

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE JOB CHALLENGES OF
INSTRUCTIONAL DEANS IN THE TECHNICAL COLLEGE
SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

by

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Education in the Department of
Educational Leadership,
Policy, and Technology Studies in
the Graduate School of
The University of Alabama

TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

2014

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ABSTRACT

The Technical College System of Georgia serves the people and the state by creating a system of technical education whose purpose is to use the latest technology and easy access for all adult Georgians and corporate citizens. Within each technical college is a hierarchy of faculty, staff, and administrators. The instructional deans serve a vital role at the middle management level.

The purpose of this study was to understand the lived experiences associated with instructional deanship in the Technical College System of Georgia. This study explored the technical college deans' background, role, challenges encountered, skill sets deemed to be important, and preparation for the role as dean. The overarching themes identified are the lived experiences of the instructional deans, the challenges they face, and the strategies they have employed to deal with the challenges associated with their position.

The information gleaned from this study may lead technical college deans to a greater understanding of the job expectations, managerial practices that better prepare them for a leadership role in their college, and strategies for responding to job associated stress.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation is the product of insight, encouragement and support from many people. My sincere gratitude is expressed to those who have assisted me along my educational journey and in the completion of this dissertation. I cannot possibly mention each person who has impacted my life in a way that helped me get to where I am today. It was the product of a large measure of serendipity, fortuitous encounters with people who have changed the course of my academic career.

I am particularly thankful to the committee members who have offered their time to provide me with guidance, Dr. John Dantzler, Dr. Beverly Dyer, Dr. Philo Hutcheson, and Dr. Wayne Urban. I am especially thankful to my dissertation committee chair, Dr. David Hardy, who challenged me, gave me guidance, offered advice, and gave me encouragement.

Finally, I offer my sincerest appreciation to my family and friends who have supported, encouraged, and sustained me when I thought the challenge would overtake me. This process has taught me the power of team and what can be accomplished when everyone pulls together for a common goal. For those who read and edited, and then read and edited some more, I am forever grateful.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Currently the United States is experiencing several factors that are driving many Americans to pursue additional higher education. President Barack Obama has refocused education as a national priority. In his 2009 *State of the Union Address*, the President demonstrated his belief that education is a critical component if we are to remain competitive in the global marketplace. President Obama appealed to all Americans and encouraged them to return to some institution of higher learning and obtain additional skills -- be it technical, community, or four-year college. The President's challenge sent a clear message that all Americans must take this time of economic downturn and use it as a springboard to make them more marketable in the workplace. President Obama has made increasing the knowledge levels of all Americans a national goal and set a benchmark that America will again lead the world in college graduates by the year 2020 (Obama, 2009). The United States is also experiencing an unprecedented economic downturn. The constricting state and federal revenue collections have resulted in all agencies and institutions receiving these funds to reformulate assumptions and strategic plans for the future. Many political talking heads and educational pundits describe the current economic situation second only to the Great Depression of the 1930s. The extremely difficult economic conditions have resulted in eight million jobs being lost over the past three years (Isidore, 2010). Higher education being counter-cyclical to economic conditions, college enrollment across the board has increased dramatically over the past three years. A recent report published by the Pew Research Center states enrollment of 18- to 24-year-old students at post-

secondary institutions is at the highest level in history (Fry, 2009). “Enrollments have been rising over many decades at both two- and four-year colleges, but the most recent spike has taken place entirely at the two-year colleges” (Fry, 2009, p. 1).

The technical college holds a unique position in higher education in the United States. Doctoral and research institutions train their students to become the next researchers and scholars; liberal arts colleges train their students to think critically and analyze problems; community colleges offer low-cost courses that offer the transfer option to four-year colleges; and the technical college offers students a low-cost and quick alternative to learn job-specific skills to obtain a job and begin a career (Couch, 2008). The mission statement of the Technical College System of Georgia reflects that very idea: “The Technical College System of Georgia provides technical, academic, and adult education and training focused on building a well-educated and globally competitive workforce for Georgia” (Technical College System of Georgia webpage, 2010). In order for this goal to be met, there must be adequate leadership to ensure that rigorous academic programs and qualified instructors are in place to meet the growing student demand. That responsibility in the Georgia technical college system falls to the instructional deans (I. Sullivan, personal communication, June 10, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

The technical college system in Georgia has witnessed near continuous enrollment increases over the past forty years (TCSG KMS Data Center, 2010). In order for student expectations to be met, there must be competent and qualified staff to lead the college.

Wolverton, Gmelch, Montez, and Nies (2001) believe that the dean is the “cornerstone of higher education” (p. 1) and that this group must lead the institution regarding policies and practices that bring about necessary curriculum, budgetary, and fundraising changes. The

deanship has changed dramatically over the years, and today's dean, to operate efficiently and effectively, needs to operate more like a Fortune 500 Chief Executive Officer (Bickerstaffe, 2006; Del Favero, 2006). In the past, there had not been an extensive amount of research into the deanship and the criteria that make an outstanding dean (Robbilard, 2000). Another interesting fact is that there really is not an accepted definition for the dean's position (Robbilard, 2000). These factors make it difficult to put professional development plans in place to assure the dean is adequately trained to perform his or her duties. Specific research is needed that explores the preparedness, effectiveness, and success of instructional deans in the Technical College System of Georgia.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the challenges associated with instructional deanship in the Technical College System of Georgia. The study built upon the research already completed in the 1994 study by Seagren, Wheeler, Creswell, Miller, and Grassmeyer. Their study explored the community college deans' background, challenges encountered, skill sets deemed to be important, and preparation for the role as dean. What had not been studied are the lived experiences of the instructional deans, the challenges they face, and the strategies they have employed to deal with the challenges associated with their position.

In an attempt to learn more about these phenomena, the purpose of this study was to explore challenges the instructional dean experiences using a qualitative research approach. This is an appropriate method because the researcher is attempting to understand the shared experience of the instructional deans (Creswell, 2007). Moustakas (1994) stated that when writers use a phenomenological methodology, they interview study participants and listen for multiple realities of their lived experience. Using these shared experiences, the researcher can

compile thoughts looking for themes to emerge to help provide a picture of the realities from a non-quantitative approach. The result from the study of the technical college deans in the Technical College System of Georgia add to the literature already available on the dean's preparation, roles, responsibilities, and challenges and add to the literature information specifically dealing with the dean in the Technical College System of Georgia.

Research Questions

The intent of this study was to explore the challenges faced by instructional deans in the Technical College System of Georgia. Specifically, the study explored the following research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of instructional deans at Georgia's technical colleges regarding the nature of their work;
2. What are the particular challenges that instructional deans face at Georgia's technical colleges regarding the nature of their work; and
3. What strategies and tactics do instructional deans utilize in addressing these challenges regarding the nature of their work?

Definition of Key Terms

Dean: A senior level manager who has the task of managing a specific unit within the college. Responsibilities may include hiring and terminating faculty, mentoring faculty, and evaluating faculty, managing budgets within their unit, participating on college improvement teams, participating in fundraising tasks, performing public relation activities and setting academic policies. Deans are also heavily involved in student/faculty mediation and curriculum and program development (Wolverton et al., 2001).

Types of Institutions: Based on the Carnegie Classifications of Colleges and Universities, these institutions will be defined as two-year, public, associate degree granting institutions. Specifically, the colleges in the study will be from five technical colleges in the metro and northern part of Georgia in the technical college system.

Comprehensive Community College: A college that offers Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of Applied Science and Certificate programs. These colleges serve primarily students seeking the transfer option to four-year institutions (Couch, 2008).

Technical College: A college that offers the Associate of Applied Science, Diploma and Certificate programs. The college serves primarily students that wish to enter the workforce immediately upon completing their program of study. A small percentage of these graduates may seek transfer to four-year institutions and utilize articulation agreements that might be in place (Couch, 2008).

Response Strategies: Techniques, policies, procedures, processes or personal development plans that deans might utilize to help them handle the associated job tasks and stress associated with performing their job duties (Seagren et al., 1994).

Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, the researcher made the following assumptions:

1. The role of the technical college dean includes a unique set of challenges, which differentiate them from other instructional administrators;
2. Technical college deans make use of and rely on a set of challenge response strategies that are unique to higher education;
3. These challenges and response strategies are adequately represented on the researcher-based version of the Seagren et al. (1994) survey instrument that was

used to collect the data in the earlier study;

4. Study participants are honest and truthful in their response to the researcher-based version of the Seagren et al. (1994) survey instrument; and
5. The sample is representative of the technical college dean in the Technical College System of Georgia.

Delimitations of the Study

The researcher has delimited the current study to include the job-related challenges and response strategies of instructional deans in two-year, public, associate degree granting institutions in the Technical College System of Georgia within the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools region. Therefore, the study's findings are not reflective of other administrative positions at other types or levels of colleges or universities, or to deans at private institutions. Further, the data collected was from two-year, public, associate degree granting institutions in the Technical College System of Georgia, and therefore cannot be interpreted to reflect the experiences of all technical and community college instructional deans throughout the United States.

Limitations of the Study

The researcher acknowledges the following possible limitations of the study:

1. Findings were limited by the extent to which participants were able to articulate their experiences of the phenomena in question;
2. Participants in the study may not have fully or honestly disclosed all the facts or all of their beliefs regarding the subject of inquiry;
3. Participants' personal characteristics and professional environments, other than those expressly included in the study may have had an effect beyond what the

researcher was able to infer from the data collected; and

4. The size and scope of the study are small; thus, the results were not appropriate for generalization beyond the particular roles and institutional settings being explored.

Summary

This research is organized in five chapters with accompanying references and appendices. Chapter I included a brief introduction into the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, definition of key terms, assumptions, limitations and delimitations of the study and summary of the chapter. Chapter II includes a review of the existing literature dealing with the history of the dean position, issues associated with defining the dean position, characteristics of the dean, issues and problems associated with the deanship, characteristics that comprise an effective dean, issues related to the level of authority the dean should possess, what management tasks the dean performs and stress factors associated with the dean position. Chapter III includes a description of the research approach, research questions site descriptions, organizational framework, data procedures, research personality, and the timeline for the study. Chapter IV presents the study results and Chapter V includes conclusions, discussions, and recommendations for future research, policy and practice.

The challenge of continuing economic difficulties, the expanding global marketplace, the availability of an inexpensive and skilled workforce overseas and the continued shedding of jobs in America has once again focused a spotlight on the importance of education and producing the most skilled labor force anywhere in the world (Isidore, 2010). In order to meet the economic challenges that lie ahead of us as a country, we must again lead the world in education. The ability to produce an educated and skilled workforce is a critical component if we are to meet the

challenges that confront our nation (Obama, 2009).

The dean of the college, be it technical, community college, or a four-year institution, has the responsibility to lead the college and make sure that curriculum, faculty, facilities and funds are all in place to assure that effective teaching and learning takes place (Wolverton et al., 2001). The day-to-day responsibilities of the dean are significant. The dean has to be a student advocate, faculty mentor, and conduit between faculty and senior leadership. This relationship places the dean in an uncomfortable role of being friend and colleague to faculty while also implementing policies and procedures that faculty might disagree with (Wolverton et al., 2001). The role and scope of the dean has changed dramatically over the past 50 years. Today, the dean needs to operate more like the CEO of a company than ever before (Bickerstaffe, 2006; DeFavero, 2006). This study is significant due to the fact that there has not been a wide-ranging amount of research completed on the role and scope of the dean (Robbilard, 2000). As is seen in the following literature review, the amount of research and data specifically relating to technical colleges and the role the dean plays in making these institutions' academic missions a success was found to be almost nil.

CHAPTER II:
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A History of the Deanship

A literature review quickly reveals that there has been minimal research completed specifically on the role of the technical college dean. The technical colleges serve a large number of students (TCSG KMS Data Center, 2010). In FY 2010, in the state of Georgia, 197,059 students enrolled in the 27 technical colleges. This was a 20% increase in student population from the previous year. During the same time period, the University System of Georgia grew by 3% (TCSG Data Center, 2010; Georgia Board of Regents, 2010). Many Georgia residents are returning to the technical colleges for educational coursework.

“The academic dean has been called the cornerstone of higher education, providing an important foundation to institutions, and creating policies and encouraging practices that improve and sustain” (Wolverton et al., 2001, p. 1). Institutional leadership expects the dean to lead the college and deal with the myriad of issues that confront the institution each day. It has been said that the dean must be faculty leader, curriculum expert, budgeting expert, fundraiser, student adviser, bookkeeper, personnel manager, co-worker, and scholar, while at the same time being the fulcrum between upper administration and their faculty (Wolverton et al., 2001). What makes the dean position so extremely difficult is the reality that they serve two distinct and different masters (Wolverton et al., 2001). The president and provost expect loyalty and immediate response to their concerns and issues, while the faculty expects loyalty to their department and for the dean to fight for department goals and initiatives. Department goals and initiatives may not be congruent with college goals that the president thinks are important. Thus, the dance

between faculty and upper administration can be a very “taxing dance” indeed (Wolverton et al., 2001).

The deanship can be traced back to the early 1800s. The first dean was appointed in 1816 at Harvard University to manage the medical school (McGrath, 1936, 1999). The first dean’s primary responsibility was to be friendly and helpful to students (Brubacher & Rudy, 1958). Between 1830 and 1870, many other institutions embraced the dean concept and positions were added in the fields of law, divinity, and liberal arts and sciences; by the year 1913, the position had gained universal acceptance (Deferrari, 1956; McGinnis, 1933). These deans did not see themselves as leaders of the institution, but rather as promoters of faculty opinion and decision-making. If the dean, as the college representative, and the faculty did not share similar goals, the dean would side with faculty and abandon the idea (Gould, 1964). In its earliest stages, if one were to look at the dean position across all institutional sizes and disciplinary foci, the makeup of the dean position would look identical at all institutions. The dean would have been a white male, 56-year-old who had been in the position for six years. Their biggest and most challenging tasks would have been evaluating faculty. Additionally, the majority of these early deans would have been teaching at least one class along with their dean responsibilities (Wolverton et al., 2001).

Today the dean’s role in higher education has changed dramatically (Wolverton et al., 2001). The early 1900s continued to see the dean primarily as student and faculty advocate. This began to change in the mid 1940s and has continually evolved over the past 50 years into what we see today. The end of World War II resulted in an influx of students due to the implementation of the G.I. Bill. Thus, due to the influx in the 1940s, the dean’s position and responsibilities evolved. The incursion of these students necessitated the advent of the Dean of

Student Affairs. This allowed the instructional deans to relegate many tasks to the newly formed Dean of Student Affairs and let the instructional dean focus primarily on curricula, faculty, and budget issues. The role of the president also changed dramatically during this time as well (Wolverton et al., 2001). The 1960s brought additional physical plant expansion issues, social issues, student unrest and heightened scrutiny to be good stewards of the institution never before experienced. This led the president to become more of a public relations specialist, chief executive, and fundraiser than ever before in the history of higher education. The 1970s and 1980s continued to bring change to the position of instructional dean. More managerial functions became necessary due to the fact that, for the college to operate efficiently and effectively, it had to be run more like a traditional business (Wolverton et al., 2001).

The Changing Role of the Dean

In the past, the instructional dean functioned more in a reactive and festive fashion. The dean would “recognize and reward students with high GPAs at an annual awards dinner: the academic dean was basically a hierarchical, technical, celebratory functionary in the organizational system” (Hyun, 2009, p. 91). Bickerstaffe (2006) believes that today’s dean, to be effective needs to operate more like a CEO than a dean would have in the past. Because of the heightened level of accountability and the need to align curriculum more closely to business requirements, the dean must have the ability to work cooperatively with his business partners. In today’s economic climate, it is also incumbent upon the dean to be able to locate additional funds to offset the continued reallocation of state appropriated funds (I. Sullivan, personal communication, June 10, 2010).

Typical challenges of the dean’s position include being faculty leader, curriculum expert, budgeting expert, fundraiser, student adviser, bookkeeper, personnel manager, co-worker and

scholar. An additional challenge for today's dean is the requirement that they must operate more like a CEO than a traditional dean would have in the past (Wolverton et al. 2001). Because of the heightened level of accountability and the need to align curriculum more closely to business requirements, the dean must have the ability to work cooperatively with their business partners. In today's economic climate it is also incumbent upon the dean to be able to locate additional funds to offset the continued reallocation of state appropriated funds (Bickerstaffe, 2006; Del Favero, 2006).

Robillard (2000) stated that the first obstacle in the amount of research available on the role of the dean is the lack of definition for the term *dean*. The information available on exactly what the dean does and the duties that make up this job description are also very limited. The result is that there simply has not been that much research conducted on this vital position at the college (Robillard, 2000). Dill (1976) provided an interesting definition of the dean:

Like medieval galleons, deanships come in many sizes and styles. They range widely in cost and complexity, and in accommodation for crew and cannon power. Most are built without design, improvised instead from memories of previous successes and failures and elaborated to the extent that local initiative and creativity will allow. They are often slow and clumsy craft, hard to maneuver and not too well suited for long voyages in stormy seas. Some, like the great Swedish ship *Wasa* in 1628, have been known to capsize in calm water and sink, flags flying, shortly after leaving the dock. (p. 1)

Creswell and England (1994) stated that, although recently the instructional dean has become a popular research topic, "The position of dean has received little scholarly attention" (p. 7). Specifically, Vaughn's *Pathway to the Presidency* (1990) has contributed to the literature on the role of the dean and have provided insight into exactly what the deans is responsible to lead, guide, and direct (Robillard, 2000).

Morris (1981) suggested four routes that one takes to enter the role of instructional dean: professional accession, trained administrator, managerial outside transfer, and political

appointee. He stated that through the professorial ascension route, the individual rises through the academic ranks from assistant professor to full professor and department head; then, with scholarship and published works is finally elevated to the full-time position of dean. The next route, trained administrator, is less utilized, but nonetheless a viable pathway. This route consists of the individual specializing in administration at the graduate level, developing scholarly credentials in the study of administrative problems, and making higher education administration their career. After many years they move into the instructional dean position. The next route discussed is the managerial outsider. This individual is truly an outsider that has been hired from business, industry or the military. These individuals find the transition usually very difficult and frustrating. The last route Morris discussed is the political appointment route. These individuals rarely make good instructional deans. They have been appointed to a position purely based on the fact that they were politically connected at some level. The result of this unfortunate occurrence is that all lose.

The dean's role in the technical college, as in other higher education institutions, is complicated by the fact that in order for the individual to be successful, he or she needs to be the master of many things (I. Sullivan, personal communication, June 10, 2010). The dean must be able to gather and synthesize a tremendous amount of data and therefore must be an individual who enjoys reading many types of books, journals, and magazines. This is of critical importance due to the fact that the dean must have a good working knowledge of economics, political, and social data in order to manage their division effectively (Reres, 1981). The dean, while not the individual who is actually instructing students, is the person responsible for and accountable to assure that faculty is teaching and will be teaching in the future, the coursework required to produce a quality graduate (Reres, 1981). To be an effective, the dean requires

inclusion on advisory committees and local boards to help facilitate good long-term planning, as well as gathering the contacts that could lead to shared resources and financial assistance (Reres, 1981). Seagren et al. (1994) described the dean as being positioned between administration and instruction. This requires these mid-level managers to be jugglers who often times are attempting to keep many conflicting parties at the table. The dean must be prepared to face and address competing priorities, interests, agendas, office politics, staffing concerns and budget allocations in a cogent manner (Ferris, 2008). In his 2009 study, Hyun found that the most important expertise the instructional dean should possess is an excellent managerial skill set. These requisite supervisory skills are necessary to manage the complexities between management, academic leadership, and professional development issues and concerns.

The dean operates in a highly complex atmosphere. To better understand the complexities facing the dean, research was completed to assess what faculty believe are necessary administrative behaviors for a successful dean (Bray, 2008). This 2008 study looks specifically at norms and faculty expectations and institutional boundaries. Bray's 2010 study delves further into norms and utilizes the Mertonian set of norms for science as the benchmark against which to assess appropriate behaviors. Mertonian norms of science consist of universalism, communality, disinterestedness, and organized skepticism (Bray, 2010). Norms can be either formal or informal. Formalized norms are demonstrated by written rules and regulations and informal norms are passed along to employees through word of mouth (Bray, 2008, 2010). Norms are further broken into prescriptive and proscriptive norms. Prescriptive norms are those norms considered acceptable by faculty and proscriptive norms are those that faculty find inappropriate (Bray, 2010). The results of the studies identify appropriate behaviors of deans as deemed important by faculty. The behaviors are categorized into high crimes, minor felonies, and misdemeanors. Bray (2010) differentiated these norms into several categories. The high crime

norms consisted of inept evaluation and representation, failure to communicate, fiscal intemperance, and regulatory disdain. The minor felon norms consisted of expectations that were not conveyed, undermining faculty control, bending to pressure, and publicly critical. The misdemeanor norms consisted of devaluing nonacademic staff, disdain for faculty input, and visionary incoherence (Bray, 2010).

Feldman (2008) looked into the possibilities of faculty trained in the sociology discipline moving into the position of dean and whether or not there were contradictions specific to this discipline that disqualifies them from serving. The sociologist is often seen to be a contrarian and critic of the establishment and this would make one suspect these faculty would not be good candidates for the dean position. Feldman examined experiences the sociologist may encounter as they move from their faculty position into the position of dean.

Feldman (2008) stated that it is common for faculty that move to any administrative position to feel the discomfort of being seen as moving from the “faculty” camp to the “administrator” camp. It is also not uncommon for faculty members to feel the uneasiness of colleagues once considered as close working partners to now being seen as the adversary (Feldman, 2008). Feldman suggested that the sociologist should understand this more than most because of their training in “bureaucracies, roles and structures, and institutional change” (p.102). Feldman asserted that challenges will take place on several levels all at once. Changes will occur at both the individual and interpersonal levels and new deans must deal with the emotional and professional baggage that accompanies their new position. On the individual level, the new dean must deal with his or her new status and how this alters his self-concept. The new dean will have to deal with the altered perception of fellow faculty and coworkers as they adjust to the status of the position as well. On the interpersonal level, colleagues will adjust their perceptions

of the dean and will make adjustments to their schedules and the amount of interaction they choose to have with the new dean. This change in coworker attitudes towards the dean is one of the most disappointing aspects of the job (Feldman, 2008). Feldman (2008) believed that the sociologist could bring a very unique perspective to the dean position and the college. Their training, experience, and the perspective as contrarian and challenger of authority, while at first glance look like negatives for the position, may in the long run be their greatest attribute to the job.

