three colleges were identified as real teams. A holistic review of the results of the study confirmed the existence of a real team in one of the institutions. However, there was strong evidence that the

administrative groups of the two remaining institutions combined simple elements of working groups with complex interactions characteristic of real teams. Finally, the study presented practical implications for future research that could enhance this inquiry as well as broaden the understanding of leadership groups in higher education.

References

Amey, M. (2005). Leadership as learning: Conceptualizing the process. *Community College Journal of Research & Practice, 29*(9/10), 689-704.

Amey, M., & Brown, D. (2000, November). *Interdisciplinary collaboration and academic work.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Seattle, WA.

Ary, D., Jacobs, L., Razavieh, A., & Sorensen, C. (2006). *Introduction to research in education* (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson & Wadsworth.

Baker, G., & Associates. (1995). *Team building for quality: Transitions in the American community college.* Washington DC: Community College Press.

Bassin, M. (1988). Teamwork at General Foods: New and improved. *Personnel Journal, 67*(5), 62-70.

Batterson, M. (2006). *In a pit with a lion on a snowy day.* Colorado Springs: Multnomah.

Beall, D., Evans, D., Farmer, K., Melchert, R., Ross, L., Schmoll, B., & Thompson, D. (2008). Identifying perceptions of professionalism in pharmacy using a four-frame leadership model. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education, 72*(4), 1-8.

Bennis, W., & Nanus, B. (1997). *Leaders: Strategies for taking charge.* New York: Harper & Row.

Bennis, W., Spreitzer, G., & Cummings, T. (Eds.). (2001). *The future of leadership: Today's top leadership thinkers speak to tomorrow's leaders.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bensimon, E. (1989). The meaning of good presidential leadership: A frame analysis. *Review of Higher Education, 12*(2), 107-123.

Bensimon, E. (1991). How college presidents use their administrative groups: Real and illusory teams. *Journal for Higher Education Management, 7,* 35-51.

Bensimon, E., & Neumann, A. (1993). *Redesigning collegiate leadership: Teams and teamwork in higher education.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University.

Bensimon, E., Neumann, A., & Birnbaum, R. (1989). Making sense of administrative leadership: The 'L' word in higher education (In ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 1). Washington, DC: The George Washington University.

Bentley, T., Reames, E., Reed, C., & Zhao, F. (2004). Frames we live by: Metaphors for the cohort. *Professional Educator, 26*(2), 39-44.

Bess, J. (1988). *Collegiality and bureaucracy in the modern university: The influence of information and power on decision-making structures.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Birnbaum, R. (1988). *How colleges work: The cybernetics of academic organization and leadership.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Birnbaum, R. (1989). The implicit leadership theories of college and university presidents. *The Review of Higher Education, 12*(2), 125-136.

Birnbaum, R. (1992). *How academic leadership works: Understanding success and failure in the college presidency.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Blackaby, H., & Blackaby, R. (2001). *Spiritual leadership: Moving people on to God's agenda*. Nashville: B&H.

Bogdan, R. & Biklen, S. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods* (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Bolman, L., & Deal, T. (1991). *Images of leadership* (NCEL Occasional Paper No. 7). Nashville, TN: National Center for Educational Leadership. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED332345)

Bolman, L., & Deal, T. (1997). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bolman, L., & Deal, T. (2008). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership.* (3rd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bonvillian, G., & Murphy, R. (1996). *The liberal arts college adapting to change: The survival of small schools.* New York: Garland.

Bornstein, S., & Smith, A. (1996). The puzzles of leadership. In F. Hasslebein, M. Goldsmith, R. Beckard, and R. Schubert (Eds.), *The leader of the future* (pp. 281-292). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Boulanger, M. (2003). Why consider a Christian college? *Campus Life, 61*(10), 26-30.

Burns, J. (1978). *Leadership.* New York: Harper & Row.

Burns, J. (2003). *Transforming Leadership.* New York: Grove.

Carnegie, D. (1964). *How to win friends and influence people.* New York: Pocket Books.

Chang, R. (2001). *The passion plan at work.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Cohen, M., & March, J. (1986). *Leadership and ambiguity: The American college presidency* (2nd ed.). Boston MA: Harvard Business School.

Cooper, H. (2009). *Research synthesis and meta-analysis: A step-by-step approach* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Corrigan, M. (2002). *The American college president.* Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dean, K. (2008). *At the base of the bridge: A case study of boundary spanning by members of a university's presidential leadership team.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park.

