

AN ANALYSIS OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF STRATEGIC PLANNERS AND SYSTEM  
ADMINISTRATORS IN THE ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
SYSTEM REGARDING COMMUNITY COLLEGE GOALS

by

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## ABSTRACT

Throughout the last century and into this one, community colleges have become comprehensive institutions with multiple missions. However, because of resource scarcity, it is not possible to give equal priority to every functional goal that makes up the comprehensive mission. The purpose of this study, then, was to understand the goal priorities of strategic planners and system administrators in the Alabama Community College System and the extent to which these different stakeholders agree on those priorities for the community college.

In this quantitative, descriptive study, the researcher sought to understand how stakeholders perceived the importance of different goals of the community college and how the same stakeholders would prefer those goals be prioritized. The researcher also examined how these goal priorities might differ by participant role, namely whether the participant was an ACCS Office employee, a college administrator, a faculty member, or a college staff member. In addition, differences in goals priorities with regard to the participant's location (in a college or in the ACCS office) and the participant's college size were analyzed. Data were collected using the Community College Goals Inventory (CCGI) developed by ETS. The CCGI asks respondents to identify the extent to which specific goals *are* being pursued at their institutions and the extent to which specific goals *should be* pursued at their institutions. Finally, the researcher attempted to understand if the CCGI has remained a valid and reliable instrument for measuring the goal priorities of modern community colleges.

An analysis of the results of the study led the researcher to make four major conclusions. First, there is strong agreement concerning the priorities of community college goals among the

groups that were surveyed. Second, although it is often listed as one of the major functions of community colleges, the goal of Community Services does not appear to rise to a level of high priority in the Alabama Community College System. Third, creating a sense of community in which there are open lines of communication and trust between administrators, faculty, staff, and students, the goal of College Community, appears to be a major concern for study respondents. Finally, the Community College Goals Inventory appears to be a reliable instrument based on internal consistency, but it does not take into account all the goals of the modern community college.

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Community colleges, in the form of junior colleges, entered the landscape of American higher education at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Over a century later, two-year institutions make up a significant portion of the higher education sector in the United States (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014). The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) reports that in 2018 there were 1,103 community colleges in the country (American Association of Community Colleges, 2018), accounting for almost a third of degree-granting institutions recognized by the U.S. Department of Education to receive federal student aid (National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.-a). In terms of students, these same two-year institutions account for over 7.1 million credit students, or 41% of all undergraduate enrollments in postsecondary education, and to those numbers can be added the 5.0 million non-credit students served by community colleges (American Association of Community Colleges, 2018). Therefore, what community colleges do—their missions—affects over 12 million students and their families, as well as the communities in which they live. In addition, two-year institutions reported revenues of over \$57 billion and expenses of over \$55 billion in fiscal year 2016 (National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.-a).

Since such a large percentage of undergraduates enroll in two-year institutions and these institutions account for billions of dollars of the country's education monies, it is certainly justifiable that stakeholders scrutinize what community colleges do (Lorenzo, 1994; McPhail & McPhail, 2006). Ayers (2002) as well as Nevarez and Wood (2010) have argued that community

colleges should continually examine their strategic missions in order to ensure that their resources are focused on programs and services that are relevant to their communities. A well-defined mission helps to create a sense of purpose that can be shared by all internal and external stakeholders, and its mission allows the constituents of the college to discriminate between the goals, activities, and services that conform to the needs of the institution and those that do not (Abelman & Dalessandro, 2008; Morpew & Hartley, 2006).