Hyun (2009) studied instructional deans by years of deanship experience, institutional type and Carnegie Classification to determine if there were differences in the level of dean involvement and accountability relating to student success. Hyun (2009) went on to state the dean's role has taken on more responsibilities than ever before and has evolved into something much more than chief academic officer of a program. In a relatively recent development, the dean has acquired the responsibilities of being a budgeting expert, fundraiser, politician, pseudo-parent, strategic planner, facilities expert, and chief mediator (Bright & Richards, 2001). The Commission on the Future of Higher Education (2006) posited that the role of the instructional dean had shifted and that new responsibilities pertaining to globalization, innovation and quality of technological innovation were now responsibilities for the instructional dean. The commission report went even further to suggest that student's success is now a shared responsibility between secondary, post-secondary, and industry. The commission report clearly reflects the linkage between academic success and individual student responsibility has lessened and has altered the way deans must perform their jobs. For these reasons, the study attempted to assess if deans see themselves as more directly tied to a student's academic success than in the past.

Hyun (2009) utilized a web-based survey instrument that was distributed to 242 deans located in institutions of higher education in Ohio. There were 121 survey instruments returned for a response rate of 50%. The 101 usable surveys in the study consisted of 42 (35%) instructional deans from private institutions, 59 (49%) from public institutions, and 20 (17%) from unidentified institutions. The deans identified their institutions in the following Carnegie classifications: Associate–Baccalaureate, 15 (12%); Baccalaureate-General, 9 (7%); Baccalaureate–Liberal Arts, 7, (6%); Masters, 23 (19%); Doctoral/Research-Extensive, 20 (17%); Doctoral/Research-Intensive, 27 (27%); and unidentified, 20 (17%). Responses also revealed that over 50% of the deans had been in their position five years or less. Prior to the deanship, 36% served as department chair, 23% as assistant or associate dean, and 13% as program coordinator. Data were gathered utilizing both qualitative and quantitative processes to answer the research questions of the study. Hyun (2009) asked the following research questions: 1) What particular issues or influences do instructional deans most closely associate with their own definition and understanding of college students' academic success; 2) What particular aspect of instructional deans' leadership practice do they perceive as important in fostering students' academic success; 3) In what particular leadership practice do instructional deans most frequently engage during the regular academic year to foster student's academic success; and 4) What concerns, difficulties, or dilemmas do instructional deans inherently face with regard to proactive and strategic methods to enhance academic success?

Regarding question one (What particular issues/influences do instructional deans most associate with their own definition and understanding of college students' academic success?), the following findings were made: Retention had the largest mean score at both public (3%) and private (3%) institutions. The term retention was defined as, "student desire to complete a

program for a livelihood, student activities for a well-rounded experience, student class participation, student accountability, student and faculty interaction, student making connection to someone within the professional field of choice” (Hyun, 2009, p. 96).

Regarding question two (What particular aspect of leadership practice do instructional deans perceive as important in fostering students’ academic success?), the following findings were made: Quality of faculty hiring at both private (M=3.67) and (M=3.88) at public institutions was deemed most critical (Hyun, 2009, p. 98). The number of years that the dean had been in the position also influenced views on fostering students’ academic success through flexible programs. Deans with 11 - 15 years’ experience rated most highly flexible programs with a mean score of 3.20. Deans who had been in their position for 0 - 5 years yielded a mean score of 2.84 and deans holding the position for 6 - 10 years results reflected a mean score of 2.86 (Hyun, 2009, p. 99). Deans with 0 - 5 years’ experience rated the level of support they receive from faculty more highly (3.58) than did the deans with more years of experience. There were differences in the responses by Carnegie classification as well. The doctoral level institution deans believed that the dean should be held accountable for the hiring of quality faculty in contrast to the associate and baccalaureate level institutions that thought the dean should be more involved in assuring that there are quality remedial programs. Clearly the level and mission of the individual institution affected the impression of what the dean’s leadership role should be in regards to impacting academic success (Hyun, 2009).

Regarding question three (What particular leadership practice do instructional deans most engage during the regular academic year to foster students’ academic success?), the following findings were made. Significant differing responses between the public and the private institutions were revealed. The common practices of both public and private institutions

revealed that communicating with faculty for high quality curriculum development and innovative teaching, public (M=3.12) and private (M=3.57), was the most utilized practice. Communicating with students about their academic progress was the next most utilized practice at both public and private institutions. Interestingly, increasing the level of partnership between PK-12 school systems had the largest difference of mean scores. Public institutions reported a mean score of 1.85 and private institutions reported a mean score of 1.12 (Hyun, 2009).

Regarding question four (What concerns, difficulties, or dilemmas do instructional deans inherently face with regard to proactive and strategic methods to enhance students' academic success?), a qualitative question, it was determined that deans felt that the high cost of higher education is forcing too many students to work in order to stay in school. Additionally, the deans in the study felt that the level of incoming students academic preparedness is not sufficient to assure that the student is ready for college level course work. Deans also need to work more with faculty and help them keep curriculum up to date and relevant. They also need to help faculty in assessing learning objectives. Overall, deans within all Carnegie classifications felt that they held very little control over faculty accountability and performance. Lastly, the deans felt reduced levels of funding was resulting in students not being prepared to compete program requirements due to less remedial help being available (Hyun, 2009).

Bray's 2012 study discussed the rules, guidelines, and "code" deans employ to guide their behavior and influence their decision-making. He stated that norms exist across all human organizations and it is critical for the individual to understand the norms in their particular organization. He asserted that social groups and organizations use norms, or rules, as a way to bring structure and order to complex institutions. He suggested that social mores, folkways, and formal rules each provide direction and help workers understand the norms they are expected to

follow. Bray (2012) posited that higher education is a complex organization and has its own code and culture the dean must understand to successfully navigate the cultural landscape. Del Favero (2010) and Bray (2012) suggested that there are two distinctive cultures in higher education, the administrative culture and the academic culture. The dean finds himself in the uncomfortable position of being caught between the two. On one hand, the dean needs to function as co-scholar with the faculty under their supervision while at the same time being responsible to upper level administrators to support and carry out the President's vision and directives. On many occasions, this sets the dean up for conflict with either one or both of the groups with which he is working. Bray (2010) listed several strategies the dean can utilize to learn more about accepted behavior and code of conduct that has been established in higher education. As quoted in Bray (2012), the American Association of University Administrators (AAUA) offered a list of 18 behaviors that should guide administrators in their work. However, the list produced by the AAUA is general in nature and does not specifically deal in-depth with their particular decision-making and role areas. Other suggested resources Bray listed as potential tools to help the dean understand accepted rules and guidelines were professional conferences, written communication, and talking to other deans. Lastly, Bray utilized his studies from 2008, 2010, and 2012 to develop six tenets that the dean can use to guide their academic behavior:

1. Academic deans should be outstanding communicators;
2. Academic deans should be transparent;
3. Academic deans should be colleagues;
4. Academic deans should be judges; and
5. Academic deans should be fiscal managers.

Challenges and Stresses of the Deanship

Wild, Ebbers, Shelley, and Gmelch (2003) conducted research on stress and what factors were perceived as making the dean's role most difficult. The research identified nine areas that were especially problematic for deans: managing human interactions, intrinsic job demands, managing professional/personal life, role strain, balancing leadership and scholarship, fiscal responsibilities, external constituency demands, administrative identity, and professional maturity. Additional complicating factors that have led to increased levels of stress for deans are the current era of accountability in higher education, the continued reduction in state funding of higher education, increased levels of emphasis being placed on community services, and the increased challenges of dealing with faculty and administration of the institution (I. Sullivan, personal communication, June 10, 2010). Additionally, the fact that there is not a universally applied definition for the term "academic dean" and the fact that there is little research on the stresses associated with being an instructional dean all contribute to make the dean's job extremely challenging and very stressful (Wild et al., 2003).

Freeman and Coll (2009) studied department chairs and instructional deans and the amount of work they are producing above and beyond the normal 40-hour work week. The study also looked at the positives and negatives of job sharing as a possible tool to help ease the amount of work required to meet the outcomes expected of their positions. Freeman and Coll (2009) listed increased risk of heart disease, marital distress, sleep disorders, depression, low morale related to child care arrangements, burnout, erosion of integrity, loneliness, alienation, dissatisfaction with life, and child neglect as negative consequences of work overload. Freeman and Coll (2009) listed more quality time with family, flexible work schedules, greater production, an increased capacity to retain valued employees, and enhanced professional skills

for job-share employees who use their non-work time for professional development as advantages of job sharing. Disadvantages of job sharing include the potential for unfair treatment in promotion and tenure, an expectation that the job-share team be twice as productive, the potential for employees to be viewed as uncommitted professionals and clashing job styles or differences in quality standards between the two job sharers (Freeman & Coll, 2009).

The study was conducted using a survey instrument that was mailed to 150 counselor education department chairs and 150 college of education deans randomly selected from the directory of counselor education programs. The group selected had an average of over 15 years experience in higher education. The survey consisted of 31 questions; 17 Likert-type questions on advantages and disadvantages of job sharing, 8 questions regarding married couple's job sharing, and 6 questions pertaining to demographics of the participants. Total return rates for the surveys were 67% for department chairs and 61% for deans. The demographics for department chair consisted of 66% male and 34% female, with an average age of 50.7 years and an average of 21.3 years in higher education. Respectively the sample group was 91% white, 5% African American, and 1% Hispanic. The sample of education deans comprised 59% males and 41% female, with an average of 53.5 years and an average 5.3 years' experience in higher education (Freeman & Coll, 2009).

The results from the study indicated that both department chairs and deans agree there are benefits of job sharing. The study indicated this is due to the faculty being averse to change, lack of awareness regarding job sharing, or the perception that full-time faculty want to only do part-time work. Whatever the true cause may be, the study only found tepid support for job sharing as a tool to relieve stress and overwork on department chairs and deans (Freeman & Coll, 2009).

Mirvis et al. (2006) studied deans in medical colleges and measured the prevalence and intensity of the psychological components of burnout. Effective leadership is a critical component of all organizations. High levels of stress and burnout could potentially result in ineffective leadership and poor decision-making (Bok, 1986). In the event that researchers found that deans at colleges of medicine were exhibiting high levels of stress and burnout, this would result in ineffective leadership. The authors of the study posited that stress and burnout levels are increasing at the dean of medicine position due to the ambiguity of the job, increasing numbers of objectives and the increasing external stakeholder pressures for more accountability. The authors also speculated that high levels of burnout may suggest organizational problems that can be lessened if preventive measures are taken to address the stress factors identified (Mirvis et al., 2006).

The study was conducted using a survey instrument that was mailed to deans of colleges with membership in the Association of American Medical Colleges. Surveys were also mailed to high-level administrators such as vice presidents and chancellors associated with medical colleges. Deans of colleges in related health fields such as nursing were also sent questionnaires and asked to participate in the study due to their expertise and familiarity with the medical college-working environment. A total of 286 surveys were mailed between March through May 2003. The final number of participants in the study was 149, for a return rate of 52%. Forty-six percent of the final study group was medical school deans, 32% were nursing school deans, and 22% were other academic health center leaders. The mean age of the study group was 59 years old, they had been at their current position for 5.7 years and they worked an average of 65.7 hours per week. The demographic of the final group consisted of 91% white, 2% black, 4% Hispanic and 7% other (Mirvis et al., 2006).

The questionnaire consisted of six areas that the researchers wanted to explore and assess how they factored into the psychological stress that medical deans experienced. The six areas analyzed in the questionnaire were the following: demographic and job information, burnout, physical and behavioral symptoms, job stress, susceptibility to stress, and job satisfaction. The instrument used to assess the level of burnout that medical college deans were experiencing was the Maslach Burnout Inventory. Respondents were scored on a 7-point scale and measured in three sub domains: depersonalization reduced personal accomplishment, and emotional exhaustion. Physical and behavioral symptoms were assessed using a 21-question instrument. The symptoms were grouped into categories representing anxiety, depression, sleep, cardiac, and musculoskeletal symptoms. Job stress was analyzed utilizing the 41-question Stress Navigator survey. Categories of personal stress, job stress, and environmental stress were analyzed in this section. Susceptibility to stress was analyzed utilizing a 22-question instrument adapted from the Stress Navigator survey. This section looked at susceptibility to stress based on health behaviors; lifestyle; and available financial, social, and spiritual coping resources. Lastly, job satisfaction was assessed incorporating seven questions selected from the other survey instruments that were used in the study (Mirvis et al., 2006).

The findings of the study strongly suggest that medical college deans were under a tremendous amount of stress and have the potential to experience chronic burnout. Depersonalization was the most common finding relating to burnout. Depersonalization is described as “a form of distancing oneself from people and situations perceived as stressful. Persons with high levels of depersonalization exhibit emotional hardening and a tendency to attribute problems to others” (Mirvis et al., p. 17). They also base their decision-making on intellectualism, decision-making strictly by the rules, and the position of power they have due to

their high level of administrative influence. This decision-making model leads the administrator to place more value on the issue or concern than the person. This strategy helps the administrator escape the stressful situation. One quarter of the deans reported a reduced sense of personal accomplishment. This finding suggested that these deans may not put forth the required commitment due to the fact they believe what they do does not matter. One quarter of the deans reported high levels of emotional exhaustion. This leads to the dean not being able to focus and put forth the necessary energy it takes to be successful at the dean level (Mirvis et al., 2006).

Lastly, even though the study revealed that there is too much stress on medical college deans, there is research that points to the importance of timely intervention strategies (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). There are studies that show that if intervention strategies are engaged that the recipients will reduce their stress and burnout levels. Ultimately, this helps the individual, their families, their coworkers and the institution (Golembiewski, et al., 1986).

Fee, Hadlock, and Pierce (2005) studied the relationship between graduate business school rankings and dean turnover in an era of increasing accountability and the importance placed on national business magazine rankings of colleges. While at face value these rankings seem to be a reasonable approach to help to identify the best colleges, there are many vocal detractors that argue these rankings are not representative of the best colleges. The authors argued the approach utilized by *U.S. News and World Report* and *Business Week* do not measure what truly makes a college great. For the business school dean, these rankings do matter and potential students and parents perceive this data to accurately portray an institution's educational value.

The study by Fee et al. (2005) analyzed *U.S. News and World Report* and *Business Week* survey data from 1990 through 2002 and examined two thesis questions: a) are deans held

accountable for school performance; and b) are rankings a useful indicator of a dean's performance. The study includes 60 schools and 521 total observations. The sample consisted of approximately the same number of public and private colleges. However, the schools in the top 25 were almost two-thirds private. In the sample, the average age of the dean was 53 years old and they had been on the job for slightly over five years.

The data revealed that the overall annual turnover rate for business school deans is 13%. The length of career at the 25th percentile is four years, at the 50th percentile the length of career is seven years and at the 75th percentile the length of career is 10 years. The study also looked at how a dean's tenure impacted the turnover rate. The data reflected that the turnover rate for tenured deans is low in the first four years in the position with an annual turnover rate of 6%. The rate jumped to 17% in year five, and continued to increase at approximately the same rate in succeeding years. The authors proposed that many deans remain in their dean position to complete a full five-year term before making a college change or position change (Fee et al., 2005).

The study placed deans that departed from their position into categories for analysis. The deans who left their positions were classified in the following categories: generic departures, forced, moves up or moves down, and death. If information was found suggesting that a dean had been pressured to leave by faculty or administration, he was placed in the "forced" category. The "moves up" or "moves down" categories were used for non-forced departures if the dean left his position and stayed at the college. Individuals were placed in the "moves up" category if a dean took a position of greater influence and authority upon leaving the business school deanship. The "moves down" category was used if the dean stayed at the college in a lesser position of authority. The "generic departure" category was used when there was little or no

information about the dean's departure. The study found that a large percentage of deans, 62%, return back to the classroom as a faculty member if they leave the dean position. These individuals were placed in the "generic departure" category. The category of death is self-explanatory. The study found that approximately 10% of the deans are "forced" out of their positions with approximately 20% of the survey group "moving up" to take the Chief Academic position. The majority of the study group fell into the "generic departure" category (Fee et al., 2005).

The authors of the study suggested that rankings are used when evaluating business school deans' performance and that the deans are held accountable for the performance of their business school program. *Business Week* rankings appear to be looked at with greater reliability than the *U.S. News and World Report* rankings. The authors of the study posited this may be because the *Business Week* rankings are considered by many to be the more prestigious rankings. The authors suggest another reason could be that *Business Week* rankings rely heavily on recruiter and student perceptions of the institution. If that is indeed a factor, the authors argued that students' happiness and customer satisfaction may play major roles in the removal of a dean. The study results also demonstrate that the dean's performance and reward are asymmetrical; the dean is punished more for falling in the rankings than they are rewarded for moving up in the rankings. Deans at the colleges that receive a downgrade in their rankings see a higher level of dean departure than do colleges whose rankings remain the same or go up. The study also reveals no evidence to suggest that college rankings go up when a dean is "forced" out and another dean takes the position (Fee et al., 2005).

The past decade has brought many changes in the field of higher education. The economy has endured the worst, and most persistent, downturn since the great depression

(Bickerstaffe, 2006; Isidore, 2010). The constricting of federal and state budgets has resulted in decreased federal and state allocations; calls for increased accountability and efficiency; the need for increasing educational opportunities for low income students; and increased government inclusion in accreditation issues (Bickerstaffe, 2006; Del Favero, 2006). At the same time, budgets are decreasing and calls for higher education being more accountable increasing (Farmer & Paris, 2000).

Schoenbachler (2009) stated, “It is definitely not business as usual for our institutions of higher learning and our colleges of business” (p. 5). The author stated that just as individuals saw their net worth drop by 30 to 40% as the stock market dropped, so did endowments at institutions of higher learning. Many of the larger universities that most would think untouchable, such as Harvard, Yale and other prestigious institutions, suffered massive loses to their foundations and endowments as well when the market dropped (Schoenbachler, 2009). He summarized that the stock market drop, uncertain economy and resulting state and federal tax receipt decreases have all led to everyone in higher education being held to an ever increasing level of accountability. “Public institutions have increased tuition an average of 7.3% over the past decade (well above the 3% average inflation and the 5.5% private school tuition increase), pushing the costs out of reach for the middle or lower middle income family” (Schoenbachler, 2009, p. 5). The author concluded that with the rising cost of higher education and the continued decrease in state and federal allocations, it is imperative that all institutions of higher education look for ways to improve efficiencies.

Wepner, D’Onofrio, and Wilhite (2008) executed an emergent methodology study of 27 deans regarding their personal and professional backgrounds and their approach to leadership and decision-making. They initially studied six deans. The following year an additional six

education deans were interviewed using the same questions, with an additional nine questions about their problem-solving styles. The initial six deans were also asked the nine additional questions for a complete set of responses to all 26 questions. The authors of the study hoped the outcome of the study was better in-service training opportunities for deans newly appointed to that position could be identified. The deans that participated in the study all had been in the position for more than six years. The participants were asked to watch video vignettes and then go through the process they would follow to solve the organizational problem presented. The model was developed over a seven-year period using a conceptual framework that consisted of four dimensions of leadership: intellectual, emotional, social and moral. The conceptual model was grounded in the psychology of self-concept based on the theory by Loevinger's that the evolution of a personal identity and self-concept depends on the differentiation and integration of intellectual, emotional, social and moral attributes (Wepner et al., 2008).

Within the seven year research period, the 27 deans who were interviewed included: 13 white men, nine white woman, two African American men, two African American women, and one Latina. The participants in the study came from 17 states across the United States and represented all size institutions, both with and without unions. The study specifically identified deans who have served for a period of longer than seven years. This length of time would allow the deans that participated in the study to have learned how to balance their skills and strategies against their emotional, intellectual, social and moral perspectives. Also, it was felt that this amount of time on the job would allow the participants to have sufficient experience so that they could exercise their decision making skills with confidence and without hesitation (Wepner et al., 2008).

...we inferred 11 themes from similarities and shared attributes in the 12 deans' statements: (1) tolerates perplexity, contradiction and ambiguity; (2) transcends polarities

and sees reality as complex and contradictory; (3) recognizes that they and others function differently in different roles and responds differently to different requirements and demands; (4) synthesizes views and ways of behaving; (5) expresses feelings of vividly and convincingly; (6) acknowledges inner conflict in terms of needs and duties; (7) copes with conflict rather than ignores it or projects it; (8) tolerates self and others in terms of individual differences and the complexity of people and circumstances; (9) cherishes personal ties with others; (10) holds to broad social ideals; and (11) sees relations with others an opportunity to negotiate different perspectives with mutually acceptable outcomes. (p. 157)

The findings of the study suggest that deans use all four dimensions of leadership but most frequently use intellectual dimension with the emotional dimension being used next most frequently to help solve organizational problems. Wepner et al. (2008) suggested that deans have a tendency to frame problems in intellectual terms with the understanding that others function differently. “They anchor their understanding of problems by responding to social and moral context, namely, considering the importance of interpersonal relationships and organizational responsibilities” (Wepner et al., 2008, p. 163). Overall, deans are strategists that use all four dimensions of leadership. The research does demonstrate that deans analyze organizational problems first and foremost through the intellectual dimension. But, for organizational problems to be dealt with and strategies put into place to solve problems, deans must also rely on their emotional dimension as well (Wepner et al., 2008).

As several studies have stated (Seagren et al., 1994; Robillard, 2000), the deanship has never been clearly defined. This ambiguity results in deans being pulled in many different directions. Walters and Keim (2003) conducted a study of instructional deans and their involvement in institutional and facilities planning. Their study investigated three factors: the deans’ preparation for the planning task; the degree that deans are and should be involved in planning; and challenges and obstacles to planning (Walters & Keim, 2003).

A sample consisting of 300 deans of instruction was identified utilizing the America Association of Community Colleges (AACC) membership directory. A two-page survey was mailed to each participant that consisted of four sections: demographics; institutional long-range planning; facilities planning; and challenges and obstacles to future planning. After the initial mail out and several follow ups, the final makeup of the survey group consisted of 201 returned survey instruments for a return rate of 67%. The survey group represented deans in 41 states (Walters & Keim, 2003).

The survey was analyzed using SPSS software and revealed the following results regarding the three research questions. Twenty-seven percent of survey participants were from rural locations, 22% from urban and 22% from suburbs, and 22% from small towns. The highest degree earned by the overwhelming majority of the instructional deans was the Ed.D. award. The majority, 64%, of the deans had served in the position for less than six years. Of the participants in the survey, 47% had served as either dean or department or division chair. Sixty-six percent of the deans believed that they had been adequately prepared to be important contributors in the institutional and facilities planning function. Eighty-four percent credited their planning aptitude and acumen with the knowledge gleaned from their immediate prior position. Participants were asked to provide input regarding obstacles to institutional planning at their colleges. Fifty-four percent responded that the high cost of operation and maintaining the system was the biggest obstacle. Followed by excessive time requirements to complete an adequate plan (53%), lack of coordination between planning and budgeting decisions (47%), inadequate financial or staff support (46%), lack of planning experience and expertise (32%), and lack of cooperation and acceptance by faculty and staff (26%). Ninety-eight percent of the deans felt they were involved in facilities planning on their campuses. The participants were asked their

perception regarding their degree of involvement with 22% responding they were a leader of a planning team, 62% responded they participated on a planning team, 9% were somewhat involved, and 6% were only minimally involved. When asked what the ideal situation would be pertaining to facilities planning, participants in the study overwhelmingly agreed that they should be involved in the process but necessarily the team leader. The challenges and obstacles that deans identified as most critical were money and resources (32%), technology use in the curriculum (25%), future needs and trends (11%), facilities updating and replacement (8%), and classroom space/distance learning (5%). Overall, the study suggested that a large number of deans feel they are not adequately educationally prepared for their role in planning; the number of consultants used in the planning process is increasing; the biggest obstacles are money and technology use in curriculum; and deans at smaller institutions have a larger role in institutional and facilities planning (Walters & Keim, 2003).