Dearborn, P. (2005). *The transition from high school to college: a study of the perspectives of first-year students, administrators, and faculty members at two independent Bible colleges.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Temple University, Philadelphia.

Dewey, M. (1998). *An exploratory study of the relationship between cognitive complexity of college administrative teams in private liberal arts colleges and organizational health as one dimension of organizational effectiveness.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Vanderbilt University, Nashville.

Drucker, P. (1996). The effective executive. In *The executive in action* (p. 525). New York: Harper Business.

Duguid, J., & Brown, P. (2000). *The social life of information*. Boston: Harvard Business School.

Dumaine, B. (1994, September 5). The trouble with teams. *Fortune*, 86-92.

Duncan, A., & Harlacher, E. (1991). The twenty-first century executive leader. *Community College Review, 18*(4), 39-47.

Eavey, C. (1964). *History of Christian education.* Chicago: Moody.

Eddy, P. (2003). The impact of presidential cognition on institutional change. *The Community College Enterprise, 10*(1), 63-77.

Eddy, P., & VanDerLinden, K. (2006). Emerging definitions of leadership in higher education: New visions of leadership or same old "hero" leader? *Community College Review, 34*(1), 5-26.

Eisenstat, R., & Cohen, S. (1990). Summary: Top management groups. In J. Hackman (Ed.), *Groups that work (and those that don't): Creating conditions for effective teamwork* (pp. 78-88). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Eisenscher, M. (1999). Leadership development and organizing: For what kind of union? *Labor Studies Journal, 24*(2), 3-21.

Evans, R. (2007). The authentic leader. In M. Fullan (Ed.), *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership* (pp. 135-158). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Favero, M. (2006). An examination of the relationship between academic discipline and cognitive complexity in academic deans' administrative behavior. *Research in Higher Education, 47*(3), 289-290

Featherstone, A., & Brumette, L. (2007). Using Distance Education in Graduate Programs. *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics, 39*(2), 285-299.

Fenby, F. (2006). *Examining dissatisfaction with an online doctoral program*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX.

Fielder, F. (1967). *A theory of leadership effectiveness.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

French, R. (2001). *Encouraging participation in college and university distance education programs.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, State University of New York at Buffalo.

Gaebelein, F. (1951). *Christian education in a democracy.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Garcia, J., Gorosave, G., & Slater, C. (2008). Challenges of a successful first-year principal in Mexico. *Journal of Educational Administration, 46*(6), 702-714.

Gardiner, J. (1988). Building leadership teams. In M. Green (Ed.), *Leaders for a new era.* New York: American Council on Education/Macmillan Publishing Company.

Gardner, J. (1990). *On leadership.* New York: Free Press.

Gardner, H., Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Damon, W. (2001). *Good work: When excellence and ethics meet.* New York: Basic Books.

Gaspar, L. (1963). *The fundamentalist movement 1930-1956.* The Netherlands: Mouton and Company.

Green, M. (1988). *The American college president.* Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Green, M. (1994). Not for wimps or cowards: Leadership in the post-heroic age. *Educational Record, 75*(3), 55-60.

Guskin, A., & Bassis, M. (1985). Leadership and institutional renewal. *New Directions for Higher Education, 49,* 13-22.

Guzzo, R., & Dickson, M. (1996). Teams in organizations: Recent research on performance and effectiveness. *Annual Review, 47,* 307-338.

Hackman, M., & Johnson, C. (2004). *Leadership: A communication perspective* (4th ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland.

Hanna, K. (1986). The second hundred years. *Moody Monthly: The Christian Family Magazine, 86*(6), 52-55.

Hensley, R. (1998). *A case study of presidential leadership in selected Montana higher education institutions.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Montana State University, Bozeman.

Higgins, B. (2008). *An evaluation of the relationship of nursing school administrators' leadership frame orientation to faculty perceptions of job satisfaction and leadership effectiveness.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri, Columbia.

Holliday, A. (2007). *Doing and writing qualitative research* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Hollingsworth, C., Brewer, E., & Petty, G. (2002). Leadership characteristics and work ethic of extension family and consumer science educators. *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences. 94*(3), 46-55.

House, R., & Aditya, R. (1997). The social scientific study of leadership: Quo vadis? *Journal of Management, 23*(3), 409-473.