The term “mission” of a community college is often used interchangeably with expressions such as role, function, purpose, and goal (Bogart, 1994). However, Fenske (1980) articulated a useful distinction between mission and goals. “Mission” is a term that is most commonly an aspirational statement about what a society expects from its institutions. On the other hand, “goals” refer to the more specific functions and purposes of the institution. Goals often refer to particular outcomes and processes at the college, and they tend to be internal aspirations. Ayers (2005) suggested that, as a practical matter, it is the outcomes and goals of the institution that are of the greatest concern of educators, students, policymakers, and the citizens of the community. Ayers’ view aligns with Fenske’s (1980):

The study of goals is acknowledged to be important because goals not only give an organization a sense of direction, a frame of reference for its activities, and a means by which to evaluate change and progress, they help explain and relate the organization to its public. (p. 178)

Using the goal model of organizational effectiveness as a conceptual framework (Daft, 1995; Etzioni, 1964; Perrow, 1961; Richman & Farmer, 1974), this present study answers the calls made by scholars and researchers to examine the goals of the community college (Ayers, 2002, 2005; McPhail & McPhail, 2006; Salinas & Friedel, 2016). This current examination of

community college goals is limited in scope to the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and its comprehensive colleges. The ACCS is currently made up of 24 institutions, including 21 comprehensive community colleges, two technical colleges, and one military institute. The institutions of the ACCS enrolled 118,972 students in AY2016-2017, accounting for 44.2% of all undergraduate enrollments in public institutions in the state, and the System's institutions received state appropriations in FY2017 totaling almost \$313 million (National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.-a). Based on the numbers recounted above, the impact of the ACCS on higher education in the State of Alabama is significant, making the goals and purposes of the system worthy of study.

### **Background to the Study**

#### **Move Toward Comprehensiveness**

Many scholars trace the beginning of the modern, multi-functional, and public community college to Joliet Junior College, established in 1901 in Illinois, through a partnership between the Joliet Township High School and the University of Chicago. The purpose of the college was to provide to students in the high school district affordable and accessible lower-level courses that were part of the university curriculum while also relieving pressure on the growing university (Bogart, 1994). From there, the junior college model spread throughout the country. Through the Great Depression and into World War II, the institutions began to expand their curricula to include a "terminal" degree in occupational programs for students who did not intend to transfer to a four-year school (Thornton, 1960).

A watershed moment for junior colleges came in 1947 with the publication of *Higher education for American democracy* (President's Commission on Higher Education). This report described the Truman Commission's vision of the establishment of true "community colleges," a

term that was not in common use at the time. The report called for community colleges to serve the educational needs of the entire community, including youth and adults. This suggestion of the expansion of the purpose of community colleges foreshadowed the comprehensive nature of the institution's mission that exists today and highlights the idea that these two-year colleges should be intimately involved in the lives of their communities. As a result, the post-World War II years brought with them what Thornton (1960) identified as the next major phase in the growing community college mission—an expansion of its community service and community education activities. This historical trifecta of major functions—transfer education, occupational education, and community education—are now at the heart of the current, multi-part mission of the community college (Dougherty & Townsend, 2006; Perez-Vegara, Lathrop, & Orłowski, 2018; Phelan, 2014).

The two-year institutions in Alabama have also participated in move toward expanding missions and comprehensiveness. Alabama's state system of public, two-year colleges did not come into existence until 1963 with the administration of Governor George Wallace (Katsinas, 1994). However, Smith (2012) noted that, prior to 1963, Alabama had a wide array of two-year institutions including private junior colleges, public trade schools which offered occupational training, and at least one public junior college. The establishment of what would become the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) in 1963 led to a system of institutions focusing on transfer, occupational, and community education. With mergers over the decades, the ACCS now consists of 21 comprehensive community colleges, two technical colleges, and one two-year military institution. The institutions focus on providing transfer education, career and technical education, adult education, and workforce development by providing appropriate technology,

guaranteed college-credit transfer, specialized training for business and industry, and distance education (Alabama Community College System, 2019).

### **Descriptions of Comprehensiveness**

Bailey (2002) acknowledged that modern, comprehensive community colleges have multiple missions that address all the varying constituencies who are served by the institution. This idea of multi-layered services to students and stakeholders in the community is not only welcomed in the college service area but is expected, much like the Truman Commission's report suggested (President's Commission on Higher Education, 1947). Frost (2011) pointed out that for many community colleges, especially small, rural colleges, it is necessary to have a multi-focused approach to address the needs of the community because the college is likely the only institution in town that exists to serve the community in such diverse ways.