A critical component of the dean's responsibilities each day is making sensitive and difficult decisions (Findlen, 2000). He suggested that deans should consider five different aspects before making a decision, and that the deans break the decision down into problems, issues, players, options and principles. "The first aspect of a difficult or controversial situation is the problem itself. Experience suggests that presenting the problem is almost always the behavior of the person complained about or a situation the complaining person wants" (Findlen, 2000, p. 35). Findlen stated that in order for a solution to be employed, it is imperative that the problem be correctly identified. If this does not happen, the problem might be addressed and perhaps even improved, but ultimately will not be solved because the true problem was not identified. The author specified that the next question that must be addressed in a problem situation is "What are the issues?" It is critical for the dean to understand all the necessary issues

associated with the problem as well. If this important step is not taken, the result may be that the dean does not completely and totally understand all the nuances of the problem. Additionally, the author believes, if this step is not fully understood, the dean may miss a key individual. Findlen stated that the players involved in the problem or issue are the next critical aspect that must be understood when difficult decisions must be made. No administrator should underestimate the importance of the stakeholders involved in any difficult situation. The author noted that because of the nature of higher education there is always the potential of many different stakeholder groups getting involved. Such groups include students, parents, faculty, staff, board members, watchdog groups or the media. Because each of these groups has the potential to do the college harm, administrators who ignore them do so at their own risk. The author also stressed that a wise dean will look at all their options when he is dealing with difficult decisions. All problems have multiple courses of action that can be selected to address the situation. Questions the dean may consider could include: “what alternative course of action is available to the administrator?” and “what is the foreseeable effect of each option” (Findlen, 2000, p. 37). Lastly, when dealing with difficult decisions, everything humans do has an associated goal or motive. Decisions are never made without biases attached. Therefore, the author believes that “principles are the major rules of life, rooted in the concepts behind federal and state laws, major concepts like justice, and the core concepts of effective leadership. Ultimately, principles are wisdom” (p. 38). The author urged all decisions be vetted against core values and principles.

Watba and Farmer (2006) analyzed the challenges facing community college deans in their 2006 study. Rapid changes in technology, changing workforce skills, the anticipated tremendous turnover of upper level administrators, and financial shortfall due to the severe economic downturn were all areas of concern. Each of these factors contributed to the way deans

complete their individual jobs as well as how they manage their faculty. The researchers attempted to answer the following question: what significant issues or challenges will community colleges deans face in the areas of supervision and leadership during the next five years?

The study group consisted of community college deans in Florida, Maryland, North Carolina, and Virginia. The study utilized the Delphi Technique in an attempt to bring about consensus among the participants. Each of the participants volunteered and was a subject matter expert and held positions as either dean of occupational education (OE) or dean of continuing education (CE). The participants were mailed a questionnaire at three different times and asked to identify and prioritize issues they would face in the next five years. The responses were prioritized utilizing a 5-point Likert scale with 1 being rated lowest priority and 5 as highest priority. After each round the data were analyzed and group opinions were identified. The states of Maryland, Florida, North Carolina, and Virginia were selected due to their close proximity and their emphasis on skilled training in career and technical education at the post-secondary level. The study was pilot tested in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to gather suggestions for improvement and to assure study reliability. The final sample group consisted of 56 Occupational Education deans and 46 Continuing Education deans for a total of 102 participants (Watba & Farmer, 2006.)

An analysis of round one comments generated 48 major issues and 18 categories. Round two data resulted in 12 of the 48 issues having mean scores of 4 of points or more. The research revealed that the major priority issue with a mean score of 4.41 was finding resources to fund new and existing programs. After analysis of round three data, the most and least important priorities were identified and ranked. The data reflected the following priorities from most to

least importance. The top ten priorities identified were as follows: (1) financial resources; (2) collaboration with business and industry; (3) funding for new services; (4) updating facilities and equipment; (5) changing technology; (6) recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students; (7) program promotions and marketing; (8) increased accountability; (9) salary disparities; and (10) leadership development (Watba & Farmer, 2006).

The overall findings of the study indicated that deans in the study had to address continued funding shortfalls, needed increased collaboration with business and industry partners, had to increase their knowledge of technology and their ability to incorporate new technology into the classroom, and had to increase their understanding of business and industry needs in workforce skills training. Further analysis of the results also indicated that the results closely corresponded with the study results from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania pilot study.

Lastly, the authors of the study urged deans and other educational leaders to embrace change and address the issues that have been identified to assure their institutions are positioned to serve their students effectively (Watba & Farmer, 2006).

Bailey (2008) looked at the community college occupation dean and the stresses they face as they attempt to manage their workload with their family life. He stated that occupational deans face a myriad of tasks and that this balancing act is common in many professions, however, “community college occupational deans may face the juggling act in unique ways due to their multiple responsibilities including state and federal grant oversight, business and community partnerships, multiple accrediting body reporting, and management of diverse programs” (p. 779) and defined the “work/life” balance concept as encompassing emotional, spiritual, physical, and developmental components; taking dreams, beliefs and experiences into account; living in the present; and taking action. Bailey utilized the definition provided by

Rapoport et al. (2002) as his guide in his study. Rapoport et al. defined “work/life balance” as “work is primary-time to spend at work is unlimited, and the demands of family, community, and personal life are secondary.” Utilizing Rapoport’s definition is it easy to deduce that today’s workers are not functioning in the ideal “work/life balance” scenario. The world of work norms has changed dramatically over the past 40 years due to the increase in global competition, the increase in work load, the increase in hours worked and the changing norm of dual career couples; all factors that have lead to an almost unattainable goal of the “work/life balance” espoused by Rapoport et al. (2008).

Bailey’s study was qualitative in nature and utilized a personal interview format to gather data. The participants, many who were deans, were all from the midwestern part of the country and were selected due to their job tasks and responsibilities they shared regarding state and federal reporting responsibilities. The group consisted of 19 organization members (they had been members at least one calendar year), and from that group, nine deans were selected for the study. The researcher sought to gather information to help understand how Midwestern state deans manage their work and personal lives, stresses and conflicts they encountered, strategies they employed to help manage this relationship, and how the participants aligned themselves with the ideal worker norm (Bailey, 2008).

The study revealed several themes including the idea that deans have diverse responsibilities, a chaotic work pace, and overflowing workloads. A major concern identified in the study was the inability for the dean to have the necessary time to think, reflect, and process. Another common issue the study identified was that additional job responsibilities have been added due to budget cuts -- resulting in positions being lost. Unfortunately for the deans, this has required that they take on even more responsibilities and, in turn, this has led to more work hours

being required to meet the increasing demands. The study also revealed that the deans thought many of the added responsibilities were irrelevant to their position or to the purpose of the college. The majority of the deans in the study commented that they felt consumed by their job responsibilities. Another interesting fact uncovered in the study was that the female deans consistently worked more hours than their male counterparts. Almost all the deans said that they almost always took work home with them and worked on weekends to get the job done. Interestingly enough, even with the overwhelming job responsibilities and stress their jobs encompass, the deans in the study overwhelmingly reported loving their jobs and none was considering leaving his current position (Bailey, 2008).

The deans in the study identified several strategies they employ to help them deal with the stresses associated with their positions. The strategies identified include compartmentalizing their lives; developing routines to help them deal with home/family issues before leaving for work; carefully choosing which committees on which to participate, and having good support groups of family and friends. In the end, the deans in the study found their jobs rewarding even though the daily workload placed upon them is considered overwhelming. In the current higher education work environment, the dean has moved way beyond just managing curriculum and having faculty oversight. Regarding “work/life” balance, the reality of the deanship in the current environment requires the dean put in long hours and endure heavy stress. Bailey suggested further research on the long term costs associated with this model (Bailey, 2008).

If the widening gender college gap is reflective of the educational workplace, it can be assumed that more women will hold leadership titles within our colleges. According to Moreton and Newsome (2002), one-third of all U.S. faculty members were female. Data from 2009 reflects that women make up more than 55% of enrollment in higher education (National Center

for Educational Statistics, 2014). According to an article written by Jack Stripling in 2012, more than a quarter of presidents are now female, and more than a third lead two-year colleges.

Moreton and Newsome (2002) looked further into the percentage of women holding upper level administration positions at evangelical Christian colleges and universities in their 2004 study.

Earlier research in 2002 revealed that 14% of chief academic officers were women at Council for Christian Colleges and Universities compared to 26% of woman chief academic officers at non-Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (Rewey, 2002). The study was conducted to build upon research completed earlier describing personal characteristics career paths of female chief academic officers and to try and understand why more women did not hold high level administrative and leadership positions in Christian Higher Education institutions.

Moretone and Newsome (2002) contacted 18 female high-level administrators in the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities and inquired into their willingness to participate in their study. These 18 female administrators consisted of Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs, Instructional Deans, and Provosts. Of the 18 possible participants, 16 agreed to participate in the study. The research method consisted of in-depth interviews of each participant, transcribing the conversation and reviewing the data for themes. Demographically, the final research group consisted of two women in their thirties; eight were in their forties; and six were in their fifties. The majority, 15 of 16, had served in their current position for less than five years. Eleven women held the Master of Arts degree, two held the Master of Science degree, and three held Master degrees in religion. The majority of the women in the study held undergraduate degrees in the humanities. All of the women in the study held as their highest degree the doctor of philosophy.

Moretone and Newsome's (2002) findings revealed that 13 of the chief academic officers were married. The authors suggested this as evidence that women can indeed have both a great career and a great family life. Almost half of the women were first generation college graduates. The majority of participants held a humanities undergraduate degree. The authors of the study suggested that this is typical of women graduating from college in the last half of the 20th century. They posited that perhaps this is a stereotype of women in higher education but, nonetheless, the data in their study suggested women are still embracing humanities degrees over the sciences. The vast majority of the women in the study described their childhood as happy, and intellectually challenging. The women all seemed to enjoy extracurricular activities with a majority of the women enjoying music. Mentors also played a big part in the women's lives in their adolescent and teen years. The women studied in the group had their educational career goals shaped and influenced by parents, educators, ministers, and by their own personal goals.

Isaac, Behar-Horenstein, and Koro-Ljungberg (2009) studied ten female deans using a feminist poststructural perspective to deconstruct their ideas and beliefs and determine their unconscious experiences in the social structure of educational leadership. The study deconstructed the concept of women's leadership within the context of identity, power and leadership using rhizoanalysis. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) described rhizoanalysis as "a disruption of unity and linearity and establishes connections between semiotic chains and the organizations of power" (p. 138). The authors of the study developed the definition further by stating, "The lines of becoming are the shades of grey between black and white-not either/or, but the 'middle' of any extreme. The 'middle' is a part of each which unfolds to the next 'middle'" (Isaac et al., 2009, p. 136). The study deconstructed the gender binaries of their identities between "masculine and feminine, between becoming their fathers yet becoming their own

quintessence, the purest part of themselves” (Isaac et al., 2009, p. 139). Lastly, the study respondents’ data unfolded into belief that women can be both “reproducers of the species and producers of culture” (Isaac et al., 2009, p. 139).

The study consisted of ten women administrators who were selected from one southeastern university using the criterion sampling method. Interviewees were asked questions using a semi-structured interview approach. All of the interviews were done on campus and ranged from 45 to 100 minutes. Each interview was recorded and transcribed to help assure response accuracy. To ensure data validity in the study, peer review, member checking and external audit were used (Isaac, et al., 2009).

The study revealed that there was not a definitive or perceived best leadership style experienced by the women in the study. Nor did the study reveal a particular leadership style or traits that would position women to be more successful once they moved into the dean position. Rather, it did find that leadership is not found in binaries, but rather in multiplicity. The fact that women who have achieved the position of dean can be masculine and exhibit manly behavior, such as competitiveness and unemotional decision making, can also demonstrate feminine characteristics such as consensus, collaboration and cooperation. The ability to move between the masculine and feminine identities contributed to their success as women deans because they can be seen as tough and good business people while at the same time being seen as caring and compassionate supervisors. Leadership, power and delegation were all terms the deans discussed in depth in their interviews. Leadership was defined as getting all the team members to work together towards a common goal. Power was seen as the ability to make decisions and the ability to allocate resources to assure college goals are met. Delegation was seen as a gift from the dean to their employees that fostered collegial decision-making and helped empower coworkers. The

deans in the study identified cooperation and collaboration as key components in the current area of accountability where results are the drivers of effectiveness. The study revealed that the women deans still see the deanship as being a masculine field where they have to work harder than men to be perceived as doing an excellent job. Lastly, the participants in the study validated that women can be both reproducers of the species and producers of culture (Isaac et al., 2009).

Many deans complain that there is no real formal training that prepares the dean for his/her managerial tasks (Dill, 1991). Because of this, a question the study focused on concerned no apparent formal training in place for the neophyte dean, and where do they learn the skills to adequately perform their jobs? Specifically, the study explored two questions: What kind of experiences do instructional deans report most contributed to their learning of what their job entailed and are discipline differences evidenced in the kinds of experiences which enable instructional deans' learning of their roles (Dill, 1991).

Van Maanen and Schein (1984) posited that the new deans bring all of their experience from throughout their educational careers to the new job and this is what allows them to perform the tasks associated with the managerial and administrative tasks they must carry out. According to Van Maanen and Schein (1984), "Socialization, or the way in which one learns the expectations associated with the role, is cumulative, that is it accumulates over time" (p. 279). The vast majority of deans have been faculty members before taking the position of dean. Many have also held managerial positions such as division chair or have been involved in improvement team activities. While these positions have administrative and managerial tasks associated with them, they are in no way at the managerial level that the new deans find themselves in upon accepting the position. According to Van Maanen and Schein (1979), the nature of the socialization process suggests that the trial and error approach is the one most used by novice

instructional deans when learning the position of dean. While this seems counter-intuitive for individuals who have spent their lives in scholarly pursuits, in the absence of any real formal training, it is the only alternative to follow.

In 2006, Del Favero conducted an examination of the relationship between academic discipline and the cognitive complexity in instructional deans' administrative behavior. In an attempt to get the data needed to answer his first question, Del Favero (2006) asked the study participants to list according to importance the strategies they employed to learn the dean's position. The potential strategies included 1) past relationships, 2) past committee service, 3) leadership training courses, 4) past administrative posts, 5) mentoring, and 6) trial and error. The analyzed data demonstrated that deans most utilized past administrative posts and past relationships with peers to help them learn the skill necessary to perform their administrative and managerial tasks. Eighty percent of the study participants ranked as either first or second past administrative posts, and 38% of the study respondents ranked as either first or second past relationships with their peers as their vehicle to learn the requisite skills for the dean position.

These results further strengthened the chain of the socialization concept (Van Maanen & Schein, 1984) and demonstrated the belief that many of the strategies a new dean employs to help them be successful are learned before they ever take the position of dean. The data from the study further supports the idea that leadership training should be further explored due to the fact that only 12% of the survey respondents reported using leadership training as a tool to help them learn the tasks associated with being a dean. In fact, in the study, 36% of all respondents ranked leadership training as either next to last or last. Interestingly enough, trial and error was ranked as the second least influential strategy to glean knowledge for the deanship responsibilities. This contradicts the literature regarding the socialization process as a strategy to

learn the requisite skills to perform the deanship job tasks. Perhaps this can be explained due to the scholarly approach that has been followed throughout the newly appointed dean's career. Del Favero (2006) posited that it is probably difficult for individuals who have spent entire careers being trained in their academic discipline to admit that such an important position as instructional dean can be learned through inculcation and trial and error.

Del Favero (2006) believed that socialization theory could be considered to describe how the dean makes the transition to the administrative position from the faculty position. In 2006, he completed a descriptive study that looked at the relationship between instructional deans and academic discipline and if that relationship impacted their readiness to take on the instructional deanship administrative responsibilities. This study utilized a questionnaire that was mailed to a national sample of 421 instructional deans from research and doctoral institutions across the country. After two additional mail outs, a final usable sample of 210 deans were identified for the study. The final sample consisted of 48% from research universities and 52% from doctoral granting institutions. The sample was grouped in the following categories: 10% from the hard-pure sciences disciplines (chemistry, physics, math); 26% hard-applied disciplines (engineering, medicine); 21% from soft-pure disciplines (sociology, humanities); and 42% were from the soft-applied disciplines (education, law). Males constituted 69% of the deans in the study with woman representing 31% of the deans in the study. The sample covered a broad spectrum of academic areas as well: education (20%); medicine/nursing/health sciences (17%); engineering/computer science (15%); liberal arts (12%); science and technology (12%); humanities/social sciences/ fine arts (11%); and law, policy and communications (10%). The other 2% were deans of faculty.

In order to answer study question two, “Does the discipline studied affect how a newly appointed dean learns their role?” Del Favero (2006) split the survey respondents into discipline groups of hard-pure, hard-applied, soft-pure and soft-applied. Chemistry, physics, and mathematics were examples of hard-pure disciplines, while sociology, history, and political science were examples of soft-pure disciplines. Engineering and medicine were examples of hard-applied disciplines and education and law were examples of the soft-applied disciplines.

The respondents in the hard-pure and soft-pure disciplines relied more on trial and error than did the deans in the applied fields. The applied fields are more entrepreneurial and more pragmatically oriented and focus less on leadership roles and tasks needed to function effectively in a dean’s role. On the other hand, the pure fields were less pragmatically oriented and focused less on leadership implications and how what they do is preparing them for future leadership positions. Overall, the study results did not indicate that there is any difference in the way deans from different disciplines approach learning the skills necessary to perform the dean’s tasks efficiently and effectively. However, the study did suggest that the deans from the pure fields do rely more on trial and error than do their applied discipline scholars.

Summary

The dean plays a vital role in higher education, and is a major component in curriculum design, budgeting, student advising, managing personnel, public relations, and fundraising. The dean serves as a conduit between division and upper administration. The dean’s ability to perform the myriad of tasks he is responsible for requires a comprehensive set of managerial skills. They are required to master many varied activities and tasks throughout their tenure as dean. This study explores the various problems and issues the dean faces and the possible response strategies that can be employed to help ease stresses associated with the job. The

review of the literature demonstrates a need to better define the dean's role, responsibilities, stresses of job and appropriate response strategies. The following chapter will present the methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER III:
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the challenges the instructional deans encounter in the Technical College System of Georgia. Additionally, response strategies were identified that they employ to help meet their expected responsibilities and obligations. The study added to the knowledge base in the field and filled a gap in the existing literature concerning the deans and the challenges faced in postsecondary education. The study was important to those in leadership positions in higher education, specifically, to those individuals who hold the dean position in community and technical colleges. Chapter III includes a description of the research perspective, research approach, research questions, site descriptions, organizational framework, data procedures, researcher positionality, and the timeline for the study.

Research Perspective

This study was guided by a constructivist paradigm. Qualitative studies are often conducted in settings where the research participants live and work (Samaranayake, 2012). This research study utilized a general qualitative study with an approach informed by phenomenology identifying themes, thematic analyses, commonalities and uniquenesses. Creswell (2007) stated, “In this worldview, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences- meanings directed towards certain objects or things” (p. 20). “The aim of inquiry is understanding and reconstruction of the

constructions that people initially hold, aiming towards consensus but still open to new interpretations as information and sophistication improve (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 113). Creswell (2009) stated, “The goal of the research was to rely as much as possible on the participants’ views of the situation being studied. The questions became broad and general so that the participants could construct the meaning of a situation” (p. 8). Furthermore, qualitative research seeks to identify the commonalities shared by participants as they experience a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). To that end, this study aimed to explore participants’ perceptions regarding challenges they face in their work environment, perceived barriers that impede their ability to successfully complete job responsibilities, and response strategies they employ to deal with the challenges identified.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is a philosophical perspective that helps the researcher understand a group of individuals’ experiences without presupposing knowledge of their shared experiences (Converse, 2012). Edmund Husserl, the German philosopher, is credited with starting the Phenomenology Movement in 1913 with the publication of his book, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (Dowling, 2007; Giorgi, 2005). Husserl’s goal of phenomenological inquiry “was to understand thought and experience through rigorous and unbiased study of things as they appear” (Dowling, 2007, p. 132). “What made Husserl’s phenomenology distinct from naturalistic science was the idea of philosophical reduction” (Converse, 2012, p. 29). This involves the stripping away of the researcher’s preconceptions and biases concerning a phenomenon and experiencing its pure essence (Flood, 2010,).

Another influential figure in the spread of phenomenology was Martin Heidegger. Heidegger studied under Husserl and worked as his assistant. Heidegger expanded on Husserl’s

philosophy, but believed that research should answer the question of meaning and not just describe the experience or essence of the phenomenon (Converse, 2012). He also believed that in order for the researcher to make meaning of a phenomenon, that the researcher must have an understanding of that world. “Thus, interpretation takes place with the understanding that the researcher is part of their historical, social, and political world” (Converse, 2012, p. 29).

Likewise, Van Manen (1990) expanded on this concept when he stated that the researcher will reflect on essential themes of the individuals in the study and at its conclusion will interpret and make meanings from the participants’ lived experiences.

Husserl believed that there was a vast difference between facts and essence, and what was real and non-real. Husserl also was concerned with discovering the meaning, or essence, of the lived experience and, to achieve that outcome the concept of *epoche* was critical (Converse, 2012). *Epoche* requires that the researcher eliminate, as much as possible, any preconceived notions and suppositions above every possible doubt (Moustakas, 1994). In a phenomenological study, the importance of the researcher in the study cannot be overstated (Creswell, 2007).

To that point, the Husserlian concept of *epoche*, or bracketing, critical and was utilized by the researcher in this study to glean the essence of the participants’ lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

Research Approach

This study employed a qualitative interview research based approach. Within qualitative methodology, there are many procedural approaches available to the researcher: case study, ethnography, phenomenology, and grounded theory, for example (Creswell, 2007). However, when dealing with individuals that have a shared experience, a research approach informed by phenomenology is an effective method to gain understanding of those shared experiences.