Howell, J., & Eidson, D. (1985). *The idea of an ideal liberal arts college.* Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Hoy, W., & Miskel, C. (2008). *Educational administration theory, research, and practice.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Ibbotson, S. (2005). *Career paths of Bible college presidents.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Gonzaga University, Spokane, WA.

Israel, M., & Kasper, B. (2004). Reframing Leadership to Create Change. *The Educational Forum, 69*(1), 16-26.

Jamison, L. (1997). *Leadership - Is gender an issue? Women's leadership in the 21st century.* A consensus report of the CSIS International women's leadership program. Washington, DC: The Center for Strategic & International Studies.

Kallgren, C. (1991). The invisible colleges. *Christianity Today*, *35*(10), 27-28.

Katzenbach, J., & Smith, D. (2001). *The discipline of teams: A mindbook-workbook for delivering small group performance.* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Katzenbach, J., & Smith, D. (2006). *The wisdom of teams: Creating the high performance organization.* New York: HarperCollins.

Keeton, M. (1971). *Models and mavericks: A profile of private liberal arts colleges.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Kezar, A. (1998). Trying transformations: Implementing team-oriented forms of leadership. In S. Frost (Ed.), *Using teams in higher education: Cultural foundations for productive change* (pp. 57-72). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kezar, A. (2002). Expanding notions of leadership to capture pluralistic voices: Positionality theory in practice. *Journal of College Student Development, 43*(4), 558-578.

Kezar, A. (2006). Redesigning for collaboration in learning initiatives: An examination of four highly collaborative campuses. *The Journal of Higher Education, 77*(5), 804-838.

Kezar, A., & Lester, J. (2009). *Organizing Higher Education for Collaboration: A Guide for Campus Leaders.* New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Kezar, A., Carducci, R., & Contreras-McGavin, M. (2006). Rethinking the "l" word in higher education: The revolution of research on leadership. *ASHE Higher Education Report, 31*(6), 101-136.

King, J. (2007). *The American college president*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Knudson, L. (1997). *Team leadership in three midwestern community colleges: The president's cognitive frame of reference and its relationship to real versus illusionary teams.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Kansas, Lawrence.

Kogler Hill, S. (2010). Team leadership. In P. Northouse (Ed.), *Leadership: Theory and practice* (5th ed.), (pp. 241-270). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kohnen, J. (2005). Reframing Organizations. *The Quality Management Journal, (12)*1.

Kouzes, J., & Posner, B. (2002). *The leadership challenge.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kozlowski, S., & Bell, B. (2003). Work groups and teams in organizations. In W. Borman, D. Ilgen, & R. Klimoski (Eds.), *Handbook of psychology: Industrial and organizational psychology: Vol. 12.* (pp. 333-375). London: Wiley.

Lang, E. (1999). Distinctively American: The liberal arts college. *Daedalus, 128*(1), 133-150.

Larson, C., & LaFasto, F. (1989). *Teamwork: What must go right/what can go wrong.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Larson, C., & LaFasto, F. (2001). *When teams work best: 6,000 team members and leaders tell what it takes to succeed.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lawrence, P., & Nohria, N. (2002). *Driven.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Lawson, K., & Eguizabal, O. (2009). Leading Ministry Teams, Part II. *Christian Education Journal, Series 3, 6*(2), 265-281.

Mangano, K. (2007). *College presidents and administrative team members: An investigation of a team leadership approach to financial decision-making in liberal arts colleges.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

March, J., & Simon H. (1963). *Organizations.* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Maxwell, J. (1993). *Developing the leader within you.* Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Maxwell, J. (2003). *Relationships 101: What every leader needs to know.* Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

McClellan, G. & Stringer, J. (Eds). (2009). *The handbook of student affairs administration.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

McNeal, R. (2000). *A work of heart: Understanding how God shapes spiritual leaders.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. (1997). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education.* San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass.

Morgan, G. (1997). *Images of organization.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Neff, T., & Citrin, J. (1999). *Lessons from the top.* New York: Doubleday.

Neumann, A. (1991). The thinking team: Toward a cognitive model of administrative teamwork in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education, 62*(5), 485-513.

Neumann, A., & Bensimon, E. (1990). Constructing the presidency: College presidents' images of their leadership roles, a comparative study. *Journal of Higher Education, 61*(6), 71-91.

Nieman, J. (2008). *Knowing the context: Frames, tools, and signs for preaching.* Minneapolis: Fortress.

Northouse, P. (2010). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Patton, M. (2001). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Pfeffer, J. (1977, January). The ambiguity of leadership. *Academy of Management Review,* 104–112.