In pursuit of studying the functions of community colleges, it is helpful to note the various components that contribute to the colleges' comprehensiveness, and numerous scholars have identified the major mission components of the comprehensive community college. Cohen et al. (2014) identified six major functions of the community college: transfer education, occupational education, integrative/general education, student services, developmental education, and community education. Other scholars use very similar descriptions with slightly different terminology to discuss community college missions. For example, Nevarez and Wood (2010) categorized the functions as transfer education, terminal education, remedial education, and continuing education. Phelan (1994) characterized the missions as transfer education, vocational education, student services, general education, and community service. Another key component of the community college mission was identified by Bailey and Averianova (1998) as contract education/economic development activities. In their study of functions, they described

the important role that community colleges play in driving the economy in their service areas. Within this functional area, colleges provide skills training to existing businesses and industries and help bring economic growth to the community.

Similarly, Grubb, Badway, Bell, Bragg, and Russman (1997) conducted a study in which they made a distinction between the “regular college” and the “shadow” or “entrepreneurial college” (p. xi). They determined that the “regular college” includes the traditional functions of community colleges: degree and certificate programs, workforce development programs for specific groups of students (e.g., displaced workers), and continuing education courses that are not related to occupational activities. The “entrepreneurial college” refers to the portion of the college mission that is separate from the regular college activities. The activities of the “entrepreneurial college” fall under three major categories—workforce development, economic development, and community development. Workforce development is training provided to employees of a specific business. Economic development is any activity, unrelated to coursework, that the college uses to promote the economy of the local community. Community development consists of any activity in which the college supports the political, social, or cultural well-being of the community.

Bailey and Morest (2003) described three categories of community college functions: core activities, vertical activities, and horizontal activities. Core activities describe the part of the community college mission that relates to degree-granting programs that lead to an associate degree or certificate, whether it is for transfer to an upper-level institution or an occupational degree. The vertical activities of the institution include those related to moving a student through the educational pipeline from high school to associate degree and beyond. Examples of vertical activities include dual enrollment programs, transfer/articulation with four-year institutions,

baccalaureate programs offered at two-year institutions, and honors programs. The horizontal activities include any activity in which the institution reaches out to the community such as non-credit programs, contract training, summer camps for children, and adult basic education classes.

As community colleges in the nation and the State of Alabama have moved toward comprehensiveness, critics have expressed words of caution. Fitch (1989) noted that by the 1970s community colleges had become institutions that were expected to be all things to all people, but Cross (1985) suggested that if comprehensiveness is expected to be achieved with excellence, then all parts of the mission must be carried out with excellence as well. However, attempting to pursue every function of comprehensiveness at the same level of quality is unsustainable because of scarce financial resources (Amey, 2017; Breneman & Nelson, 1981; Phelan, 2014). Tillery and Deegan (1985), though, acknowledged that “giving equal priority” (p. 23) to each function is not how most community colleges would define comprehensiveness. Instead, comprehensive community colleges seek to find the right balance among all of their functions in relationship to their scarce resources and community needs (Amey, 2017; Barringer & Jaquette, 2018; Tillery & Deegan, 1985).

### **Problem Statement**

This study addresses the problem of goal prioritization that is necessary because of resource scarcity. Regardless of an agreed-upon definition of the comprehensive mission, community colleges, like all institutions of higher education, are faced with resource scarcity; there is a finite amount of money to be shared among state agencies and between institutions. Abelman and Dalessandro (2008) noted that this limitation requires community colleges to clarify their philosophy and to better focus their functions. The scarcity of fiscal resources automatically creates tension between internal and external stakeholders and competition

between the myriad goals of the community college (Hellmich & Feeney, 2017; Saunders, 2014). Therefore, community college administrators and policymakers at the state level are required to make decisions about which parts of the comprehensive mission to stress. Focusing on one portion of the mission may result in reducing the resources that are available for another mission goal (Dougherty & Townsend, 2006; Nevarez & Wood, 2010).