Creswell (2007) explained that the ultimate purpose of a research approach informed by phenomenology “is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence” (p. 58). Qualitative research allows the researcher to study participants in their natural environment, and seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, such as “...real world setting where the researcher does not attempt to manipulate phenomenon of interest” (Patton, 2001, p. 39). Qualitative research broadly defined means “...any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 17). Instead, research findings are garnered from the studying participants in real world settings where “...phenomenon of interest unfolds naturally” (Paton, 2001, p. 39). Unlike quantitative researchers who seek to understand an issue or problem by gathering data and analyzing it as numbers that can be quantified and summarized, the qualitative researcher instead seeks enlightenment, understanding, and the ability to infer findings to similar situations (Hoepfl, 1997). Because this study will focus on the shared experiences of the instructional deans in the Technical College System of Georgia, qualitative research methods are appropriate. This study will build upon survey-based research conducted by Seagren et al. (1994) study. The goal of this study was to develop, “a profile of the characteristics of the chair position, instructional unit and institution and to identify some implications for leadership development of chairs and potential chairs, as well as policy and structural considerations for community colleges” (Seagren et al., 1994, p. 3).

The current study was primarily concerned with the deans’ articulations of their lived experiences and the challenges they face. The in-depth interview approach in this study employed a topical or guided interview method. Seidman stated,

the purpose of in-depth interviewing is to not get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses, and not to evaluate as the term is normally used. Rather, the interviewer is

attempting to understand the feelings of the participants and to understand the nuances of what it was like to have lived that experience and then to make meaning out of their thoughts and perspectives. The in-depth interview certainly cannot give the interviewer total understanding of the experience. But, interviewing does “allow us to put behavior in context and provides access to understanding their action. (Seidman, 2006, p. 10)

Intent of Study and Research Questions

The intent of this study was to explore the challenges faced by instructional deans in the Technical College System of Georgia. Specifically, the study explored the following research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of instructional deans at Georgia’s technical colleges regarding the nature of their work;
2. What are the particular challenges that instructional deans face at Georgia’s technical colleges regarding the nature of their work; and
3. What strategies and tactics do instructional deans utilize in addressing these challenges regarding the nature of their work?

Participants and Settings

To examine the challenges faced by instructional deans in the Technical College System of Georgia, 11 instructional deans were interviewed at four colleges. These were selected because of their close proximity to one another. Each of the technical colleges was selected because their deans could provide insight into the central phenomenon. The individual participants in the study were selected using a criterion sampling method based upon the assumption that they all share the commonality of being instructional deans in the Technical College System of Georgia. Creswell (2007) stated this is appropriate because, “Criterion sampling works well when all individuals studied represent people who have experienced the phenomenon” (p. 128).

Before any interviews took place, the researcher contacted each college and asked the Presidents for permission to conduct the study. Additionally, the Instructional Vice Presidents were contacted and asked for permission, names and contact information for their instructional deans. The researcher asked permission to speak with each of the instructional deans before they were contacted and asked to participate in the study. Additionally, the researcher provided each Instructional Vice President with several dates for potential interviews that were to be held on each campus, and made sure that interview dates did not conflict with campus events or meetings. Further, the researcher asked permission of the Instructional Vice Presidents at each college for a private meeting room to be secured on their campus. Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes.

Once each Instructional Vice President granted permission, the researcher contacted each instructional dean at the selected colleges. At that time, information was provided to them briefly outlining the research study and they were invited to participate in the research study. Participants were asked to sign informed consent forms stating their willingness to participate in the study at the time of their interviews.

As previously noted, the proposed research took place at four technical colleges in Georgia. A brief profile of each college follows.

College A

College A is classified in the 2012 Carnegie Basic Classification System as a medium, public, suburban-serving multi-campus Associate's institution. In the fall of 2011, the college enrolled 4,300 students and conferred 1,100 graduates in an associate degree, diploma or technical certificate. The population is 40% male and 60% female. The racial/ethnic distribution is 76% Black, 17% white, 2% Asian, 0.2% Hispanic and 1% being of mixed ethnicities.

College B

College B is classified in the 2012 Carnegie Basic Classification system as a medium, public, rural- serving multi-campus Associate's institution. In the fall semester of 2011, the college enrolled 6,200 students and conferred 1,500 to graduates in an associate degree, diploma or technical certificate of credit programs. The student population is 35% male and 66% female. The racial/ethnic distribution of the student population is 12% Black, 82% White, 0.5% Asian, 5% Hispanic and 1% of mixed ethnicities.

College C

College C is classified in the 2012 Carnegie Basic Classification System as a medium, public, urban-serving Associate's institution. In the fall semester of 2011, the college enrolled 4,500 students and conferred 1,400 awards to students in an associate degree, diploma or technical certificate of credit programs. The student population consists of 41% male and 59% female. The racial/ethnic distribution of the student population is 94% Black, 3% White, 1% Asian, 1% Hispanic and 0.7% mixed ethnicities.

College D

College D is classified in the 2012 Carnegie Basic Classification System as a large, public, suburban-serving, associate's institution. In the fall semester of 2011, the college enrolled 12,000 students and conferred 3,500 awards to students in an associate degree, diploma or technical certificate of credit programs. The student population is 40% male and 60% female. The racial/ethnic distribution of the student population is 33% Black, 57% white, 2% Asian, 6% Hispanic and 2% mixed ethnicities (NCES, 2012).

The participating institutions represented a cross-section of college types, enrollment sizes, and demographic differences. This variety made for an informative comparative analysis.

Data Collection

Prior to beginning their interviews, all participants were given the opportunity to review the procedures of the study. With each participant, the researcher discussed the scope of the research and the rights they had as participants in the study. The researcher briefly discussed the potential risks, possible benefits of the study, the confidentiality of records, dissemination of the results, as well as the contact information for the researcher and The University of Alabama Internal Review Board for any questions regarding their rights during the research study. Before each interview began, the researcher had a signed consent form from the research participant. After the interviews were completed and the data were analyzed and coded for recurring or emergent themes, the researcher presented findings and recommendations for policy, practice, and future research.

To gather data, the researcher employed in-depth interviews (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009). Creswell (2009) claimed that, “For a phenomenological study, the process of collecting information involves primarily in depth interviews with as many as 10 individuals” (p. 131). In phenomenological research, the in-depth interview is the method that gives the researcher the best path to discovery of the lived experience of the participants (Creswell, 2007; Creswell, 2009; Seidman, 2006). “The job of an in-depth interviewer is to go to such depth in the interviews that surface considerations of representativeness and generalizability are replaced by a compelling evocation of an individual’s experience” (Seidman, 2006, p. 51). Seidman (2006) stated that the goal of in-depth interview in a phenomenological study built upon the participants’ responses to interview questions and, ultimately, allowed the research participants to reconstruct their lived experiences within the topic being studied. The interview was audio recorded and then transcribed in order to review and code the data for significant details and

emergent themes. The breadth and depth of the interviews was ensured by the use of probing, open-ended questions, which invited the participants to fully expand on their lived experiences. Creswell (2007) suggested the importance of the qualitative researcher taking field notes that “record aspects such as portraits of the informant, the physical setting, particular events and activities, and the researchers own reactions” (p. 134). During the interview the researcher also produced field notes using a laptop computer to record verbal and non-verbal responses of the participants for later analysis. Saldana (2011) also suggested the researcher write analytical memos throughout the data collection period. He stated, “Analytic memos are somewhat comparable to researcher journal entries or blogs- a place to dump your brain about participants, phenomenon, or process under investigation by thinking and thus writing and thus thinking even more about them (p. 32). Throughout the data collection period, the researcher reflected on his field notes and analytical memos to help develop and interpret the major themes of the data. The preliminary list of questions for each interview appears as Appendix A to this proposal.

Data Analysis

The researcher collected data via personal interviews with 11 instructional deans in the Technical College System of Georgia. The data were analyzed using standard qualitative techniques (Creswell, 2007, 2009; Merriam, 1998; Seidman, 2006). In qualitative research, data is gathered and analyzed simultaneously (Merriam, 2002). That is, data are analyzed beginning at the first interview and observation, and continues throughout the study. Simultaneous data collection and analysis is critical due to the amount of data produced via interviews and transcribed documents. It would be extremely difficult to begin the analysis of the hundreds of pages of transcripts if the researcher waited until all interviews have been completed (Merriam, 2002). The researcher read the transcripts multiple times and begin analyzing and sorting the

information into categories utilizing the coding process to uncover recurring and emerging themes (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998).

An inductive data analysis approach was utilized when reviewing the qualitative data that is collected during interviews in fall of 2013. Creswell (2007) explained that, “the inductive process involves researchers working back and forth between themes and the database until they establish a comprehensive set of themes” (p. 39). The inductive approach may require the researcher to collaborate with the participants so that the themes and their lived essence of the phenomenon emerge (Creswell, 2007). When utilizing a methodological approach informed by phenomenology, the researcher should develop and analyze the significant statements from each interview, generate meaning units, and develop what the research participants’ lived experiences have been. The researcher, through multiple readings of the transcribed interview, built a thick description of the participants’ lived experience (Merriam, 2002). Denzin (1989) stated that “detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another. Thick description evokes emotionality and self-feelings. It inserts history into the experience. In thick description, the voices, feelings, actions and meanings are heard” (p. 83). To that end, the six-step data analysis procedure, as outlined by Creswell (2009), was followed to analyze participants’ responses. Namely, as Creswell (2009) suggested, the following steps were taken: (1) gathered raw data; (2) organized and prepared data for analysis; (3) read through all the data; (4) conducted detailed analysis and coding process; (5) advanced how the description and themes were represented in the qualitative narrative; (6) and interpreted meaning of the data.

Saldana (2011) described a code in qualitative inquiry as a word or short phrase that is used to capture the meaning or essence of a piece of data. The researcher followed his suggested format to analyze and code the data. The *coding* procedure that he suggested, and the researcher

utilized, involved a three-column document as an instrument for analysis and coding of the transcribed data. The first column being the raw transcribed interview data, the second column used to assign preliminary codes and the final column being used to assign final codes and emerging themes to the transcribed interview data. Column two utilized descriptive and *in vivo* coding to begin the process of breaking the data do into more meaningful categories, while the third column listed the final codes and themes that have emerged from the data. One example of a theme that was uncovered by the research was “Adequate Training for the Deanship is a Challenge.” Moustakas (1994) suggested selecting significant statements in the transcripts that provided insight into the central phenomenon which were coded in column one. This theme initially evolved from codes in the first column including: conflicts, too many meetings, purchasing rules, credibility gap, budgets, qualified faculty, and orientation.

In order to label level two coding, the raw data from level one coding was reexamined and categories were developed including: deans constant change, information technology, time management, human resource management, crisis management (firefighter), public relations/fundraising, and budget management. While the deans’ responses were very similar, they differed in the amount of time they allotted for each task. The analysis of this data lead to the final theme: Adequate Training for the Deanship is a Challenge.

Data Security and Participant Confidentiality

The data for this study came from personal interviews, transcribed data and field notes taken during on-campus interviews during the fall of 2013. After each interview session, the researcher reviewed the recorded conversations and made handwritten notes pertaining to the interview. These notes were analyzed against the initial notes taken during the interview that day. The researcher sought similarities in thought and theme, between the interviews, as well as

any interesting statements that the researcher might not have noted during the interview session. A transcription of each interview was produced by a professional transcriptionist. The researcher provided the recorded interview to the transcriptionist on the day the interview took place. To maintain the participants' confidentiality, the researcher used pseudonyms instead of the participants' actual names when reporting the findings in the study. Likewise, the researcher used pseudonyms when referring to the institutions where the data are collected. All interview data that was recorded, collected, transcribed, handwritten, and analyzed was kept secured inside a locked file cabinet in the researcher's office. The researcher made sure that all electronic, written or audio records were properly deleted, shredded, or destroyed after the study ended.

Researcher Positionality and Trustworthiness

It is important to state, from the very beginning of any qualitative study, the researcher's position and any biases that may have impacted the study (Creswell, 2007, 2009; Merriam, 1998; Seidman, 1998). Specifically, the researcher should provide the reader with background information regarding any "comments on past experience, biases, prejudices, and orientations that have likely shaped the interpretation and approach to the study" (Creswell, 2007, p. 208). To that end, over a 20-year period, I have worked in the Technical College System of Georgia and have held several different positions. I began my career in the Student Affairs division of a technical college as the Career Services Coordinator where I served for seven years. I moved into the instructional division for two years, where I served as a Marketing Management instructor. During that two-year period, I also held the position of division chair and provided leadership and support to the business division. Next, I moved into an executive leadership role as the Vice President of Student Affairs and served in that position for eight years. During that eight-year period, I worked very closely with the Instructional Vice President and faculty to

resolve issues between Student Affairs and instructional staff. To assure quality instruction and student needs were being met, I spent a good deal of my time discussing issues with the Vice President of Instruction and the divisional deans of the college. In 2008, due to the economic conditions in the country and the state of Georgia, the Technical College System of Georgia began to merge a number of its sister colleges. As part of the system merger plan, West Georgia Technical College was merged with West Central Technical College. I became the Interim President of the college at the beginning of the merger and remained in that position for a year as the two colleges were merged. This year of experience placed me in the chief executive position, and required that I deal with all issues and areas of the college. Much of my time during the merger of the two colleges was spent working work with the Instructional Vice President on areas related to instruction. Certainly, a big part of my workload during that year was instructional in nature, and required that I spend a good deal of my day with curriculum and instructional faculty issues. As we moved from an autonomous college to a merged college, a large portion of that work required that I merge instructional leadership positions from two colleges into one college instructional leadership unit. Subsequently, after the merger was complete, several deans were reassigned new duties or relieved of their duties as part of a college Reduction in Force plan. After the merger was complete in 2009, I became the Provost of the merged colleges. This executive administrative level and Chief Executive Officer experience has afforded me a unique opportunity to work with the instructional leadership of the college and witness the daily responsibilities and tasks the dean routinely perform.

I attempted to avoid bias during data collection, analysis, and reporting by using the following strategies: member checking, anonymity of participants, and peer review (Creswell, 2007, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2009). The fact that I have worked in higher education

institutions for 20 years, have been an instructor, and have held executive leadership positions managing instructional deans makes it unlikely that I have a blank slate of experiences and opinions regarding the instructional dean's role. So, the appearance of bias could certainly be seen as a potential hindrance to a successful study. However, by revealing my background at the beginning of this study, I hope to remain cognizant of potential bias and remain an objective researcher throughout the study.

Timeline

After the dissertation committee and the University of Alabama Institutional Review Board give approval to move forward with the study, interviews took place during the fall of 2013. Interviews were completed and taped interviews transcribed. The researcher read, analyzed, coded, and interpreted data during the fall of 2013 and the spring of 2014.

Summary

The dean plays a critical role in higher education. The dean is responsible for many areas including personnel, curriculum, and budgetary and fundraising activities. The dean's position and responsibilities have changed over the years. The dean today must be able to handle the routine administrative tasks, but also must be able to work in the public arena and deal with local political concerns and public relations issues, as well as to work in partnership with business and industry. This study seeks to understand the challenges of instructional deans in the Technical College System of Georgia and to identify issues that they encounter and response strategies they employ. Chapter III included a description of the research perspective, research approach, research questions, site descriptions, organizational framework, data procedures, research personality, and the proposed timeline for the study.

CHAPTER IV:
FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify the challenges that deans face in the Technical College System of Georgia. Additionally, the researcher sought to understand the lived experiences and response strategies deans employed to help them complete the tasks associated with their jobs. In order to develop an understanding of challenges associated with being a dean in the Technical College System of Georgia, the researcher interviewed 11 full time instructional deans at four technical colleges within the Technical College System of Georgia.

This chapter reflects the research data collected from the semi-structured interviews. This study was guided by three research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of instructional deans at Georgia's technical colleges regarding the nature of their work;
2. What are the particular challenges that instructional deans face at Georgia's technical colleges regarding the nature of their work; and
3. What strategies and tactics do instructional deans utilize in addressing these challenges regarding the nature of their work?

Participants were asked four descriptive questions to elicit responses that address their demographic composition. Additionally, an interview protocol comprising ten open-ended questions was presented to each participant in the study to gather responses to be analyzed.

Demographics

To better understand the challenges faced by the deans in the Technical College System of Georgia, the researcher sought to include a representative group of deans in this study. Questions that solicited general demographic information from participants were included in the protocol for the interviews. A summary of this information is included as Table 1. Eleven full time deans from the Technical College System of Georgia participated in this study.

Participants included four males and seven females. Five participants were Caucasian, and six participants were African-American. The age range of the deans was 35 years, with the youngest participant being in their thirties and the eldest being in their seventies. The mean age of the participants was 52.8. All participants have at least one year of experience as an acting dean at the technical college level. Three deans have less than three years of experience in their current positions; six of the participants have between three and five years in their current positions; two participants in the study have more than six years of experience as a dean. The longest serving dean in the study has 16 years of experience. The mean of the participants' years of experience in the dean's position is 4.7.

Table 1

General Demographic Information of Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Years in Current Position	College
Mike	35	Male	White	2	A
John	51	Male	White	5	A
Lynn	55	Female	White	4	A
Christine	45	Female	White	2	B
Joan	51	Female	White	7	B
Tina	48	Female	Black	3	C
Dan	65	Male	Black	5	C
Paul	70	Male	Black	1	C
Tracey	56	Female	Black	3	D
Ann	61	Female	Black	16	D
Wendy	44	Female	Black	4	D

Emerging Themes Derived from the Qualitative Data

Participants of this study were asked to share their personal thoughts and perceptions regarding the challenges and roles of an academic dean in the Technical College System of Georgia. During the fall semester of 2013, the researcher collected, transcribed, analyzed, and coded personal interview transcripts. Connections were established between the collected data and the proposed research questions. Research Question One sought to understand the lived experiences of the deans in the Technical College System of Georgia. In this question, participant’s narratives were examined for themes that spoke to what a dean actually encounters as they go about performing their varied tasks. The analysis included questions to ascertain what they considered to be the definition of a dean in the technical college system of Georgia; what leadership role the dean should fulfill; and what a typical day is like. Research Question Two

sought to understand the challenges that the dean encounters in their jobs. The analysis included questions to ascertain what internal and external factors were in place to impede their ability to complete their job tasks. Additionally, questions were asked regarding additional duties assigned by upper management as well as the biggest challenges that confront the instructional deans over the next five years. Research Question Three sought to understand the strategies that deans use to help them deal with the high levels of stress they encounter in their jobs. In this question, participants' narratives were examined and responses evaluated in an attempt to gather the strategies used most often. Additionally, the participants were asked questions regarding In-Service training they felt would help them better perform their job tasks. Lastly, the participants were asked to reflect back to the beginning of their time as a dean and discuss what would have helped them be more successful. The following themes emerged from the collected data in response to Question One: (a) the dean never experiences a typical day; (b) the dean serves as a middle manager; and (c) the dean must multi-task. The following themes emerged from the collected data in response to Question Two: (a) insufficient funding is a challenge; (b) the inability to acquire qualified faculty is a challenge; (c) adequate training for the deanship is a challenge. The following themes emerged from the collected data in response to Question Three: (a) the dean must be a renaissance man (b) the dean must utilize support groups; (c) the dean must maintain a healthy work-life balance.

Theme 1: The Dean Never Experiences a “Typical Day”

Participants in the study agreed that the dean in the Technical College System of Georgia very seldom ever have a day that could be called a “typical day.” The first question asked to each participant was to define the role of the dean and what the dean actually does in the technical college. The participants all had difficulty answering the question regarding defining

the role of the dean without further clarification from the researcher. After clarifying the question, “What would be your definition of the instructional dean in the technical college,” the participants indicated that a huge part of each day was just “putting out fires” and making sure that the business was open and ready for customers. Several participants indicated that a large part of their day was spent on faculty evaluation and resource development. Several other participants responded that working outside the college to develop additional funding streams with business and industry partners took a large portion of their time. These participants stated that this was necessary due to the continued reduction of state appropriations. Several other participants focused more of their time working with individual students to help them overcome hurdles that could prevent them from completing their programs of study. After participants’ narratives were analyzed there were commonalities of tasks among the deans regarding curriculum, personnel development, budgeting and too many mandatory meetings. However, when asked to quantitatively put a percentage of time spent on each of those tasks their responses vastly varied. Most deans stated that between 25-50% of their day involved addressing faculty issues (including staffing, observation, equipment, and problems). General communication procedures (emails, phone calls, etc.) accounted for between 25-40% of most deans’ routines. Administrative duties (including student complaints, mandatory meetings, paperwork, and reports) accounted for between 25-40% of several the deans’ schedules. The varying ranges of time allotment demonstrate to what extent the deans do not experience a “typical day.”

Participants’ narratives in the study reported that a major component of their frustration dealt with not having a good knowledge of what their position as dean entailed. Many deans felt like they were asked to perform functions that were not spelled out on their job descriptions. This loosely defined job description was an area of concern among many of the deans

interviewed. Lynn from College A articulated her thoughts:

That is a very interesting question because as you will probably hear from other candidates it varies differently from college to campus to exact position within a college and a campus, but I define a Dean as a middle manager who reports to a Vice President of Academic Affairs and that is true across the system whether it's a campus Dean, a program Dean, a specific type of Dean.

As Lynn anticipated, "typical" days varied among the other participants included in the study.

All of the research participants' narratives focused on the overwhelming number of different tasks the deans are asked to perform. Many deans in the study commented on the amount of time that they spend with internal and external customers and the effort they put forth to help make sure these stakeholders are getting the information they need. Tina at College C revealed her focus on these different stakeholder groups:

You spend a lot of your time trying to bridge the relationships of the students that have problems either appealing grades, not understanding why they got a certain grade, handling all issues with the instructors that they have with the students, making sure we have enough adjuncts especially – right now we're dying, and a lot of human resource issues that we have to do like timesheets and hours and we spend a lot of time, especially I do because I have so many [adjuncts].

Many of the research participants spoke to the issue of budgets and budgeting as being a large portion of their daily routine. The majority of all participants spoke to their concerns regarding lack of funding and their inability to manage their divisions effectively with inadequate funds. Mike claimed that "budget stuff takes up quite a bit of time." He further stated that in the event budget requests are submitted incorrectly it becomes his responsibility to research and correct the request, and get the request approved. Ann remarked that she spends a good deal of her time, "managing the budgets to make sure that we stay within the allocated fund source that has been allocated for the budget." Lynn noted the reality of her institutions fiscal situation: "I am not asking for a big wish list, because I came in, and they told me exactly what my budgets were and what we can and cannot do right now." She remarked that this could

“hinder some other initiatives.”

Several of the participants commented on the large amount of office work that the dean must complete on a daily basis. Christine commented, “There is a lot of response required, emails, and questions. I try and balance and not get so caught up that all I ever do is respond.” Similarly, Joan observed,

I check my email, and see what fire is there first. We check email 24/7. I am always the point of contact if someone is going to be out. I don't think there is any job that is too small or beneath the position for that person to do.

Ann noted in her position a large amount of her office work time is allocated to auditing programs to make sure they meet state requirements and to ensure that accreditation requirements are met.

[There is] a lot of memo writing and [there are] a lot of auditing processes. In fact I've just finished auditing all of my advisory committee notebooks, a lot of auditing to ensure that the various programs are fulfilling and being successful in the state auditing like PAR process, auditing for SACS accreditation making sure that the curriculum and everything is aligned for continuous accreditation processes here at the college.