Pierson, A. (1886). *The crisis of missions: Or, the voice out of the cloud.* New York: Robert Carter and Brothers.

Rees, F. (2001). *How to lead work teams: Facilitation skills.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Ricci, E. (2001). *The policymaking function of the faculty senate in a comprehensive liberal arts university: A case study.* Accessed on 4/17/2009 at http://www.newfoundations.com/Policy/Ricci.html.

Rice, R., & Austin, A. (1988). High faculty morale: What exemplary colleges do right. *Change, 20,* 51-58.

Rice, R., & Austin, A. (1991). High faculty morale: What exemplary colleges do right. In M. Petersen (Ed.), *ASHE reader in organization and governance in higher education* (pp. 208-216). Needham Heights, MA: Ginn.

Riechmann, D. (1991). *Team leader effectives in high-involvement, high-performance teams in higher education.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Roberts, D. (2007). *Deeper learning in leadership: Helping college students find the potential within.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Ross, M., & Green, M. (1998). *The American college president.* Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Ross, M., Green, M., & Henderson, C. (1993). *The American college president.* Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Rubenfeld, M. & Scheffer, B. (2005). *Critical thinking tactics for nurses.* Boston: Jones and Bartlett.

Sanborn, M. (2004). *The Fred factor.* Colorado Springs: WaterBrook.

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and social services* (3rd ed.). New York: Teachers College.

Senge, P. (1990). *The fifth discipline.* New York: Doubleday.

Sergiovanni, T. (1992). *Moral leadership: Getting to the heart of school improvement.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Shields, C. (2003). *Good intentions are not enough.* Lanham, MD: Scarecrow.

Solansky, S. (2008). Leadership style and team processes in self-managed teams. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies, 14*(4), 332-341.

St. John, E. (2009). *College organization and professional development: Integrating moral reasoning in reflective practice.* New York: Routledge.

Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stanley, A. (2003). *The next generation leader.* Sisters, OR: Multnomah.

Stogdill, R. (1974). *Handbook of leadership: A survey of theory and research.* New York: Free Press.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Trubowitz, S. (2005). Creating a culture for learning. *Educational Horizons, 83*(3), 171-176.

Weber, M., & Karman, T. (1989). Graphite into diamonds: Using teams to strengthen intercollegial interaction. *Innovative Higher Education, 14*(1), 49-56.

Weick, K. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Weiss, S. (2007). Pastor-principal relationship in the parish school. *Catholic Education, 11*(1), 7-22.

Wheelan, S. (1999). *Creating effective teams: A guide for members and leaders.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Wolbrecht, T. (1990). *Why did this one fail? A case study of the demise of a small Christian college.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Portland State University, Portland, OR.

Yin, R. (2008). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yukl, G. (1989). *Leadership in organizations* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Appendix A – Consent Form – President

Michael E. Nichols
158 Pebble Dr.
Dayton, TN 37321

January 15, 2010

Dear (Name):

You have been selected to participate in a study that is being conducted by myself, Michael Nichols, a doctoral student in the School of Education at Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia. The study will focus on presidential leadership teams in small, private colleges.

The School of Education at Liberty University supports the protection of human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided to assist you in deciding whether you wish to participate in the present study, *Administrative Leadership in Three Small, Private Tennessee Colleges: Working Groups, Real Teams, or Both?*. You have been selected as a potential participant due to the location and certain demographic elements of your institution. Please know that even if you agree to participate, participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty and without affecting your relationship with the researcher or Liberty University.

I am studying administrative leadership groups and how they function. As part of this study, I would like to schedule an in-depth interview with you of approximately one hour in length. You will be asked to discuss a variety of topics related to leadership and your leadership team. I am also requesting permission to interview the members of your leadership team, as you so designate. This study involves minimal risk for the subjects and institutions which will be no greater than experienced in everyday activities. The information you provide will be analyzed in conjunction with the interviews of your team members and those of two other Tennessee small, private col1eges to identify themes and issues related to team leadership. I would also like to observe a meeting of your leadership team to gain additional perspective regarding how the team functions. With your permission, the interviews will be audio recorded. You have the right to have the recorder turned off at any time you choose.

All information gathered from this study will be kept strictly confidential. Neither individuals nor their institutions will be identified by name in any materials emanating from this study. The contribution of this research to developing an understanding of presidential leadership teams in small, private colleges may be significant, as no similar

study has yet been conducted. In exchange for your assistance, I will provide you with a summary of the research results in the form of the final chapter of the dissertation.