Examples of prioritizing certain goals over others because of resource scarcity can be found across the country. One of the most striking examples of goal devaluation can be found in the state of Florida regarding developmental education. In 2013 the Florida legislature passed a bill that prohibited state colleges in Florida from requiring students to take developmental coursework. Pain (2016) reported that the policymakers crafted the restrictions on developmental education due to the high cost of maintaining developmental education programs. Developmental education programs in Florida were funded at \$118.3 million dollars in 2004-2005, and that amount rose to \$168 million just prior to the passage of the bill (Pain, 2016). Another example of the displacement of goals based on resource scarcity can be seen with the colleges of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System. Fain (2014, August 7) reported that in the five years prior to 2014 the colleges cut 700 academic programs in order to use the funding for career and technical programs. An example of another community college goal that has been affected by resource scarcity is student services. As a result of the decline in enrollment at Harrisburg Area Community College and a reduction in financial support from the local school district, the College chose to stop providing on-campus clinical counseling services for their students and employees in 2019 (Anderson, 2019, October 18). In this case, Anderson (2019, October 18) pointed out that the goal of providing adequate student services has been weakened at a time when mental health issues are one of the biggest challenges on college campuses.

The 21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges (2012) acknowledged that community colleges do not receive the funds required for them to do all that they are asked to do, and the Commission called for colleges to prioritize their goals and decide the outcomes that they will seek. This critique aligns with assessments of Bogart (1994) and Lorenzo (1994) who both noted that prioritization of goals has been antithetical to the comprehensive mission of providing whatever is needed and desired by the college's community. Both scholars called for a refocus of the community college mission in order to operate most effectively with the resources that the colleges have. Similarly, Bailey and Averianova (1998) agreed that defining and prioritizing the specific goals of the community college will allow the institution to be effective within the constraints delineated by "access, equity, and [the] broad educational goals of society" (p. 2).

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS) is not immune to resource scarcity and its requirement to make hard choices about defining the mission of the State's community colleges. The Chancellor of the System stated, "ACCS has limited resources and the ACCS needs to be in a position to say that services being provided are maximized with the limited dollars available" (Alabama Community College System Board of Trustees, 2017, September 6). Fenske (1980) pointed out, though, that an organization's processes, including services, should be discussed only after the organization analyzes and clearly understands its goals.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to understand the goal priorities of different stakeholders and the extent to which the different stakeholders agree on those priorities for the community college. This understanding is critical for building consensus for the direction of both an institution and a system of institutions. Doucette, Richardson, and Fenske (1985)

acknowledged, though, that the goals of community colleges are typically ill-defined systems that mean different things to different groups, although the goals and goal priorities should be defined in order to create an atmosphere for functioning effectively. Coyan (1985) found that institutions can make strides toward achieving institutional missions when individuals can see the discrepancies between what people believe is being emphasized in a college and what they believe should be emphasized.

The focus of the present study is the goal priorities of strategic planners and policymakers in the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) with respect to the mission of the System's comprehensive community colleges. In line with the goal model of organizational effectiveness (Daft, 1995; Etzioni, 1964; Perrow, 1961; Richman & Farmer, 1974), the researcher examined the congruence and dissonance of the perceptions of goal priorities among the individuals involved in strategic planning at each comprehensive community college in the ACCS and the executive staff of the ACCS Office. There have been numerous calls to examine the goals of community colleges around the country (21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, 2012; Dougherty & Townsend, 2006), and the changes taking place in the Alabama Community College System with the appeals for a unified, strategic direction for the System, make this a prime time to conduct a study that analyzes the System's goals.

In the last five years, the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) has experienced changes that have had, and will continue to have, wide-ranging effects on the system of community colleges in the State. In 2015, the Alabama legislature passed a law that transferred control of the ACCS from the State Board of Education, which also oversees the K-12 educational system, to a newly-created Board of Trustees (Cason, 2015). The Board of Trustees is appointed by the Governor of the State of Alabama, and the new board was largely selected

because of their expertise in workforce development and training, a priority for the State that was articulated by the Governor (The Associated Press, 2015). In addition, a new Chancellor of the ACCS was appointed in early 2017 by the Board of Trustees after serving several months as Interim Chancellor (Dunigan, 2017). The vision of the new Board of Trustees and the new Chancellor is a unification of focus among the 24 separate community colleges and technical schools in the system. Board members have noted the previous lack of cohesion among system institutions and the need for a unified direction and purpose (Alabama Community College System Board of Trustees, 2017, February 8). Also, the Chancellor has articulated the need for a new strategic plan that ensures that all institutions are “collectively headed in the same direction,” and the Board of Trustees has expressed a desire to have a wide range of input for the strategic plan (Alabama Community College System Board of Trustees, 2016, November 9).