All participants stated that their days are long, filled with varied tasks and different priorities: budgets, resource allocation, HR functions, paperwork, purchasing, appeals, accreditation, advising, discipline, evaluations, meetings, fundraising, emails, and phone calls, the participants affirmed that no day could be deemed a typical day. Wendy at College D stated her frustration with her role as dean:

A typical day? Oh a typical day is I walk in and I sit down and I say this is my agenda for today and then I get a phone call or I get a student out there who needs to see me right now and the whole day changes. And am I going to work about two to three hours over to complete some of the tasks on that list or I'm going to walk out with nothing completed that day or at least half of what I needed to do was not completed. A typical day is the need for two of you cloned.

Theme 2: The Dean Serves as a Middle Manager

The dean position typically is found in the mid-level management of the organizational chart, based on the collected data. Typically, above the dean can be found Provost, Vice President and the President positions. Typically below you find the instructors and program chairs. The deans interviewed for this study claimed that their positions required them to act as conduit between faculty and senior administration, classroom manager, personnel manager, curriculum manager, and budget manager.

Several participants also mentioned to the role as a conduit between faculty and senior staff. Mike at College A stated the following:

The Dean should be someone who communicates with their faculty in their reports to let them know what the expectations are and someone who can relay communication from the executive leadership team, the President, the VPs to let the faculty know what's expected and to just constantly communicate. It's almost like you're the go between you know. You're the guy that is making sure your faculty are supported and at the same time you're working for the executive leadership team. You're making sure that things are getting done that need to get done and you're approaching your faculty and staff saying hey the President expects this to happen. What can I do to help you make that happen? So it's – very much still a supportive type of leadership that I'm seeing and it's a go between at the same time I'm making sure that the message is received by the faculty from the President, making sure that the President through you know appropriate channels through my VP. We have an associate VP and we have a VP of academic affairs so I go to my boss and make sure that she understands what's going on with the faculty. Hey they're complaining about this issue that's recently come down the pike. You know, can we double-check on this? Is there something we can do to maybe I don't know, to make their job a little more manageable and so it's very much a go between kind of person.

Mike's comments reflected the sentiments of other deans in the study. For example, Christine at College B articulated that her role is also of a conduit between faculty and senior staff and stated the following:

From a leadership standpoint I think the Dean does have the responsibility to sort of stay in touch with the folks at the Vice President level, kind of the larger vision mission of the college. I say the Deans have to kind of make sure that what we are doing within our division is matching up with where the senior leadership wants the college to go, and also

that we're communicant in some sense kind of a filter helping faculty and folks understand that larger.

John also articulated this thought, "The deans are your transfer. That is where all your information is between your administration, faculty, staff, students, and everything." Lynn also commented, "I define a dean as a middle manager who reports to a Vice President of Academic Affairs." These participations reflect the very similar thoughts found in the literature review. The day-to-day responsibilities of the dean are significant. The dean has to be a student advocate, faculty mentor, and conduit between faculty and senior leadership. This relationship places the dean in an uncomfortable role of being friend and colleague to faculty while at the same time implementing policies and procedures that faculty might disagree with (Wolverton et al., 2001).

Classroom management proved to be a common theme among many of the participants in the study. The participants spoke to the varied tasks they perform on a daily basis. John at College A commented on his duties as a classroom manager:

The Instructional Dean needs to take care of the day to day operations of the classes, making sure the instructors are there, making sure the students are taking the right classes, that they don't need to be in another class. Being available for students, say students have questions because of the 1100 students here I can assure you I don't know all of them but all them know me. Make sure the instructors are using their time wisely in the classroom that's – you know some students say we only met for 45 minutes, we've got to go and others will call and say – well we got an hour and a half class and we met 45 minutes and I paid for an hour and a half so...

Other deans such as Joan observed, "It's more than just courses. It's courses. It's budgeting. It's hiring. It's positive discipline. It's classroom management. It's how you manage people and how you treat students." One participant spoke to the serious issue of the potentiality of violence in the classroom. Dan at College C related a story of a student who became hostile and physically violent with both her instructor and campus police, which ultimately resulted with the student's arrest. Along the same line but less violent, Wendy commented that at her college bad

student behavior in the classroom is also an issue. She further expanded on her situation by stating that there is a lack of support at the senior staff level to remove the trouble students from the classroom.

The deans commented that a major component of their responsibilities was curriculum management. Joan at College B focused on her role as a curriculum manager when she stated the following:

My job I think is to make sure that in the arts and sciences division that we provide the students the necessary course work, the necessary scheduling, the necessary resources and materials that they need so that they can accomplish their educational goals whether it be a certificate, a diploma, a degree, transferring to another institution, whatever their personal educational goals are that we meet that in some shape, form, or fashion within the core area and with eight campuses you know if sometimes that means this class has got to be offered on Monday and Wednesday night because we got a group of students that that's the only time they can take it you know and things like that. But I think it's to oversee basically the faculty that I have and the division chairs that I oversee to make sure that they have the resources they need to be able to do their job to provide our faculty and our students with – the resources that – we have or that they need. In short, it's that and other duties as assigned which is probably more of the job than the actual job description.

Mike at College A revealed one of his curriculum management monitoring tools as he explained, “Our college does a course climate survey. That's when we really kind of get a feel for where the students stand course by course and we use that as a part of our annual evaluation....”

Christine at College B agreed that managing curriculum is a critical job responsibility. She stated, “The dean is responsible for the administration, oversight, and facilitation of all the academic programs. Curriculum, quality assurance, and supporting faculty are in the realm of the dean.” Paul at College C acknowledged that each dean comes to the position “armed” with different strengths. He further commented, “ I feel very comfortable in translating accreditation standards, the criteria in those standards, and what I do to meet those standards.” Tracey at College D estimated approximately 30% of her time was presently devoted to program

development.

The participants in the study indicated that managing personnel was critical. One way that deans exhibit management of personnel included locating and hiring qualified instructors. Lynn elaborated, “If a teacher quits and I have to quick hire somebody that means looking for credentialed folks and using our easy HR web system and getting somebody credentialed, interviewed, hired and the paperwork [completed].” Wendy at College D articulated her overall thoughts regarding her duties as a manager of personnel and people:

Mostly we’re just the leader of our division. We’re challenged with finding the right instructors, resources, challenged with how we use our resources meaning how we’re dealing with the budgets. Let’s see, we’re ultimately finding new leaders, responsible with keeping up with what’s new, what’s important in our areas particularly for me, mine is academics so it is more so the general ed. and learning support, so we’re charged with making sure that those departments run smoothly and that means we deal with student concerns. We deal with faculty concerns. We deal with administrative concerns.

The deans interviewed for this study revealed that budget management is a common job responsibility and can be very time consuming. The interviewees listed ensuring state purchasing guidelines are followed, verifying pricing information, analyzing purchase requests, modifying purchase requests, correcting incorrect purchase orders and dealing with the redirection of previously budgeted funds as examples. Ann at College D commented on her role as budget manager:

Well quite naturally resources right now with the budget restraints are always a challenge in making sure that the students and the faculty have the resources that they need to do – deliver the curriculum at the instructional level. I think that’s one of my biggest challenges just making sure that we stay within the constraints of the fine lines of the budget.

Christine at College B shed light on her budget issues at one of the recently merged colleges within the Technical College System of Georgia:

Of course money is always an institutional thing that gets in the way. You know we got budgets and they weren’t what we wanted them to be and nobody’s were. You know we

weren't singled out but that's tough when we merged you know we had a whole lot of things on different campuses that require resources.

Mike at College A articulated budget issues and the required time it takes in his schedule:

Budget stuff takes up quite a bit of time actually on a day-to-day basis. This faculty member needs to order these supplies or this equipment so we look at their budget to make sure we have money allocated. Was it requested if you didn't get it in the budget which lately it seems like we have a lot of people that put up front – we have an annual planning kind of budget request time period where we – know this upcoming year we're going to need these items or these things need replacing and so that's the first thing I check back. Did you request this last year to go in your budget because you don't have any money in your budget for this so then I have to go maybe make a case for it.

Participants in the study agreed that their job was that of a middle manager. While there were differences in the percentage of time spent on their middle management tasks, deans mostly cited managing faculty and students, budgets, resources, curriculum, and being the conduit between faculty and senior staff most commonly.

Theme 3: The Dean Must Multi-Task

In addition to serving in many capacities at the middle management level, the deans at times must respond to their faculty, staff, and students as an encouraging coach and a mentor. They also must act as public relations managers and maintain relationships with industry partners and community members.

Some deans, such as Mike of College A, take an encouraging approach, acting as a coach to their employees. Mike spoke of the benefit of sending reminders after a performance evaluation to keep his employees moving in the right direction. Similarly, Joan of College B advocates a positive approach. She declared,

I think we ought to think outside the box. I think we ought not to ever use the rule of that's the way we've always done it. I think we ought to never use "it can't be done." It might not can be done inside the confines of your thought process right now but most of the time things can be done. It's just a matter of finding the venue to do it and – I think a leader of the college ought to be willing to let other people give those ideas, and it's not about who gets credit. It's not about me always being right or me always getting my

way. It's about what's best for the college and the students.

From College C, Dan articulated his need to encourage instructors to progress in their academic credentials, and his need to encourage them to look for different ways to improve program facilities.

Encouragement by mentoring is one of the ways Wendy from College D executes her role as dean. She claimed, "Whatever it takes to make students successful is my daily task so if it means that you've got to pull together a way for that student to get to school if that's going to make them successful, that's your duty."

The deans spoke to the fact that they were often called upon in a public relations/fundraising capacity. John from College A discussed one way he personally executes his role as public relations manager. John stated that he was more than willing to welcome the opportunity to expose his campus to the tri-city area. His office is located in the same building as his college's conference center, which is constantly utilized by people from the surrounding communities. He rarely misses the chance to introduce himself and make them feel welcomed. He claimed, "I want people to know who I am. I want people to know that this campus is here. This is the first I've heard about this and can you take us on a tour?" He further explained, "I'm here merely running your school. It's your school and – the doors [are] always open and my office is always unlocked. It's your school. We're here because of ya'll."

Lynn at College A explained the extent to which the dean must multi task in a Public Relations capacity at times. She discussed several scenarios in which she had to be willing to be a team player:

[As a dean] you will entertain board members, or you will attend a certain ground breaking for a new career academy. I remember once the President asked me to go to grocery shopping and get shrimp and seafood for a low country boil because we were entertaining our Chinese counterparts from a sister college in another country and we all

put on aprons and chopped up vegetables and cooked. We set up tables. We put up signs.

Tracey at College D told a similar scenario about when the Chinese delegation came to town. She was informed that the delegates had a particular interest in nursing and was asked to put together a presentation. She was told it was not only an institutional event, but also a system wide event. Tracey also spoke of a last minute request from her President to attend a social gala. In quick response to her request, Tracey obtained proper attire and made arrangements to attend. The technical colleges rely heavily on what their industry counterparts' needs are and the designated academic program offerings are a direct result of their needs. These partnerships are mutually beneficial in that college faculty are called upon to serve on industry boards and committees. Another undeniable benefit for the colleges is the amount of resources and equipment the colleges are provided by industry at reduced or no cost.

Similar to their public relation manager roles, the deans stated they were called upon to participate in fundraising activities for their colleges. Many commented that this role has become more prominent as budget cuts continue. Tracey continued,

We have a dental hygiene program that will have a community clinic. I'm working with the foundation to raise some money, capital investment, into the program so that we can service the community. So yes I do see my role as not just PR because I attend all of these functions with the hospitals, community, and general public activities as best as I can because we provide graduates for employment and I have to have that relationship with the employers.

Mike from College A also articulated the importance of networking with industry partners. He stated a substantial amount of his time is dedicated to the acquisition of donated equipment for his industrial programs such as machine tool, heating and air conditioning, and welding. As a return favor, he has volunteered his faculty to serve on advisory boards within the industry.

The participants in the study all commented on the fact that they are regularly called upon to perform many tasks. Their days are filled with coaching, mentoring, and encouraging their faculty and staff, supporting their administration, representing their college, and building relationships with industry partners and community members.

The deans in this study revealed that there is an overwhelming multitude of challenges they face in their position. These challenges include lack of funding, finding qualified faculty, relying too heavily on adjuncts, declining enrollments, HR hurdles, decision making too slow, not enough autonomy, lack of respect for the position, not enough training, student discipline issues, low salaries, best faculty departing, poor morale, keeping academic rigor high, poor reputation, producing qualified graduates, inadequate software training and more.

Theme 4: Insufficient Funding Is a Challenge

In Bailey's 2008 qualitative study of higher education professionals, nine of whom were deans, he identified that deans incurred additional job responsibilities as a result of positions being lost due to budget cuts. When considering his biggest challenges at College A, Mike noted:

I think that budgetary concerns are always going to be something that's hard to deal with and it seems like our budget gets cut every single year and so having faculty in the positions they need to be in and be able to hire new faculty is going to be a big problem over the next 5 years because of salaries at the state level, and because the budget's been cut so much they've not been going up. Nobody's been getting a pay raise, so faculty that have been teaching for 5 years, for 10 years, for 15 years, they know they can go work into industry and make a lot more money and for a long time they're overlooking that because they love teaching but as time goes by they're realizing maybe they could serve their family better if they go earn a few more dollars. So that to me is probably a number one concern, being able to keep a good faculty member in the program position that I want them to teach in. Other concerns are just keeping up with equipment and supplies. If you're dealing with industrial [equipment] or anything related to computers you have to replace them quite often and with the budget being the way it is, we're a technical college system, we're supposed to be on the cutting edge of technology, right? So we're trying to supply industry with people that are trained with the latest technology so if our budget's being cut constantly it's hard for us to claim that we're producing cutting edge trained people when we can't buy new equipment so that's – an issue going forward I think.

When discussing his biggest challenges John responded, “Money!” He expanded on his concerns on the high cost of programs, including equipment, labs, and technology. Finally, John complained that it takes four to five adjunct instructors to cover the workload of one full time instructor, which results in lower quality instruction. Lynn at College A articulated her viewpoint regarding the importance of focusing on external partnerships as a result of centralized governance and continued budget cuts. She stated, “We are not a Board of Regents [institution]. Board of Regents institutions comprehensive universities have their own budgets and have that constitutional freedom to do as they want. We are under the TCSG. We are centrally governed.” Joan from College B expressed frustration regarding her budgetary situation. She lamented patching equipment instead of replacing equipment for years at a time. She also expressed frustration regarding the limitations and restrictions of how her approved budget can be spent. She said she resented the confines of the parameters of the money she is given, and longs for the day she is trusted with more autonomy. Tracey at College D summarized the shared concern among many of the deans for more budget autonomy:

I submitted a budget at the beginning of the year but then something not within your control happens. I have an example. I submitted a request for certain equipment and life was good. It was looking good. It was in my budget and then I got told you can’t do all of that right now because aviation needs a new airplane, and what do you say, don’t buy them an airplane? It’s not necessarily that we didn’t have it in the budget to start with, but sometimes that budget is so not within my control.

Ann at College D also expressed that staying within the constraints of the fine lines of the budget is her biggest challenge.

All deans expressed concerns with the current lack of funding and are continually told to do more with less. They stated as a result of the current economic situation, every area of the deans’ colleges is impacted. Many complained that the constant shifting of budget priorities by

their administration has resulted in programs with archaic equipment and outdated technology.

Theme 5: The Inability to Acquire Qualified Faculty is a Challenge

It became apparent from talking to the participants in the study that hiring qualified faculty was a major challenge for the deans. Wendy at College D articulated her thoughts on this conundrum:

I think that's the hindrance for me, money. When I talk about the revolving door of the scientists, those adjuncts that I'm hiring are getting \$23.00 an hour for that PhD in biology or physics. Most of them have doctorates in those areas so at least a master's so I'm not getting the best instructors with the rate of pay. That's my biggest complaint, the money. I want to hire people who want to work here but for \$23.00 an hour it's a joke.

Right across my campus they're paying them two times what we pay them. The college right across the street is paying \$2,400.00 a semester; we pay \$1,100.00. The adjunct staff is just always in a turnover and – basically and I'll say that one of the biggest factors is pay. Mainly the people who continue to work here really love working here, full-time or part-time staff. They love working here, and I think it's okay when you're full-time for the most part but they've had no raises in the last five years. As soon as someone blows a whistle and tells them about another job they apply and if they get it, they're gone. And I'm – certain that that particular part – the full-time part is going on all over the state but the adjunct stuff I'm not so sure about that and -- that's the part I don't understand.

Mike stated his frustration regarding the issue of adjunct instructors, “I was mostly referring to – it seems like the search for adjuncts is nonstop. I'm looking to post ads for adjuncts all the time.” He further stated, “Faculty that have been teaching for five, ten, or fifteen years, know they can go work in industry and make a lot more money.” John at College A agreed that the adjunct issue has become problematic, “It takes four to five adjunct instructors to cover the workload of one full time instructor.” He commented, “There is no ownership from an adjunct instructor. As far as I am concerned there is only one reason an adjunct teaches, and that is money.” Lynn at College A expressed her stress regarding adjunct instructors. She stated that there is “always a need to find adjuncts.” She said it was a “*constant* constant” because she was always planning ahead for the coming year. She provided an example of the stress this brings on

when she told of the time she was required to find 11 instructors to go into the high schools that were starting classes within a month. Joan at College B articulated her concerns regarding adjuncts and the need to better equip and mentor them:

Could we provide our adjuncts with better resources- make them a bigger part and better part of the family and get better results? Yes, but that would cost a lot of resources as well. Do we try to do a mentoring program for our adjuncts? Yes. Do we do a good job of it? No.

Tina at College C stated her reliance on adjuncts when she remarked,

Making sure we have enough adjuncts especially, right now, we're dying, we have a lot of uh human resource issues that – we have to do timesheets and so we spend a lot of time especially I do because I have so many. That's the problem I have in both the school of business and the general studies. I probably have about 60 adjuncts so you know – I spend a lot of my time doing that.

Dan at College B built upon the theme of not being able to find qualified instructors when he stated,

I think the adjunct for air-conditioning was advertised for over a year before we got anybody. We've now been advertising for an engineer with a master's for our engineering technology program for six months, no applicants. My method is to contact people with contacts and put the word out.

Dan further addressed the issue of competing for faculty against private colleges and the money they can offer. He stated that over the last few years in his area he has seen an increase in the number of private, for-profit institutions of higher learning. He commented that one for-profit college offered adjunct instructors \$10 more per hour than what his college was able to offer.

Regarding clinical sites at College C, Paul spoke to the issues of faculty shortages and the additional struggle to find credentialed faculty. He stated, “ In nursing, we do have a shortage of faculty and our accreditation standards not only speak to the numbers of faculty but it speaks to the specialty mix of the faculty that a particular individual who carries a degree.” Also reflective of Paul's thoughts, Tracey commented that when your program is SACS accredited (as all

Technical College System of Georgia's programs are) there are external standards for which your college is held accountable. She said that attention must be paid regarding faculty credentials to ensure that these standards are met. Wendy spoke to the issue of rapid turnover rate of instructors at College D as well as the unacceptable ratio of full time faculty to part time faculty:

I have right now 600 students – over 600 students taking biology, some form of science and I have 1 full-time instructor so the adjuncts that we have are just walking in and walking out the door. It's revolving and that's not student success so what concerns me is what's going to appear later with all this revolving doors of scientists. So when they get to the next level I'm responsible for them. What's going to happen?

It is clear from the participants' statements that the deans were extremely concerned with their inability to find and keep qualified credentialed faculty due to low pay, meaning they cannot compete with other institutions of higher learning or industry salary rates, which ultimately results in a severe lack of vested or loyal adjunct instructors. They implied the external budget restraints; in addition to external standards placed upon their colleges pose a continuing conundrum in securing the needed faculty.

Theme 6: Adequate Training for the Deanship is a Challenge

Training, and also the lack of training, was a reoccurring theme among the deans. The participants focused on the need for training in the areas of *Dean 101*: human resources, college-wide information, software and reports, leadership, accreditation, instructional issues, management, and counseling. Lynn at College A remarked, "Some deans are forced into their job because there's nobody else available and so they get promoted and they're not equipped. Some get thrown in there and they just don't have the wherewithal to handle that stress." Lynn spoke in general terms about training; whereas other deans specified areas of interest and/or need. Mike from College A stated that human resources management is the area in which he

could use additional training. He stated, “I think that knowing more about HR would help most Deans. Somebody that comes from an HR background, that’s no sweat for them, but someone that comes from an instructional background knows a little bit.” Mike recalled a recent human resource seminar held by the human resource coordinator at his college that covered topics like sexual harassment and workplace harassment. He noted the benefits of similar sessions on all aspects of the college, from economic development to marketing to admissions. He observed, “If we knew more about all those things then I think it would make our jobs a little easier because we really are involved with almost every aspect of the college. It’s not just academic affairs.” Christine at College B commented on training that has been both beneficial for her, and also training that would enhance her job ability. The leadership training she received centered on the mechanics of leading meetings. Ann at College D shared the opinion that leadership should be an area of specific focus. She stated, “We need more in-service training preparing us for leadership, and the everyday work that we have to do for accreditation and maintaining college- wide accreditations.” Christine said that she would find training on online curriculum and time management also valuable. The main training requests desired by Joan from College B are budgets and scheduling. She goes on to address one more area of need:

I would say even just awareness of the other divisions of the college. When I got hired as a math teacher the very first day way back at my previous college, I made it my business to go to every department and say hi, my name is Christine, and I’m the new math teacher, and what do you do?

“We need a formalized training for deans and they don’t have it,” was Tina’s general response to the training question. More specifically, Tina addressed the issue of management training. She stated, “We let our deans go up the ladder from instructor to dean without the proper management training they need. Also, how to deal with students when they appeal grades, and how to prioritize.” She further elaborated that if you are a general education, health sciences, or

non-business related dean, the tasks associated with management and managing people are new to you. The deans with a business background have a tremendous advantage due to the coursework they have completed. Conversely, those deans that did not come through the business track could use business management training to help them handle issues and situations.

Several participants commented on the need for software training. Notably, Paul from College C stated, "...the KMS system, you have people working here many years and I say KMS – they don't know what the KMS system is. This system has metrics, but the idea is to know to understand how to use it." Banner and BannerWeb were also mentioned by the deans as a necessary software skill.

Lynn articulated her thoughts regarding deans' knowledge of their instructional role.

In my past position I actually had to teach a course each year. That was part of the requirement so that we always know what's going on at the level of the instructor. This job is too big and too busy for me to teach at the moment so it's not a teaching position but we need to be familiar. What are the processes and Banner for entering no-shows? What is the processing for entering grades? What happens if something goes wrong?