Please feel free to ask any questions at this time. If questions arise at a later date, please contact the researcher at Michael E. Nichols, 158 Pebble Dr., Dayton, TN 37321, 904.629.7555, mnichols@liberty.edu. The researcher's advisor is Dr. Barbara Boothe, who may be contacted at 434.592.3002 or bboothe@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher or advisor, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Fernando Garzon, Chair, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 2400, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at fgarzon@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

Michael E. Nichols

Please sign your consent with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the procedures, the benefits you may expect, and the minimal risk involved. I sincerely appreciate your assistance.

Signature:_____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher:_____Date: _____

With my signature, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Consent Form for my records.

Appendix B – Consent Form – Group Member

Michael E. Nichols
158 Pebble Dr.
Dayton, TN 37321

January 15, 2010

Dear (Name):

You have been selected to participate in a study that is being conducted by Michael Nichols, a doctoral student in the School of Education at Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia. The study will focus on presidential leadership teams in small, private colleges.

The School of Education at Liberty University supports the protection of human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided to assist you in deciding whether you wish to participate in the present study, *Administrative Leadership in Three Small, Private Tennessee Colleges: Working Groups, Real Teams, or Both?*. You have been selected as a potential participant due to the location and certain demographic elements of your institution. Please know that even if you agree to participate, participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty and without affecting your relationship with the researcher or Liberty University.

I am studying administrative leadership groups and how they function. As part of this study, I would like to schedule an in-depth interview with you of approximately one hour in length. You will be asked to discuss a variety of topics related to your leadership team. This study involves minimal risk for the subjects and institutions which will be no greater than experienced in everyday activities. The information you provide will be analyzed in conjunction with the interviews of your team members and those of two other Tennessee small, private col1eges to identify themes and issues related to team leadership. I would also like to observe a meeting of your leadership team to gain additional perspective regarding how the team functions. With your permission, the interviews will be audio recorded. You have the right to have the recorder turned off at any time you choose.

All information gathered from this study will be kept strictly confidential. Neither individuals nor their institutions will be identified by name in any materials emanating from this study. The contribution of this research to developing an understanding of presidential leadership teams in small, private colleges may be significant, as no similar study has yet been conducted. In exchange for your assistance, I will provide you with a summary of the research results in the form of the final chapter of the dissertation.

Please feel free to ask any questions at this time. If questions arise at a later date, please contact the researcher at 158 Pebble Dr., Dayton, TN 37321, 904.629.7555, mnichols@liberty.edu. The researcher's advisor is Dr. Barbara Boothe, who may be contacted at 434.592.3002 or bboothe@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher or advisor, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Fernando Garzon, Chair, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 2400, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at fgarzon@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

Michael E. Nichols

Please sign your consent with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the procedures, the benefits you may expect, and the minimal risk involved. I sincerely appreciate your assistance.

Signature:_____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher:_____Date: _____

With my signature, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Consent Form for my records.

Appendix C – Observation Checklist

College: _____

Date of Meeting: _____

Duration of Meeting: _____

Group Members Present:

_____

_____

_____

Agenda Items Dealt With:

_____

_____

_____

Group Interactions:

Lateral:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Leader to Group:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Draw diagram of observation setting.

Functional Domains Observed:

Utilitarian - providing information, coordinating, planning, making decisions:

Expressive - mutual support, counsel to the president:

Cognitive - questioning, challenging, arguing, multiple perspectives, monitoring and feedback:

Core Thinking Roles Observed:

Definer - voices a view of the group's reality (vision, ideas):

_____

_____

_____

Analyst - provides deep examination of the issues defined (analyzing, root of the problem, multiple perspectives):

_____

_____

_____

Interpreter - translates how people outside the group are likely to see the issues (historical perspective, precedent, outside perception):

_____

_____

_____

Critic - redefines, reanalyzes, or reinterprets the issues (asks why?, what if?):

_____

_____

_____

Synthesizer - facilitates a summation of the group's reality (fosters consensus and tolerance):

_____

_____

_____

Frame(s) of Reference Observed:

Structural - structure, organization, setting priorities, making decisions, communicating through established lines of authority, correcting actions:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Human Resource - building consensus, team problem solving, loyalty and commitment to the college, leading by example:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Political - mediation, negotiation, influencing through persuasion and diplomacy, establishing relationships with constituencies, developing coalitions:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Symbolic - management of meaning, maintaining culture, manipulating symbols such as language, myths, stories and rituals to foster shared meaning and beliefs:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Observed Group Behaviors vs. Interview Responses:

Appendix D – Interview Protocol

Interviewee _____ Position _____

Date _____ Time _____ Place _____

Interviewer _____

The purpose of this study is to identify how the administrative leadership group works in a small, private college setting. I am defining the administrative leadership group as the president's inner circle. (Your president has indicated that you are a member of the leadership group at _____.) You and the individuals with whom you work most closely will be interviewed to determine the group's role and function and your role on the group.

1. There are no right or wrong answers.
2. Confidentiality will be strictly maintained – only myself and transcriptionist will know the actual identity of the colleges. The identity of the school and personnel will not be revealed in the study.
3. You will be given the opportunity to review the transcript of your interview and suggest revisions.
4. You will receive a summary of the results of the entire study.

Interview

1.0. What does the concept "leadership" mean to you? How do you define good leadership?

2.0. What does the concept "team" mean to you? What would you say are the roles and most important functions of a leadership group? In what ways do you find your leadership group to be most useful? Least useful?

3.0. What role do you play in the leadership group? (Ask each member about the role of other members.)

3.1. Most leadership groups develop a pattern of behavior or a way of doing business. Sometimes this is referred to as the group's operating style. Could you describe the most apparent aspects of the leadership group's operating style here at _____?

3.2. How often does the group meet together? For what purposes does the group meet? How is the meeting agenda constructed?

3.3. What makes your meetings important?

4.0. How would you describe the quality of the communication within the group? What does your president (or you) do to make sure that every voice is heard, even opposing ones?

4.1. How is conflict handled within the group? How do you feel about it? What gets in the way of effective groupwork?

4.2. How would you describe your president (or yourself) as the group's leader?

4.3. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, what score would you assess to the level of your groupwork within the group? Why? What score would you assess to the groupwork of the group as a whole? Why?

4.4. What do you think most contributed to the forming of the current leadership group here at _____? What are your concerns about how this group functions?

4.5. From your experience, what kinds of things should the members of a leadership group have in common? How should members of the group differ from each other?

4.6 What do you get personally from membership in this group?

4.7 If a newcomer to your leadership group were to ask you, What are the unwritten rules for the leadership group here at _____, the unspoken things I really need to know to get along and to be effective in the group?, what would you say?

5.0. I would like to learn a little more about how this group works by asking you to think of a recent, important issue that the group had to deal with. Could you tell me what it was about, and how the group handled it?

5.1. How did the group's performance compare with your expectations? What did you learn from the experience?

6.0 Is there someone else (other than the group members) that I should consult to learn more about the administrative group and how it functions?

Thank you for participating in this study. Reassure him or her of confidentiality.

Appendix E – Prefigured Coding Scheme

Functional Domains

Code	Concept	Key Behaviors
utl	Utilitarian	controlling, decision making, information giving, planning, coordinating
exp	Expressive	supporting, counseling, socializing, connecting, communicating, feeling
cog	Cognitive	creating, thinking, questioning, challenging, arguing, providing feedback, monitoring, talking, discovering, perceiving

Frames of Reference

Code	Concept	Key Behaviors
str	Structural	organizing, setting priorities, making orderly decisions, communicating via established lines of authority, exercising power and control
hur	Human Resource	consensus building, problem solving, leading by example, demonstrating loyalty and commitment to the college, empowering, demonstrating equality
pol	Political	monitoring the internal and external environments, influencing, establishing relationships, coalition building, compromising
smb	Symbolic	emphasizing and reinforcing values, history, language, myths, stories, rituals, and culture; sharing meaning and belief

Core Thinking Roles

Code	Concept	Key Behaviors
def	Definer	visioning, agenda building, idea generating, concept building

anl	Analyst	analyzing, seeing from different angles, exploring, projecting effects and impacts, seeing the core of the problem or the heart of the issue
int	Interpreter	providing historical perspective, figuring out how things fit with precedent, translating how outsiders will perceive the issues
crt	Critic	redefining, reanalyzing, reinterpreting, strategic thinking, asking radical questions like “why” and “what if’
syn	Synthesizer	eliciting viewpoint and ideas, drawing diverse ideas into a whole, facilitating a climate of tolerance, engaging participation