Can we troubleshoot and fix? So we need to know everything that goes on in that instructional role. My philosophy is to be a colleague even though they all report to me I need to work and assist my teachers so that they can do the best job possible which means if they have a problem, I want to help solve it.

It was observed through the collected data that deans must sometimes act as counselors.

Mike articulated his wishes for training to help deal with potentially volatile and crisis situations, "I feel like I have zilch training you know, as far as being able to calm someone down or talk them through a situation if they feel like they're having an emergency." Wendy at College D built upon Mike's comment, "Learning to deal with some of those mean letters that students send you, how to deal with it because I'd like to [learn] how to manage people better." The deans' responses indicated that they must be equipped with the social skills and coping mechanisms needed when facing sensitive faculty or student issues.

During the interviews, it became apparent that these deans feel more training is absolutely needed. The range of topics is vast, and is impacted by each individual dean's background. The responses showed that if a dean was promoted from instruction, they desired more training in other areas of the college like Human resources. Conversely, if the dean was appointed from outside of instruction, they longed for more knowledge regarding the instructional role.

As the study of medical college deans conducted by Mirvis, Graney, Ingram, and Tang (2006) revealed, deans face a multitude of stress factors. Even though the study reveals that there is too much stress on medical college deans, there is research that points to the importance of timely intervention strategies (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). There are studies that show that if intervention strategies are engaged that the recipients will reduce their stress and burnout levels. The participants were asked to share their stress reduction strategies.

Theme 7: The Dean Must Be a Renaissance Person

The participants' narratives relayed that in the fast-paced world of deans one must be prepared in several ways. They must be organizationally prepared and they must be realistically prepared. Many deans suggested that one tool to assist in preparedness is making to-do lists. To-do lists are helpful to deans in their attempt to gain a realistic perspective on what they can and cannot actually accomplish in a given timeframe. Mike from College A stated, "I make a priority list so once a week I'll reorganize it, mark things off. Okay, I finished this, I can move on to this. I can work on this, make some progress towards that, and then move to that." Tracey from College D added:

Before I leave I usually have my little to-do list that I was going to be doing that day and I haven't done, so I still have stuff left over from yesterday. So when I come in the morning - and even wake up in the middle of the night - yes I really need to finish up those contracts and whatever, so I come in in the morning and I have my nice to-do and I

add a couple of more things. I'm like I'm going to be able to do this, do that, and do that based on what is going on.

The deans also stated that it is important to only take on reasonable workloads. Taking the time to walk away from stressful situations, also referred to as “management by walking around” by some participants, was a common response strategy to stress as well. Mike noted, “I’ll walk around the campus a little bit. I’ll make an effort to go see somebody on the opposite end of the campus you know first of all just to make my face seen and check on them.” John from College A declared, “I want the students to see me in the hallways – and know that I know what’s going on. I don’t want them to think I’m sneaking up on them or anything like that but I want to be out.”

Additionally, all colleges in the Technical College System of Georgia are charged with formulating and implementing successful dual enrollment programs with their service area high schools. Deans must become familiar with secondary guidelines and standards they are charged with overseeing. Instructors must be obtained, fees and costs must be addressed, and course credit transferability must be assured. Mike elaborated,

There is pressure to get dual enrollment in the high schools. We want more numbers but it seems like there’s pressure from the high schools and from the state to get that going as soon as possible. Finding adjuncts and full-time people to be at every high school is very much a challenge.

Another dean expressed anxiety with the onslaught of online programs, and their undeniable convenience factor. Joan likened the situation to that of a customer in search of a specific new car. She stated,

If you have a car lot and people want to buy a Lexus and you’re serving up Toyotas, they’re going to go find a Lexus somewhere [else]. And if the students want to take online, they’re going to find it somewhere whether it’s with you or somebody else. In some respects you’ve got to cater to the students’ demands.

To be a true Renaissance Person, one must be proficient in multiple fields. These aforementioned duties require that the dean be the master of many areas, from secondary programs to industry needs.

Theme 8: The Dean Must Utilize Support Groups

The interviewed deans listed several different types of support groups that they call upon when facing stressful situations. These included both internal (staff) external (family and peer) support groups. Several deans claimed that when times are stressful, they turned to their staff for input and support. Lynn from College A claimed, “I can call for help. I have a team of people below and above me. I know that I have department heads to help - talented, smart faculty, with masters and doctorates; I have Assistant Dean to assist me.” Mike from the same college elaborated:

Knowing that I have people that I can rely on makes me never be at the point where I’m overwhelmed. If I’m at that point where I’ve got 10 emergencies coming at the same time I know that the people that work with me can help me deal with it so that’s awesome.

Christine from College B reiterated their sentiments, “I have a really good support system within my job, and there are people with whom I can have real honest conversations.” Joan echoed her colleague, “You have to have an inner network of sounding boards that you can (behind that door) be as brutally honest as you can be on the problem solving side regardless of what it takes.”

Tracey from College D named family support as her top strategy for responding to the pressures of being a dean. She said, “I thank God all the time I have a very supportive husband.”

Christine agreed that family is keeps her grounded. She stated:

I have a family, friends and that sort of thing, and keeping in mind the job is not everything of who I am. You know what I’m saying? Sometimes I’ll go home and I think I have four things I need to do but really what I need to do is be with my family and focus on that.

Theme 9: The Dean Must Maintain a Healthy Work-Life Balance

The increase in global competition, the increase in work load, the increase in hours worked and the changing norm of dual career couples have all lead to an almost unattainable goal of the “work/life” balance espoused by Rapoport (2008). The participants in the study commented on the need to keep a good balance between work, social, family roles and responsibilities. The deans interviewed understood the position brings with it many challenges that will absolutely result in stressful situations. The deans listed exercise, vacation, hobbies, video games, and prayer as strategies to help maintain the crucial needed work-life balance. Mike at College A noted, “For me exercise is such a stress reliever. I usually run. I play soccer. For me, the walk usually does the trick.” John at College at A built on the theme by responding that he found after-hour activities that require very little effort on his part help keep a good balance. He stated,

I got tickled one night when I was at home and I was playing solitaire on my iPad and my wife said why do you waste your time doing that? I said because there’s nothing involved in it. You know it’s – you know I just sit here and it takes no thought process.

Christine at College B further built upon this theme. She stated,

I have a real strong sense of who I am when I’m away from work. I have a lot of family, friends that sort of thing, and keeping that in mind, I was speaking with somebody in my family right before this meeting and thinking you know this is not – the job is not everything of who I am.

Joan at College B asserted her techniques to keep a good work-life balance, “I ride in the car sometimes and listen to the music. I have a pretty strong faith background too and I rely on that a lot. I don’t let things stress me too much.” Dan from College C discussed what he does to maintain a good work-life balance, “I’m always on the computer, watching videos or reading books. I guess that is what I do. I like to talk to friends, [read] historical novels or biographies or something like that so I guess it’s a fairly introverted type thing.” Paul at College C took the

discussion of work-life balance to a more personal and internal perspective when he commented that keeping a good work-life balance is easier when you are thoroughly prepared for your job. He stated his past work experience allowed him to be comfortable in his current position as dean. He also stated, even though being the dean over a large healthcare division is certainly stressful, his military background, and the fact that he had experience managing several hundred employees, made his current position not seem that stressful. He asserted that, “I don’t feel the need to prove anything.” Ann at College D stated similar comments. “I’ve been doing this for 16 years. There are not too many problems I can’t resolve around here. If I really know what the problems are, I can quickly resolve it. You know it just comes with years of experience.” Tracey at College D stressed the importance of having the flexibility and freedom to take time off when needed:

I come to work; the folks around this college think I’m just a happy “la la la” person. I’m really not, but I enjoy being here because this is where I want to be and yes there are stresses and yes last weekend I decided to take a week off. I was tired. I was tired, tired so I worked Monday, Tuesday and took off. I did it as vacation. We didn’t travel anywhere. I enjoyed just being home, so we have the ability to take some time off to relieve that stress.

When discussing the importance of a good work-life balance Wendy at College D reflected the sentiments of many of the deans who had children:

I pray a lot. I pray a lot... You can only do so much, and on the weekend I love my children to death and forget about College D because when I’m here I’m giving 24 [hours] – I mean you know [I’m giving] a 100% when I’m here!

Summary

The deans that were interviewed for this study demonstrated their commitment to students, faculty, and their colleges as they shared their lived experiences, job responsibilities and challenges they face as deans in the Technical College System of Georgia. The participants discussed how situations and random events caused them stressful situations. Participants were

asked to discuss any internal or external factors as well as any additional assigned duties that kept them from being able to perform their assigned tasks. Additionally, the participants provided insight into strategies they utilized to help reduce the stress associated with the deanship. To summarize, the following themes emerged from the collected data in response to Question One: (a) The dean never experiences a “typical day”; (b) the dean serves as a middle manager; (c) the dean must multi-task. The following themes emerged from the collected data in response to Question Two: (a) insufficient funding is a challenge; (b) the inability to acquire qualified faculty is a challenge; (c) adequate training for the deanship is a challenge. The following themes emerged from the collected data in response to Question Three: (a) the dean must be a renaissance person; (b) the dean must utilize support groups; (c) the dean must maintain a healthy work-life balance. Chapter V will include additional findings from the study, discussion of the participants’ responses to the interview questions, and conclusions drawn from the research. Finally, recommendations for policy, practice and future research will be presented, along with the researcher’s closing remarks.

CHAPTER V:
DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The current study was primarily concerned with the deans' articulations of their lived experiences and the challenges they currently face as well as struggles they encountered as new deans. Wolverton, Gmelch, Montez, & Niles (2001) stated the dean's job is difficult because they serve two masters and wear many hats. As Freeman and Coll (2009) observed, deans have increased stress factors due to the varied tasks they perform. To this end, the deans were asked to articulate strategies they utilized to help reduce the stressful nature of their work and to provide feedback regarding what professional development activities could benefit the deans and make them better prepared. The study explored the following over-arching research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of instructional deans at Georgia's technical colleges regarding the nature of their work;
2. What are the particular challenges that instructional deans face at Georgia's technical colleges regarding the nature of their work; and
3. What strategies and tactics do instructional deans utilize in addressing these challenges regarding the nature of their work?

To gather the data for the study the in-depth interview approach was conducted employing eleven deans from the Technical College System of Georgia. The interviewer attempted to understand the feelings of the participants and to understand the nuances of what it was like to have lived that experience and then to make meaning out of their thoughts and perspectives. Participants were asked four descriptive questions to elicit responses that address their

demographic composition. Additionally, an interview protocol comprising ten open-ended questions was presented to each participant in the study to gather responses to be analyzed. The data were collected, coded and analyzed to develop emerging themes. As Seidman (2006) noted, the in-depth interview certainly cannot give the interviewer total understanding of the experience. But, interviewing does “allow us to put behavior in context and provides access to understanding their action” (p. 10).

The following themes emerged from the collected data in response to Question One: (a) the dean never experiences a “typical day”; (b) the dean serves as a middle manager; and (c) the dean must multi-task. The following themes emerged from the collected data in response to Question Two: (a) insufficient funding is a challenge; (b) the inability to acquire qualified faculty is a challenge; and (c) adequate training for the deanship is a challenge. The following themes emerged from the collected data in response to Question Three: (a) the dean must employ excellent time management skills; (b) the dean must utilize support groups; and (c) the dean must maintain a healthy work-life balance.

This study provides information that individuals who are currently in the dean’s position, as well as individuals who are new in the position, may find helpful in their search to understand the realities of the deanship and best practices to better equip them to perform at the optimal level of success.

Discussion of Findings

The ten interview questions posed to all participants provided a framework for a discussion of this research. These questions were formulated through discussion with dissertation committee and were selected to reveal the central phenomenon. Each question will be addressed individually followed by a comprehensive analysis of the findings.

How is the role of the instructional dean in a technical college defined? Wolverton, Gmelch, Montez, & Niles noted in their 2001 study that there was no real definition of the dean or their responsibilities. Most of the participants in the study responded that they never really thought much about what their “role” was as the dean or how they would define the position. Several participants responded their days were too fast-paced to give much time to philosophical pursuits. However, the deans in the study did provide information regarding the myriad of tasks they deal with on a daily basis. A number of participants listed overseer of programs, motivator, coach, faculty supporter, middleman, class scheduler, PR person, HR person, evaluator, and resource developer as roles that they perform.

After more reflection, the participants responded that their days were fast-paced, unpredictable, chaotic, and full of decision-making opportunities. The participants reported their jobs consisted of long days, insufficient resources, stressful situations, and occasions to juggle many issues at the same time. Nonetheless, the participants in the study agreed that they loved their jobs and loved the satisfaction they received from knowing that their work was responsible for changing individuals’ lives.

When asked to provide a definition of what a dean is in the Technical College System of Georgia, the participants had a difficult time “defining” the position. The deans’ difficulty in defining the position reinforces Robillard’s (2000) stated that there is a lack of a definition for the term *dean*. The information available on exactly what the dean does and the duties that make up this job description are also very limited and change from college to college. This lack of clear purpose and direction was evident in the responses from the deans in the study. Paul from College C confirmed the extent of the struggle in defining his role as dean, was to differentiate his duties from what a program director does. Additionally, this lack of clearly defined role as a

dean and loose job description were contributing factors in the stress load that deans endure. As an example, several deans talked about the amount of time they spent dealing with discipline issues at their colleges. Other deans spoke more to the issues associated with resource development and having state-of-the-art equipment. Many deans spoke to the issue of relying more heavily on adjunct instructors due to budgetary concerns and the time associated with finding these individuals. Several deans discussed the need to be the public relations person in the community and the time resources needed to be effective. Many deans spoke to the need of building partnerships with business and industry and the time required to make those connections. Bickerstaffe (2006) observed the changing role of the dean, and a need to act as fundraiser and CEO. Other deans focused the majority of their time on issues relating to producing quality graduates that meet business and industry standards. The findings from this study suggest that there is not a typical day for the technical college dean other than their jobs being associated with a heavy workload and stress.

After careful review of the job description for academic dean as provided by the Technical College System of Georgia webpage (www.tcsg.edu), it became evident that the difficulty regarding the loose definition of the dean even occurs at the system level. As an example, some responsibilities, standards, and qualifications are said to be performed by “some incumbents” while others are said to be performed by “all incumbents.” This incongruence is unclear and lead to further confusion within the academic roles of deans, and beyond. For these reasons, the great debate between student affairs and academic affairs, and what their roles entail is perpetuated. The job description is wide-ranging and encompasses every task the interviewed deans addressed, in addition to many others.

The deans in the study supported the findings of Ferris (2008) and Wolverton et al. (2001) who suggest being a successful dean requires these mid-level managers to be jugglers who oftentimes are attempting to keep many conflicting parties at the table. The dean must be prepared to face and address competing priorities, interests, agendas, office politics, staffing concerns and budget allocations in a cogent manner. The deans' responses in this study reflect that they accepted the position without a clear definition or expectation for what they would be held accountable. The participants in the study agreed that the position required long hours and was accompanied by a certain level of ambiguity, but only after taking day-to-day responsibility of the position did the realization of job complexities become palpable. It also became apparent that the deans had varying amounts of autonomy to make the position fit the culture at their college.

What leadership role should an instructional dean fulfill in the technical college? What makes the dean position so extremely difficult is the reality that they serve two distinct and different masters, thus the dance between faculty and upper administration can be a very taxing dance indeed (Wolverton et al., 2001). To be an effective, the dean requires inclusion on advisory committees and local boards to help facilitate good long-term planning, as well as gathering the contacts that could lead to shared resources and financial assistance (Reres, 1981). Seagren et al. (1994) described the dean as being positioned between administration and instruction. This requires these mid-level managers to be jugglers who often times are attempting to keep many conflicting parties at the table. The dean must be prepared to face and address competing priorities, interests, agendas, office politics, staffing concerns and budget allocations in a cogent manner (Ferris, 2008). The president and the provost expect loyalty and immediate response to their concerns, while the faculty expects loyalty to their

department and for the dean to fight for department goals and initiatives (Wolverton et al., 2001). The idea was articulated by participants in the study who felt their role was that of middle managers who were entrusted with varying degrees of autonomy to handle the day-to-day operations of their divisions. However, several of the deans expressed differing opinions on the amount of autonomy they actually had and felt it would have been helpful if they had “real” control over their areas. Wendy at College D observed,

...you have no say so. You don't have any conversation and say we do this; we need to do something else, or make some changes, not give him all the responsibility but maybe allow them to be over this part just to begin with...So if that decision is made and given to you to act upon, then it kind of puts you at a disadvantage. I think ultimately it also creates problems in your division and again rest assured that I understand that as the Dean you're not going to make every decision, but I don't think you should say that I'm the leader if I can't make those very important decisions that will actually be the deciding factor on how well my division works.

Profoundly, a differing perspective from Ann, also from College D, provided,

I've been doing this for 16 years. I just had a conversation with someone this morning. There are not too many problems I can't resolve around here. If I really know what the problems are, I can quickly resolve it. You know it just comes with years of experience.

I can probably solve something in five minutes, where it may take somebody a month to solve and it's just because of the longevity I've been in the position so it's not too often that the faculty, staff, and students will come to me and not get a problem resolved.

Therefore, after analyzing the data, a significant finding of the study is that the dean's level of autonomy appears to be correlated to their years of experience. The majority of deans in the study had less than five years' experience, with Ann at College D being the exception with 16 years of experience. This reflects findings from a study done in 2003 by Walters and Keim who reported the majority of all deans have served in the position for less than six years. The mean number of years' experience of deans who participated in this study was 4.7. While the deans felt like they had a degree of autonomy and decision-making authority to be the leader, only Ann at College D felt she had the ability to have complete autonomy and decision-making authority.

Watba and Farmer (2006) looked at the challenges facing community college deans in their 2006 study and what leadership role the dean played. Rapid changes in technologies, changing workforce skills, the anticipated tremendous turnover of upper level administrators, and financial shortfall due to the severe economic downturn were all areas of concern. Each of these factors contributed to the way deans completed their individual jobs as well as how they managed their faculty. The top ten identified challenges from their study were as follows: (1) financial resources; (2) collaboration with business and industry; (3) funding for new services; (4) updating facilities and equipment; (5) changing technology; (6) recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students; (7) program promotions and marketing; (8) increased accountability; (9) salary disparities; and (10) leadership development. The deans in this study mentioned the challenges listed above as issues they are currently are working on, and formulating strategies to address. Overwhelmingly, the deans felt like they have the skills and experience to be more actively involved in the decision-making process. Likewise, the deans did not feel like they were being utilized to their fullest extent. They would like more meetings with senior staff members and opportunities to be a more active part of budgetary decisions regarding their divisions.

What is a typical day like for an instructional dean? The dean's role in the technical college, as in other higher education institutions, is complicated by the fact that in order for the individual to be successful, he or she needs to be the master of many things (I. Sullivan, personal communication, June 10, 2010). The dean has acquired the responsibilities of being a budgeting expert, fundraiser, politician, pseudo- parent, strategic planner, facilities expert, and chief mediator (Bright & Richards, 2001). The Commission on the Future of Higher Education (2006) posited that the role of the instructional dean had shifted and that new responsibilities pertaining to globalization, innovation and quality of technological innovation were now responsibilities for

the instructional dean. During data analysis, it became clear that the deans in the Technical College System of Georgia seldom experience anything that could be called a typical day. The general consensus of the participants in the study was that their days were filled with many tasks, but that each day brought new challenges and situations that rendered any type of daily plan or schedule useless. While the deans articulated that there is not a typical day, they did provide examples of how they personally spent the bulk of their day. Some of the tasks the deans articulated were answering emails, attending meetings, dealing with student and faculty issues, producing schedules, formulating budgets, meeting with business and industry partners and supporting their vice presidents.

Most of the deans who were interviewed for the study begin their day with an almost “worst-case scenario” approach. They get to their offices and check their correspondences for emergencies that must be resolved. The deans then moved on to budget and faculty requests, including purchasing, travel, and leave. Many deans stated that their days become further complicated when their staff is not thorough in *their duties*. Paul complained of a time when he received a \$17,000 invoice from an instructor that was severely past due, which resulted in a refocusing of the day’s priorities for Paul himself.

Once their days start rolling, the deans have many meetings to attend. These can include meetings with faculty, divisions, curriculum designers, advisory committees, secondary counterparts, and senior staff. For some deans, this requires travel between multiple campuses. Mike said, “We have excessive numbers of meetings...you’re going to get behind on the stuff that you feel is important for you to take care of on a day-to-day basis so you’ve really got to prioritize to make those things happen.”

Some deans take the time to make their faces seen around campus and practice “management by walking around” (MBWA). Due to the rapid turnover of faculty, many deans are faced with human resources issues on a daily basis as well. Locating candidates, interviewing candidates, and sending candidates through the hiring process are common tasks that consume additional time and focus on the part of the deans.

Central to this study was the finding that all of the interviewed deans encounter crises that frequently interrupt their daily duties. Deans listed examples that required quick action such as leaking toilets, a hostile student who threatened a faculty member, replacing broken equipment in academic programs, and an instructor that suffered a severe nosebleed and was taken to the hospital. Many deans encounter students who feel certain academic policies are restrictive and not helpful to them. They also must assist students seeking to appeal their grades. According to the data, other miscellaneous issues deans might address in a day included bookstore problems, safety concerns, and occasional counseling of students.

Overwhelmingly, the deans agreed that no two days are the same. While there are notable similarities in their daily tasks, and most do encounter critical decision-making scenarios daily, the subject and nature of the situations vary greatly. The difficulty in defining a dean’s typical day also appears to be impacted by the fact that no two technical colleges face the same challenges or achieves the same accomplishments simultaneously.

What internal institutional factors present challenges and hinder an instructional dean from being successful? As Freeman and Coll (2009) observed, deans have increased stress factors including sleep disorders, depression, and low morale. The participants in the study reported an array of internal factors that, at any given time, impede their success. A common response from the deans regarded the slow processes at their colleges; human resources

processes were deemed most hindering. The deans claimed that their human resources staff is not always sensitive to deans' needs. They specified that the undertaking of locating, securing, and employing qualified faculty is far too cumbersome and time consuming. In the same vein, they commented that it was entirely too problematic to remove poor-performing faculty from instructional positions. The deans spoke of the ability of many technical college employees to "work the system" and abuse the parameters of their employment.

A substantial finding in this area was how dissatisfied the deans feel about a perceived lack of autonomy. Several deans voiced frustration over not being included in critical decisions that directly impact their divisions and the people they manage. Tracey elucidated this point when she told of a budget-specific example, regarding a time her requests were denied for the aviation department to receive the funding needed to acquire a new airplane. Dan at College C reflected upon a time when he worked diligently to schedule, equip, and fill a class, but was ultimately told there was no space on campus. Wendy at College D expressed her frustration due to her lack of autonomy when disciplining problematic students. She was exasperated over her lack of authority to make the call to remove a disruptive student from her instructor's classroom.

Watba and Farmer (2006) analyzed the challenges facing college deans in their 2006 study. Rapid changes in technology, changing workforce skills, the anticipated tremendous turnover of upper level administrators, and financial shortfall due to the severe economic downturn were all areas of concern. Perhaps the most significant challenge in this area that was voiced by the deans was that of continued budget cuts at the state level, as well as the lack of faculty and staff raises over the past five years. They specifically noted how this leads to the continuous rapid turnover of their faculty, which then ultimately leads to their undesirable but necessary reliance on adjunct instructors. The deans pinpointed low salaries, and the inability to

be cost competitive with other colleges (namely private institutions) as the main reason. Wendy at College D reaffirmed this concern when she spoke of only being able to offer potential instructors half of what the college across the street pays. She voiced the impact of the budget situation by stating, “I’m not getting the best instructors with the rate of pay...I want to hire people who want to work here...”

The dean must be prepared to face and address competing priorities, interests, agendas, office politics, staffing concerns and budget allocations in a cogent manner (Ferris, 2008). Office politics were vocalized as an issue for Lynn at College A. She stated, “You can’t learn the politics. You just have to be exposed to them and there’s politics at every college, and here. But I’m so glad I’m not a part of it.” Joan at College B declared, “Politics just drive me nuts. Call it like you see it, tell me the truth. I can work with the truth.” The magnitude of office politics seems to be one of the initially underestimated aspects of the deanship. Wendy at college D spoke to the impact of internal politics when she commented:

My new VP is not knowledgeable in the area of Academic Affairs. So until my VP learns to do her job it’s a hindrance to me because she doesn’t understand what’s important right now and those are the things that are important to me and so when I go through that process with you to get something out of it, I end up walking away with nothing basically. My group is looking at me for leadership and for support so if you don’t support me on that level, I can’t support my team.

The deans in the study testified that the internal factors that hindrance them are plentiful and challenging. Most deans admitted that these factors only became apparent after a fair amount of time in the position.

What external factors present challenges and hinder an instructional dean from being successful? The Commission on the Future of Higher Education (2006) posited that the role of the instructional dean had shifted and that new responsibilities pertaining to globalization, innovation and quality of technological innovation were now responsibilities for the

instructional dean. The Commission report went even further to suggest that students' success is now a shared responsibility between secondary, post-secondary, and industry which is an external factor. In addition to internal factors that hinder the deans' success, the deans noted there are external factors that prohibit their productiveness. The external factors listed by deans in the study were: budget cuts (state and federal) and their effect on the colleges ability to function at an optimal level; high school partnership issues; TCSG policies; accreditation; local (city and county) politics; building industry rapport; and the perceived poor image/reputation of Georgia's technical colleges.

The Great Recession of 2007 resulted in constricting state and federal revenue collections, which forced all Georgia agencies and institutions receiving funds to reformulate strategic plans for the future. The interviewed deans all feel the effects of the economic strain when facing their institutional budget. Mike at College A reflected a concern that most of the deans identified when he discussed having far too many adjunct instructors in place of full-time instructors. He implied that adjunct instructors are often working several jobs and, as a result, become very strained and the quality of instruction is compromised. As previously mentioned, funds are often recalled and reallocated based on the necessary prioritization of college resources. In most cases, the lack of available financial aid brings lower student enrollment.

All colleges in the Technical College System of Georgia are charged with formulating and implementing successful dual enrollment programs with their service area high schools. This comes with additional guidelines and standards deans are responsible for overseeing. Instructors must be obtained, fees and costs must be addressed, and course credit transferability must be assured. Mike elaborated,

There is pressure to get dual enrollment in the high schools. We want more numbers but it seems like there's pressure from the high schools and from the state to get that going as

soon as possible. Finding adjuncts and full-time people to be at every high school is very much a challenge.

Another matter revealed in the data was the issue of central governance by a state agency and the problems that arise as a result. The Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) is a state agency that is comprised of 27 technical colleges. Most deans in this study complained of restricted productivity due to the constraint of predetermined TCSG policies that must be followed; policies such as curriculum design and approval, purchasing, and positive discipline. Lynn at College A articulated her viewpoint, “We are not a Board of Regents [institution].

Board of Regents’ comprehensive universities have their own budgets and have that constitutional freedom to do as they want. We are under the TCSG. We are centrally governed.” Joan articulated her frustration with central governance when she stated:

TCSG is my challenge. The biggest [challenge] right now is the AS degrees and that it’s so political. It drives me nuts because we offer all the parts to the bicycle. You can buy every part to the bicycle but we cannot put it together and sell it to you as a bicycle. You can buy it all from us but you can’t have it as a [complete] bicycle.

Paul told of a relevant example when he addressed the Quarter to Semester (Q2S) conversion mandated by the Technical College System of Georgia. He testified, “The Q2S in 2011 really provoked a lot of dissidence in the system. The Q2S required curriculum change...” While the Board of Regents institutions were also forced to convert from quarters to semesters, they were given the waiver of a year’s time before the conversion was implemented because of their internships and other factors.

Another area of focus the deans claimed slowed their success was the area of accreditation. Many academic programs must be accredited on their individual merit and ultimately must receive regional accreditation if their college is a member of an organization such as SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools), as an example. One area in

particular that requires an intense amount of program specific accreditation is healthcare. As Paul explained, “There are significant accreditation demands. The specific accreditation demands of the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, NLNAC, now called ACEN. There is significant demand to attend to their requirements.”

As noted by the Commission on the Future of Higher Education (2006) students’ success is now a shared responsibility between secondary, post-secondary, and industry. There are unfortunate times in the technical colleges’ histories at which where the needs of the industries they serve do not meet the agenda of the colleges’ goals. Tina drew attention to a time when College C was working with a company who needed to staff ten graduates of an engineering program that would have to be started at her college. She explained that while that program might have been crucial to that company, it would not benefit the college or community as a whole in the long run. This can lead to negative word of mouth in the colleges’ respective communities. Now the deans have to act as marketers to repair and improve the image of their institution. Dan addressed concern over the image of technical colleges in his community. He stated, “It’s [viewed as] a continuation of high school and you get a lesser education. If you can’t do anything else, you can go here and gain a skill.” Local (city and county) politics play a factor in the deans’ world, as John from College A explained. He described the continuing struggle his college experiences enrolling local high school graduates. His college has encountered opposing views on their significance within their community. The secondary schools in the county strongly encourage their graduates to attend technical college; the secondary schools in the city strongly discourage their graduates from attending technical college. The deans in the study all agreed that the views of their surrounding communities directly affect their service as dean. They are challenged with managing many conflicting parties and must aim to appease them all.

What additional “as assigned” duties take deans away from performing required instructional duties? In earlier years, the dean was more of a celebratory functionary in the organizational system (Hyun, 2009). A challenge mentioned by most deans in the study was the call to be not only an academic leader, but also to act as a public relations person for their college. Several deans said they were called away from their offices, daily paperwork and other duties to attend functions in the community with their supervisors. Two deans made mention of an event involving Chinese dignitaries that required additional time, presentations, and expense.

Many deans commented on the sheer multitude of extra-curricular functions, including meetings that they are required or expected to attend. Some insinuated that many of these meetings were unconnected to their main role as deans. A realistic summation was provided by Lynn at College A as she listed some of her duties which included entertaining board members, attending groundbreaking ceremonies, and even grocery shopping for a campus event. Another example of an additional assigned duty was given by Tina when she claimed there are times when she must substitute for instructors in the classroom.

Conclusively, most deans are “people pleasers.” They work hard to complete their assigned duties, while always striving to meet the expectations of their senior administration. As previously stated, deans wear many hats and those hats differ from college to college.

What do you believe are the biggest challenges ahead in the next five years for instructional deans in technical colleges? Bickerstaffe (2006) believed that today’s dean, to be effective, needs to operate more like a CEO than a dean would have in the past. Because of the heightened level of accountability and the need to align curriculum more closely to business requirements, the dean must have the ability to work cooperatively with his business partners. Not surprisingly, the future challenges anticipated by the participants mirror the challenges they

are currently facing. Among the responses, the deans spoke predominantly to the challenges of inadequate job training, external competition, and insufficient funding. Most deans mentioned their disappointment in the initial new dean training they received, and also expressed the desire for continual training. The responses showed that if a dean was promoted from instruction, they desired more training in other areas of the college like human resources, information technology, and business management. The researcher observed that, if the dean was appointed from outside of instruction, they longed for more knowledge regarding the instructional role in addition to the aforementioned areas. Lynn from College A remembered back to the start of her deanship, “You don’t ask questions initially. You get swamped because you won’t know what resources, how to fill out forms, how to interview, how to do this and that. Most colleagues will fill you in, it’s on-the-job training.”

A significant finding from the data shows that many deans fear inevitable competition from other colleges. Dan specified, “In the last few years, private institutions have popped up all around. Cosmetology especially has four different competitors...they don’t require any academics so a student can finish the program and get a diploma in a shorter time period.” Also, private/for-profit colleges provide major competition for the technical colleges, as Tracey from College D observed. She articulated, “There are lots of private colleges, and I use the word ‘colleges’ loosely, that get funding and say to students they’ll do it in six weeks and you don’t have to go for two semesters over there.” Another dean expressed anxiety with the onslaught of online programs, and their undeniable convenience factor. Joan likened the situation to that of a customer in search of a specific new car. She stated,

If you have a car lot and people want to buy a Lexus and you’re serving up Toyotas, they’re going to go find a Lexus somewhere [else]. And if the students want to take online, they’re going to find it somewhere whether it’s with you or somebody else. In some respects you’ve got to cater to the students’ demands.

In today's economic climate, it is also incumbent upon the dean to be able to locate additional funds to offset the continued reduction of state appropriated funds (Bickerstaffe, 2006; Del Favero, 2006). Most deans spoke profusely about insufficient funding and the negative results this causes. The most common reported result of inadequate funding is the reliance on adjunct instructors in lieu of full-time instructors, and the effect this can have on the colleges' quality of instruction and ability to produce qualified graduates. Many deans gave examples of nearby colleges offering faculty twice as much in wage as what they are able to pay. Several deans predictably noted this can lead to less vested instructors and more frequent faculty turnover. As Reres (1981) expressed in her study, the dean, while not the individual that is actually instructing students, is the person responsible for and accountable to assure that faculty is teaching, and will be teaching in the future, the coursework required to produce a quality graduate. In the interviews, several of the deans referenced the fact that their colleges have "open admission" procedures. They further explained the disadvantage of admitting students who are already delayed by developmental classes and claimed those students are less likely to graduate.

"Customized business and industry training through programs that use the best available technology and offer easy access to lifelong education and training for all adult Georgians and corporate citizens" is the assurance that the TCSG offers potential students via their official webpage (www.tcsg.edu). Therefore, it should be rightfully assumed that all Georgia technical colleges are training their students with state-of-the-art equipment and cutting-edge software.

However, several deans voiced concern that, "We are continuing to do more and more with less. Some went on to discuss the high costs associated with hands-on programs, and one dean even admitted that several of his programs are currently depleted of resources. Hiring new faculty, in

addition to keeping qualified faculty was a reoccurring concern and a major theme of the study.

Deans vocalized that “keeping up with equipment and supplies” is a major concern. This reiterated the sentiments expressed by Bickerstaffe (2006) and DelFavero (2006) that the dean needs to operate more like the CEO of a company than ever. Mike stated, “If you’re dealing with industrial or anything related to computers you have to replace them quite often.” He further articulated, “We’re trying to supply industry with people that are trained with the latest technology so if our budget’s being cut constantly it’s hard for us to claim that we’re producing cutting-edge people when we can’t buy new equipment.” Seventy-three percent of the deans interviewed spoke to continual state defunding as a serious long term issue and spoke to their concerns that in the future they will not be able to produce highly skilled graduates for their business and industry partners. As Sullivan (2010) stated, an increased emphasis on the dean being able to locate additional funding to offset continued budget shortfalls will consume even more of the dean’s time in the future.

The deans in the study articulated that the challenges of inadequate job training, external competition, and insufficient funding are all significant factors that will impact their future success and ability to fulfill their job functions and responsibilities.

How do instructional deans respond to pressure, stress and the uncertainties of their positions? The participants in the study all agreed that long hours and stress are associated with the deanship. The dean’s ability to perform the myriad tasks for which they are responsible requires a comprehensive set of managerial skills. The participants implied that they are required to master many varied activities and tasks throughout their tenure as dean. As observed by Freeman and Coll (2009), who studied department chairs and instructional deans, the following negative consequences of work overload were identified: increased risk of heart

disease, marital distress, sleep disorders, depression, low morale related to child care arrangements, burnout, erosion of integrity, loneliness, alienation, dissatisfaction with life, and child neglect. Seagren (1994) speculated that certain techniques, policies, procedures, processes, or personal development plans should be identified that help deans deal with the associated job tasks and stress associated with performing their job duties.

Stress response strategies identified by the interviewed deans varied in nature from physical to mental to spiritual approaches. Several deans articulated the necessity of being organized, and learning to prioritize. As one dean stated, "...I'm very organized. If you don't have organization and some way to be efficient I think that it would be very easy to go crazy..." Another dean conveyed the importance of learning how to say "NO." Tina declared that when the stress becomes too much to handle, she sometimes simply closed her office door and said, "no more, I've got my desk full. Nobody else can come in here with a question." Several deans alluded to the importance of "choosing their battles." Similarly, the ability to delegate less pertinent tasks to other colleagues was a mentioned tactic. A few deans in the study agreed that by simply following policy and procedure, deans can eliminate the convoluted "gray areas" that one incurs as a middle manager. Joan reinforced this strategy when she said, "I am a policy follower, and if we're going to have a policy then let's enforce it and as long as everybody is on the same page then it doesn't get very stressful."

Experienced deans gave credit to their years of career experience, with added mention of industry background as a major advantage. As a Vietnam veteran, Dan from College C credited his extensive military background with his ability to handle the stress and pressures of the deanship. He is able to critically think and keep a calm head. He said he has a high threshold for truly critical problems. Another dean described how his previous career in law enforcement

equipped him with a strong tolerance for pressure and stress. As the most tenured dean in the study, Ann attributed her ability to solve most problems and address pressures of the deanship with her longevity in the position.

Physical activity including exercise and sometimes even a short walk around campus was a popular way to relieve the stress of the deanship. Specifically, one dean pointed to his passion for exercise through soccer and jogging. More obvious stress response strategies include mindless activities such as board games, listening to music, and reading. John elaborated, “I was playing solitaire on my iPad and my wife said ‘why do you waste your time doing that?’ I said because there’s nothing involved in it. I just sit here and it takes no thought process.”

Based on the collected data, deans rely heavily on their support staff when facing stresses of the job. They emphasized the necessity of hiring a qualified team in which they can place total confidence. As Joan affirmed, “You have to have an inner network of sounding boards that you can (behind the door) be as brutally honest as you can be on the problem-solving side regardless of what it takes.” John also acknowledged the value of confidantes, “I have two people that I talk to, one in a position on the ladder lower and one in a position higher.” Similarly, peer groups and colleagues throughout the TCSG are called upon in times of uncertainty for consultation. Deans appreciate the availability of mentors and other leaders who are forthcoming with sound advice. “If I can’t solve a problem, I have a team of people below me and above me and sometimes there’s beauty in being a dean,” stated Lynn. Beyond these tactics, many of the deans stated that it is hugely beneficial to have the right personality for the job, and to maintain a healthy work/life balance. Bailey (2008) defined the “work/life” balance concept as encompassing emotional, spiritual, physical, and developmental components; taking dreams, beliefs and experiences into account; living in the present; and taking action. Most deans

credit their families and their faith with helping them keep an optimistic perspective. As Christine affirmed, “Sometimes I’ll go home and I think I have four things I need to do but really what I need to do is be with my family and focus on that.” Tracey from College D named family support as her top strategy for responding to the pressures of being a dean. She said, “I thank God all the time I have a very supportive husband.” Wendy reinforced the significance of giving 100% to her college while she is at work, but understanding it does not totally define her as a person. She spoke lovingly of her role at home as mother to her children.

The deans in the study all attested to the high levels of stress associated with the deanship. Their strategies for handling this stress and pressure varied with regard to their individual challenges and personality style.

What, if any, in-service training would be helpful to you as an instructional dean? Van Maanen and Schein (1984) posited that the new deans bring all of their experience from throughout their educational careers to the new job and this is what allows them to perform the tasks associated with the managerial and administrative tasks they must carry out. The participants were verbose when asked about the in what areas in which they would like to receive more extensive training. Del Favero (2006) stated leadership training courses as one strategy for new deans. The deans stated they must be knowledgeable in a plethora of capacities. Deans come from different backgrounds and therefore their responses were wide-ranging and included management of their employees, human resource processes (hiring, firing, policies, and evaluations), information technology (software and reports), scheduling, advisement, budgets, accreditation, economic development, time management, leadership, grant-writing, team-building, online programs, and social media.

Several deans suggested that management training would serve them well in their daily routines. Tina at College C observed that deans who are appointed from the areas of business are naturally better equipped to manage people and situations. Several deans went on to say that they would benefit from sensitivity training in order to be appropriately responsive to delicate situations with faculty, staff, and students. Mike articulated his concern with the importance of HR training, “I think that knowing more about HR would help most deans.” He went on to say that as technical college employees, deans typically have a general knowledge of what the HR manual states. However, in order to be a truly successful manager, deans should have more in-depth knowledge of the specifics of the laws and processes.

Most interviewed deans spoke to the importance of furthering their information technology comprehension. As a dean, familiarity with complex reporting systems and software programs is critical. Some deans specified software programs such as Banner, BannerWeb, Angel, and KMS (Knowledge Management System) reports as examples of training that would be beneficial. Lynn expressed her concern regarding Banner when she questioned, “What are the processes in Banner for entering no-shows? What is the process for entering grades? What happens if something goes wrong? Can we troubleshoot and fix?” Another dean commented on KMS, “This system has metrics – the idea is to understand how to use it.”

The participants have mentioned issues related to budget management in this study, so it comes as no surprise that the deans want training to better manage budgets. Joan voiced her frustration with the training she received not meeting her expectations. She wanted training that provided the following, “Here’s the process. Here are the reports you get. Here’s what you need to do with them. Here’s how you plan. Here’s how you prepare a budget for the next year.” The data from the participants did not reflect this level of detailed training regarding budgets.

Most deans admitted they could manage time more efficiently if given the proper training. The deans' world is fast-paced and ever-changing, so they must learn to prioritize their tasks. The participants also reflected upon a desire to enhance team-building opportunities at their colleges. Many deans declared that being able to depend on a cohesive, reliable, and supportive team was a major key to their success. Christine expressed her desire to focus more on this area. She claimed she would like to know how to help people work together in teams, and, more specifically, to put together interdisciplinary teams. She stated she gravitates towards a teamwork approach as a manager so this would be helpful.

Many of the deans mentioned the recent increase of online academic programs. They all attested to the fact that their colleges are feeling pressured to increase the availability of these offerings, with a responsibility to maintain the quality of the online instruction. One dean avowed, "the quality assurance in online is a big thing that I would like to know more about...what does good online teaching look like so that I can help faculty." With the virtual world in a state of constant expansion, the technical colleges are learning to embrace the Internet as a major marketing tool. Therefore, deans and their faculty must extend their communication skill set to include social media. Wendy elaborated, "Things are just changing so rapidly. You know you used to have a problem with a student standing in your office telling you off. Now the problem is on email or it's on the social network. It's the same problem but the way it's presented has changed and so I want to be able to give my faculty [training] on those of type things."

Many of the deans explained that they have learned their duties in an on-the-job fashion. This is a common occurrence in higher education. They agreed that they would be more efficient and successful if their knowledge was expanded in more aspects of the technical college realm.

What struggles do instructional deans experience early in their careers? The deans were even more loquacious when asked about the struggles they initially faced upon entering the position. Dill touched on this topic in his 1991 study. He stated that many deans complained that there was no real formal training that prepares the neophyte dean for his/her managerial task. In addition to the challenges any new dean might face, several of these deans were promoted from amongst peers also contending for the dean position. Feldman (2008) eloquently addressed this obstacle.

Changes will occur at both the individual and interpersonal levels and new deans must deal with the emotional and professional baggage that accompanies their new position. On the individual level, the new dean must deal with his or her new status and how this alters their self-concept. The new dean will certainly have to deal with the altered perception of fellow faculty and coworkers as they adjust to the status of the position as well. On the interpersonal level, colleagues will adjust their perceptions of the dean and will make adjustments to their schedules and the amount of interaction they choose to have with the new dean. This change in coworker attitudes towards the dean is one of the most disappointing aspects of the job. (p. 105)

John summarized his own experience after accepting the dean's position, "When I came here I was pretty much given a yellow sticky pad and pencil and [told to] start a program and I had no idea what to do." He referred to the System webpage looking at different instructors and found someone he had known in his law enforcement career. Upon hearing John speak of his incompetence to perform his job tasks, the colleague instructed him to get in his car and come spend some time with him. John credits his relationship with this associate with much of his success. Several other deans recounted the challenges of their personal experiences of transition. Joan stated that several divisions at her institution have an Associate Dean. She noted, "to jump from an instructor position to a dean is like trying to jump the Grand Canyon because of the huge difference in those responsibilities." Christine stated, "There's not as much hands-on program administration as I was accustomed to. You need to be looking, forward thinking, proactively

seeing the big picture more so than in that division chair role.” Tina recalled having to work diligently to convey to her coworkers at College C she was no longer their peer. She further stated the importance of making sure the deans she appoints can effectively separate themselves from their peers. In a similar vein, Wendy addressed the challenge of building trust. She explained,

...People trusting that you have their best interest. You have all these people behind your back. You chair for so many years. I was a chair for about 13 years, different areas. I have these instructors that I know well but as soon as you sit in a chair that’s a little higher than theirs, everything changes so people don’t think you’re the same person. So it’s maintaining certain professionalism but having that relationship that you have with those people or building a relationship that will allow them to still tell you what their problems are and still have expectations from you without devaluing what they mean to you.

Many deans made suggestions regarding training that would have helped them navigate their early struggles. Regarding her unfamiliarity with the newly acquired task of handling payroll, Lynn stated,

I’d never before done that in all the years that I was division chair, or prior to my Dean spot here, done payroll for an adjunct. When you have to determine how many classes they’re teaching, what is their rate based on their masters or their doctorate and fill out a sheet on each person who is an adjunct...well I have like 75 adjuncts so I have to figure out each one’s pay 'cause a contract is written up for each CRN on the schedule. Well HR at my old college handled that through a Banner report but HR doesn’t handle that here, the Deans do...training is critical to learn the specific policies and procedures of that particular college.

Dan was originally a curriculum specialist at his college before assuming the dean’s role. He admitted his limited background in software programs that are clearly required to execute his duties as dean. He stated, “I was not skilled in Banner and BannerWeb and Angel and DegreeWorks.”

One dean stated that their progress was initially hindered by “not knowing what the big picture was.” The researcher notes that this ties back to the initial purpose of the study that is to

give more definition to the dean's role. Joan expounded,

I mean I could read on a piece of paper what the job was, and it was very generic terms of maintain department budgets, oversee leave forms, manager, create and implement scheduling, but I didn't really understand what 'maintain budgets' meant you know. I didn't understand all the details that went into how to do a budget request.

Tracey explained that having a thorough knowledge of your college's academic programs is crucial to a new dean, and also elucidated the theory of "learning by error." She articulated, "You're now in charge of them, it's really stepping back and learning the nuances of each of those [programs]. Also in the beginning not knowing all the rules. You learn by error." She transitioned to another key component that many deans noted as a missing link in their preparedness as new deans. "I think we lack structured orientation. We really do." She implied sometimes deans are appointed because they have the qualifications, have adequately performed in other areas, and for those reasons it is assumed a dean can handle the job. Reflecting her sentiment on much needed orientation, Tina added, "There's not a formalized training at all and we do need a formalized training from the state." In their 2008 study, Wepner, D'Onofrio, and White echoed Tina's instincts in determining that better in-service training for deans newly appointed to that position was critical.

As stated in multiplicity, most deans enter the position unaware of the policies, procedures, physical challenges, emotional strain, time consumption, stresses, and expectations associated with their newly acquired dean's role.

Conclusions

The dean plays a vital role in higher education. This study has been an interesting and enlightening experience for me. I have gleaned many things as I have gone through the interview, coding, and analysis portion of my study. In today's higher educational environment, the dean is called upon to be the individual that leads, guides and directs their divisions while

simultaneously being the conduit between faculty and senior administration. The dean also must possess the requisite public relations skills to collaborate with business and industry and help identify the needed skill sets to produce work ready graduates for the local workforce. Online instruction is taking more of the deans' time as the technical colleges transition from a traditional classroom instructional delivery method to an online delivery format. The deans in the study all feel like they should have more autonomy in running their divisions and should have more input with senior staff. The deans in the study are all being called upon to do more with less. Specifically, continued budget cuts have required the deans to find many more adjunct instructors to provide instruction. This increased reliance has the potential to negatively affect the quality of instruction. Additionally, the dean's position has changed over the past several years with an increased emphasis on becoming a fundraiser in order to identify additional revenue streams to help offset the continued state and federal budget cuts. Lastly, the dean's position is full of ambiguities that result in a very stressful, fast-paced and fluid environment that requires 60-hour workweeks at a minimum. The deans felt they would benefit from a formalized training process that encompassed all areas of their position. The deans in the study provided information about the stresses they encounter, and strategies to help them respond to those stresses.

In summation, the deans have a difficult job due to the ambiguity of the job description as well as a lack of initial training. It is evident from the research that the deans would like a formalized training session that addresses in more specificity what is expected within the realm of the dean's position. They also would benefit from a finely tuned job description to help prepare them for their daily tasks, and training to help them utilize the available information technology software and reports. Budgets are repeatedly discussed as a major concern among

the study participants, and their lack of total autonomy when funding their divisions.

The results of this study and the themes that emerged from the coding of interview responses are consistent with earlier research. The literature suggests that the dean's position is loosely defined, the dean serves two masters, the dean's position is continually changing, and the deans face both internal and external challenges (Bickerstaffe, 2006; Deferrari & McGinnis, 1956; Del Favero, 2006; Dill, 1976; Feldman 2008; Ferris, 2008; Freeman & Coll, 2009; Hyun, 2009; Mirvis, Graney, Ingram & Tang, 2006; Reres, 1981; Robillard, 2000; Seagren, Wheeler, Creswell, Miller, & Van Horn-Grassmeyer, 1994; Watba & Farmer, 2006; Wild, Ebbers, Shelley, & Gmelch, 2003; Wepner, D'Onofrio & Wilhite, 2008; Wolverton, Gmelch, Montez, & Niles, 2001).

The information gleaned from this study may lead technical college deans to a greater understanding of the job expectations, managerial practices that better prepare them for a leadership role in their college, and strategies for responding to job associated stress.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

The results of this study lead me to make recommendations in four areas of policy and practice: 1) communication, 2) funding challenges, 3) autonomy, and 4) training.

Communication

It became evident that the lack of initial communication to new deans set the scene for continual confusion and breakdown. I believe that deans of the technical colleges in Georgia would have a better grasp of what it takes to be successful if a number of items were clarified, beginning with improving the vague job description on the state agency's webpage. This job description is worded in an open-ended fashion and informs the reader that some responsibilities, standards, and qualifications are said to be performed by "some incumbents" while others are

said to be performed by “all incumbents.” If the TCSG would add another document encompassing tasks specific to the dean’s appointment at their institution, and be more definitive in their expectations, each technical college would have a more absolute qualification standard for appointing deans.

I also trust that on more thorough initial stating of certain aspects of the dean’s position (time consumption, politics, stress) would benefit new deans. Supervisors should strive to continue clearly relaying their expectations and maintain regular communication throughout each dean’s tenure. Deans in the study listed open communication with their superiors as a stress response strategy. Therefore I can garner the positive effects that would ensue.

Funding Challenges

In a perfect world, all higher education institutions would have abundant funding and resources. Not only are technical colleges not receiving abundant funding, they are not even receiving sufficient funding. In today’s economic climate, colleges are asked to do more with less. The deans have to be creative when it comes to equipping their programs. One response strategy is for the dean to become a fundraiser among industry partners. However, not all deans understand this aspect of the dean’s position. Another response strategy is the hiring of adjunct instructors in lieu of full-time instructors due to the higher pay wage at competing colleges, which could negatively impact the quality of instruction. While the deans have identified these solutions, they are not enough. If the deans must face continuing budget cuts from the state and federal agencies, then collaborative resolutions must be reached by a closer working relationship with the TCSG to implement these strategies.

Autonomy

As previously mentioned, the deans serve as a conduit between faculty and senior college staff. They must be sensitive to the needs of their faculty and their requests, while also conveying the significance of the decisions carried out by their superiors. They are required to respond quickly to substantial situations. For example, deans are asked to find resolutions to the continual budget cuts but the processes to approve their solutions hinder them. Sometimes their funds are reallocated altogether without the deans' input. Based on the described nature of their work, and the statements of the deans, I recommend that deans be entrusted with a level of autonomy that is consistent with their responsibilities.

Training

Perhaps the most important recommendation I can offer is the implementation of formal training programs for new academic deans. Nearly every interviewed dean characterized their existing training as "on-the-job" training, crediting peer groups and colleagues and trial-by-error with their success. If deans are better prepared on the front end, they will be more effective on a daily basis. Based on what the participants shared, I conclude that newly appointed deans would benefit immensely from a formal orientation to the dean position. Perhaps the TCSG could select a panel of experienced deans to ease the transition for new deans. Training topics should include: politics (internal and external), information technology, customer service, and human resources.

Recommendations for Further Research

The results of this study lead me to make recommendations for further research in the study of deans, and also for more in-depth analysis. A future study could be conducted with deans from other types of colleges. This study focused solely on deans in the Technical College

System of Georgia. A similar study of deans in the community college system, another in the university system, could provide helpful data that would be more encompassing of academic deans' challenges. A more in-depth analysis of extended data could provide more insight into better preparing deans across the board.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the challenges associated with instructional deanship in the Technical College System of Georgia. The study identified lived experiences of the instructional deans, the challenges they face, and the strategies they have employed to deal with the challenges associated with their position. Research was conducted through qualitative methodology with a ten-question survey as guidance for the study. The researcher was surprised at the interviewed deans' willingness to honestly describe their professional and personal conflicts. Finally, perhaps the most telling and important finding from this research study is that all of the participating deans longed for an initial formalized training and acclimation to their positions. Surely, this is something that their institutions can and should provide to other new academic deans in the future.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Research Study:

Title:

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Gender: M F Age: _____ Race: _____ Years in Position: _____ College:

Introduction: Thank you for participating in this study and for allowing me to conduct an interview with you today. I am a doctoral student pursuing a degree in Higher Education Administration at the University of Alabama. My dissertation topic focuses on the challenges associated with instructional deanship in the Technical College System of Georgia. The information gleaned from this interview will be used to complete the study. You will remain anonymous and the information you provide will remain confidential. This interview will take approximately one hour to complete. Before we begin, I ask that you join me in reviewing the consent form, so that I may address any questions or concerns that you might have about the study. Once we have discussed and you have signed the consent form, we will begin the interview.

1. How do you define the role of the instructional dean in a technical college?
2. What leadership role should an instructional dean fulfill in a technical college?
3. What is a “typical” day like for an instructional dean?
4. Tell me about any internal institutional factors present challenges and hinder an instructional dean from being successful?
5. Tell me about any external institutional factors present challenges and hinder an instructional dean from being successful?
6. Tell me about any additional “as assigned” duties that might take you away from performing required instructional duties?
7. What do you believe are the biggest challenges ahead in the next five years for instructional deans in technical colleges?
8. How do instructional deans respond to pressure, stress and the uncertainties of their positions?
9. What, if any, in-service training would be helpful to you as an instructional dean?
10. What struggles did you have in your early work as an instructional dean?

APPENDIX B

APPROVAL LETTER FROM INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

October 3, 2013

Office for Research
Institutional Review Board for the
Protection of Human Subjects



Perrin Alford
Higher Education Administration
College of Education
The University of Alabama
Box 870231

Re: IRB # 13-OR-308: "A Qualitative Study of the Job Challenges of Instructional Deans in the Technical College System of Georgia"

Dear Mr. Alford,

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your proposed research.

Your application has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR part 46. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your approval will expire on October 2, 2014. If the study continues beyond that date, you must complete the eProtocol Renewal Form. If you modify the application, please complete the eProtocol Revision Form. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. When the study closes, please complete the eProtocol Final Report Form.

Please use reproductions of the IRB-stamped consent form.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this application, please include the assigned IRB approval number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,



358 Rose Administration Building
Box 870127
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0127
(205) 348-8461
FAX (205) 348-7189
TOLL FREE (877) 820-3066

Carpantato T. Myles, MSM, CIM
Director & Research Compliance Officer
Office for Research Compliance
The University of Alabama

APPENDIX C

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPLICATION

1

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA HUMAN RESEARCH PROTECTION PROGRAM

Informed Consent for a Non-Medical Study

Study Title: A qualitative study of the job challenges of instructional deans in the Technical College System of Georgia.

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled "A qualitative study of the job challenges of instructional deans in the Technical College System of Georgia."

This study is being conducted by Mr. Perrin Alford, who is a doctoral degree candidate in the Program in Higher Education Administration at The University of Alabama. Mr. Alford is being supervised by Dr. David Hardy, Associate Dean for Research and Service and Associate Professor of Higher Education in the College of Education at The University of Alabama. Because this study is being completed in partial fulfillment of degree requirements, Mr. Alford is not receiving and salary or financial aid for completing this project.

What is this study about? What is the investigator trying to learn?

The purpose of this study is to examine the challenges associated with instructional deanship in the Technical College System of Georgia. In an attempt to learn more about these phenomena, the purpose of this study is to explore challenges the instructional dean experiences using a qualitative, interview-based research approach.

Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of instructional deans at Georgia's technical colleges regarding the nature of their work?
2. What are the particular challenges that instructional deans face at Georgia's technical colleges regarding the nature of their work?
3. What strategies and tactics do instructional deans utilize in addressing these challenges regarding the nature of their work?,

Why is this study important or useful?

The result from the proposed study of the technical college instructional deans in the Technical College System of Georgia will add to the literature already available on the dean's preparation, roles, responsibilities, and challenges and add to the literature information specifically dealing with instructional deans at technical colleges.

The findings from this study are important and useful because the challenges associated with instructional deanship in the Technical College System of Georgia have not been particularly studied and documented in prior research. Specific research is needed that explores the

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IRB
CONSENT FORM APPROVED: 10/3/20
EXPIRATION DATE: 10/2/2014

preparedness, effectiveness, and success of instructional deans in the Technical College System of Georgia.

Why have I been asked to be in this study?

You have been asked to be in this study because you are employed in the Technical College System of Georgia in the position of Instructional Dean.

How many people will be in this study?

You are one of 12 Instructional Deans from 4 Georgia Technical Colleges who will be participating in this study.

What will I be asked to do in this study?

If you agree to participate in this study, Mr. Alford will conduct an interview with you at a mutually agreed upon time and location. The interview will last approximately one hour. Mr. Alford will use a semi structured interview question protocol as a guide for the interview. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. With or without audio recording, Mr. Alford will take detailed notes of your responses to each question.

How much time will I spend being in this study?

Your interview should take about 60 minutes.

Will being in this study cause any inconvenience?

The only cost to you for participating in this study is your time.

Will I be compensated for being in this study?

There will be no financial remuneration for participating in this study.

Can the investigator take me out of this study?

Even if you meet the criteria for participation, you may decide not to participate in the study at all or, once the interview has commenced, you may decide to withdraw prior to completion of **the interview**.

What are the risks (dangers or harms) to me if I am in this study?

There are no foreseeable risks beyond possible minor psychological discomfort that you might feel while considering responses to some of the interview questions. If such discomfort occurs and you wish to discontinue your participation in the study, you may do so without any negative **consequence**.

What are the benefits (good things) that may happen if I am in this study? What are the benefits to science or society?

There are no specific, personal benefits to anyone that participates in this study. However, the research will use the personal experiences and perspectives of instructional deans like you to arrive at conclusions that may supply valuable recommendations to current and future technical college leaders who wish to improve the academic administration and the work environment for instructional deans at their institutions.

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 CONSENT FORM APPROVED: 10/3/2013
 EXPIRATION DATE: 10/2/2014

How will my privacy be protected?

Participation in the study and each participant's identity will only be known by the researcher and the participant. You may decide when and where the private interview will be conducted with the researcher. When the researcher reports findings and/or publishes any information using this data, he will use pseudonyms for both the participants and the college where they work in order to guarantee participant anonymity.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

All data collected: observational field notes, audio tapes, interview transcripts, and documents provided by participants will be kept in a locked cabinet in Mr. Alford's office. Furthermore, he will be the only person with access to these records. The signed informed consent forms will be separated from datasheets, interview transcripts and field notes, and all documents and tapes will be kept in a locked cabinet until the study is completed. Upon completion of the study, all data will be destroyed. When the researcher reports findings and/or publishes any information using this data, he will use pseudonyms for both the colleges and people involved to guarantee participant anonymity.

What are the alternatives to being in this study? Do I have other choices?

The alternative to being in this study is choosing not to participate.

What are my rights as a participant in this study?

Taking part in this study is voluntary. It is your free choice. You can choose not to be in it at all. Your participation or non-participation in the study will have no effect on your current or future employment or on your relationship (if any) with The University of Alabama. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw at any time during the study. You also may choose to end your participation in the study at any time after your participation begins.

Furthermore, The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board (a committee that looks out for the ethical treatment of people in research studies) will review study records from time to time. This is to ensure that participants in research studies are being treated ethically and that the study is being carried out as initially organized.

Who do I call if I have questions or problems?

If you have questions about this study, please ask. You may contact me by phone at 706-594-3598 at any time or via e-mail at:

Perrin Alford
Email: Perrin.Alford@westgatech.edu

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IRB
CONSENT FORM APPROVED: 10/3/2011
EXPIRATION DATE: 10/2/2014

You may also contact the chair of my dissertation committee, Dr. David E. Hardy, via phone at (205) 348-8038 or through mail at:

Dr. David E. Hardy
College of Education - Office of Research and Service
The University of Alabama
Box 870231
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0231
Email: dhardy@bamaed.ua.edu

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about your rights as a research participant, contact Ms. Tanta Myles, the Research Compliance Officer at the University of Alabama, at (205) 348-8461 or toll free at 1-877-820-3066. You may also ask questions, make suggestions, or file concerns and/or complaints through the IRB Outreach Website at http://osp.ua.edu/site/PRCO_Welcome.html.

In addition, you are encouraged to complete the online survey for research participants after the study, which is located at the above site. If you prefer, you may request a hard copy of the survey from the UA Office of Research Compliance at participantoutreach@bama.ua.edu. If you have any further questions, you may send an e-mail to participantoutreach@bama.ua.edu.

I have read and understand this consent form. I have also had an opportunity to discuss and ask questions about the study. I voluntarily agree to participate in the study. After signing the consent form, I will receive a copy for my records.

Yes, you have my permission to audio record the interview.

No, I do not want my interview recorded, but I still consent to participate without taping.

X-----

Signature of Research Participant

Date

X-----

Signature of the Investigator

Date

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IRB
CONSENT FORM APPROVED: 10/3/13
EXPIRATION DATE: 10/2/2015

APPENDIX D

JOB DESCRIPTION FOR ACADEMIC DEAN AS PROVIDED BY

THE TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

State of Georgia Job Description

Job Title: Dean for Academic
Affairs

Job Code: 11407

Last Update: 07/01/2007

Salary Plan: DTAE Support Staff
Salary Plan (SUP)

Pay Grade: 03



Job Description, Responsibilities, Standards, and Qualifications

Job Description:

Under minimal supervision, coordinates and supervises quality technical programs at a technical college. Plans and organizes the unit's work to meet the technical college's objectives. May direct the student services program. Promotes the instructional program to public and private organizations. Reviews and approves all requests for supplies and materials. Prepares the instructional program specifications and budget. Represents the department at various internal and external meetings. Supervises subordinate employees.

Job Responsibilities & Performance Standards:

- 1. Coordinates and supervises quality technical programs at a state technical college. (Performed by all incumbents)**
 1. Coordinates and supervises curriculum development for instructional programs.
 2. Monitors and evaluates instructional activities related to the effect on students on a quarterly basis.
 3. Evaluates on an established basis instructional programs to insure that they meet state standards and industry needs.
 4. Attends and coordinates on an established basis advisory committee meetings for all instructional programs.
 5. Organizes teaching assignments on an established basis to equalize teaching loads.

- 2. Plans and organizes the unit's work to meet the technical college's objectives. Directs and reviews work assignments. (Performed by all incumbents)**
 1. Assigns and prioritizes work in keeping with employee skill levels, workloads and completion time frames.

2. Monitors classroom instruction and provides feedback to instructional personnel.
 3. Assists staff in resolving problems encountered in work assignments.
 4. Evaluates policies, procedures, and processes, on a continual basis, and recommends/implements changes to ensure that assigned work unit is functioning.
 5. Reviews and approves work schedules and request for leave, training, and travel for all instructional personnel. Approves critical hire requests; responsible for disciplinary issues; acts as reviewing manager for performance plans and evaluations.
 6. Coordinates orientation training and staff development training for all instructional personnel.
- 3. Directs student services program for a technical college (Performed by some incumbents)**
1. Actively recruits students for technical programs.
 2. Conducts effective career counseling for applicants and currently enrolled students.
 3. Arrange and administers placement test for all applicants.
 4. Coordinates effective tech prep activities with local high schools.
 5. Coordinates quarterly registration process and job placement activities.
- 4. Promotes the instructional program to public and private organizations. (Performed by all incumbents)**
1. Promotes the instructional program to public and private organizations. (Performed by all incumbents)
 2. Promotes marketing for the instructional program by developing effective plans for publicizing the services available for student recruitment.
 3. Develops effective student recruitment and retention plans for programs.
 4. Solicits participation by networking with private industry, local agencies and organizations and other groups within the community.
 5. May appear on local television and radio shows to promote the technical college as requested.
- 5. Reviews and approves all requests for supplies and materials, including all curriculum materials for the program. (Performed by all incumbents.)**
1. Conducts a complete and accurate inventory of instructional department holdings on a continuous basis.
 2. Reviews and approves requisitions and the purchasing of all instructional department materials. Completes necessary orders forms accurately and obtains required authorization signatures in accordance with established guidelines and procedures.
 3. Secures the use of facilities for instructional classes and performs evaluations on the facilities.
 4. Maintains and updates software and hardware required to fulfill instructional

department functions.

6. Prepares the instructional program specifications and budget. (Performed by all incumbents)

1. Properly maintains budget controls, records and balances.
2. Writes and administers program grant proposals as required.
3. Maintains accurate records and statistical information.
4. Produces annual reports, financial reports and other reports as required by DTAE and the technical college according to established procedures.
5. Collects and compiles related data according to established guidelines.

7. Represents the department at various internal and external meetings. (Performed by all incumbents)

1. Serves as department's liaison to the assigned educational departments/entities.
2. Attends regularly scheduled and special meetings to plan activities involving educational programs and staff, as required.
3. Actively participates in conferences, inter-agency councils and other activities.
4. Provides feedback from meetings attended to supervisor and staff in a thorough and timely manner.

8. Creates and maintains a high performance environment characterized by positive leadership and a strong team orientation. (Performed by all incumbents)

1. Defines goals and/or required results at beginning of performance period.
2. Communicates regularly with staff on progress toward defined goals and/or required results, providing specific feedback and initiating corrective action when defined goals and/or required results are not met.
3. Evaluates employees at scheduled intervals, obtains and considers all relevant information in evaluations.
4. Motivates staff to improve quantity and quality of work performed and provides training and development opportunities as appropriate.

9. Displays a high level of effort and commitment to performing work; operates effectively within the organizational structure; demonstrates trustworthiness and responsible behavior. (Performed by all incumbents)

1. Demonstrates eagerness to learn and assume responsibility; seeks out and accepts increased responsibility; displays a "can do" approach to work.
2. Shows persistence and seeks alternatives when obstacles arise; seeks alternative solutions; does things before being asked or forced to by events.
3. Works within the system in a resourceful manner to accomplish reasonable work goals; shows flexibility in respond to process change and adapts to and accommodates new methods and procedures.
4. Accepts direction and feedback from supervisor and follows through appropriately.

5. Works when scheduled; begins and ends work as expected; calls in according to policy when arriving late for work or when absent; observes provisions of Fair Labor Standards Act; observes policies on break and lunch periods; uses work time appropriately.

Minimum qualifications: A master's degree from a nationally or regionally accredited college or university in a vocational field or occupational supporting discipline such as English, psychology, business administration, educational leadership, or a closely related field. Appropriate degree will reflect the requirements of college accrediting agencies *and* at least three years of full-time paid work experience within the past seven years in business, industry, education or military environments. Three years of employment must have been as a full-time instructor. Demonstrated skills in training and/or personnel development . Must demonstrate excellent written and verbal communications skills. Must possess and maintain the appropriate professional credentials required for or related to the field or position.

Preferred qualifications: Experience in curriculum development, instructional methodology, planning, evaluation, budgeting, supervision and management.

NOTE:

Job description information is extracted daily from the official Phoenix HRMS Job Code database. Problems in conversion may cause formatting errors in some job descriptions.

The information presented, while not an exact or exhaustive listing, describes the work, performance standards, and qualifications typically required of positions or employees in this job. A specific position description or employee performance plan may differ as long as it is consistent with the core Responsibilities, Standards and Qualifications of that job.

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