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is an addition to the scholarly literature about the missions and goals of community colleges in three ways. First, the study supports the scholarly calls for analysis of the community college mission in light of the increased scrutiny and financial constraints faced by the institution (Abelman & Dalessandro, 2008; Bailey & Averianova, 1998; Nevarez & Wood, 2010). Second, the study and results demonstrate a manner in which practitioners can use the study of goal priorities to inform practice. Finally, the study has specific benefits for the Alabama Community College System as it aspires to create a unified, coherent system of institutions.

Numerous scholars have called for the redefinition and reinterpretation of the modern community college mission. The 21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges (2012) suggested that community colleges redirect and recharacterize their roles to

meet the needs of education and employment in this century. Dougherty and Townsend (2006) noted that leaders of community colleges as well as policymakers need to understand the inherent tension that exists between the competing functions in an organization or system that has multiple missions. Nevarez and Wood (2010) warned that anytime there is a paradigm shift within an organization, the leaders of the organization should take the opportunity to analyze the mission and goals of the organization. Fitch (1989) argued that goal studies in community colleges allow state systems of colleges to frame statewide goals that make financial sense. Similarly, Gaskin (2000) suggested that those who have the responsibility to set the funding priorities in a system or an institution should take into account the goal priorities of the system's constituents and stakeholders.

Understanding the goals and goal priorities of the organization is a first step in taking action to achieve the mission. Peterson and Uhl (1977) pointed out that understanding goals is fundamental to developing organizational policy. They write that the conception of goals is essential to an institution's "understanding of itself, its philosophy and *raison d'etre*, its ideology as an educational, social, and political entity. In short, a goals conception is an expression of what the institution stands for" (p. 3). Once goal priorities are established, institutions are able to develop strategies to accommodate for the shifting needs of student populations and the local communities. Grubb et al. (1997) identified the need for a continual analysis of institutional goals because the foci of institutions change with stakeholder demand, and operating with the same emphases as in previous decades could be detrimental to institutional health. Evaluating goal priorities assists the college leaders to make a connection between the institutional mission and the decision-making process (Hornak & Garza Mitchell, 2016; Nevarez & Wood, 2010; Perez-Vegara et al., 2018). Cross (1981) contended that institutions should use studies of goals to

find gaps in goal priorities and goal achievement in order to develop strategic plans of action, and Pitcher (2012) highlighted the need for an alignment of goals with the organization's functions in order to develop a strategic plan for the institution.

A thorough search of the scholarly literature did not find a past study of the goals of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) or its antecedents. Such a study would benefit the ACCS in clarifying its goals, identifying new directions for the system, and creating a foundation for assessment and accountability for mission achievement. These benefits are supported by the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor of the System. They have stressed the need to gather as much information as possible in order to put together a system-wide strategic plan, and they have acknowledged the need to gather input from all stakeholders in order to design a path forward (Alabama Community College System Board of Trustees, 2017, September 6).

### **Overview of Methodology**

Within the framework of the goal model of organizational effectiveness (Daft, 1995; Etzioni, 1964; Perrow, 1961; Richman & Farmer, 1974), the goal of this study was to understand the goal priorities of leaders in the Alabama Community College System (ACCS). The researcher surveyed individuals involved in strategic planning in the comprehensive community college of the ACCS as well as administrators in the ACCS Office using the Community College Goals Inventory (CCGI) by ETS. The purpose of the survey was to determine which goals of the community college the participants believed are being emphasized and those that they believed should be emphasized more. The survey, adapted to Qualtrics® software, was sent electronically through email to those identified as being involved with strategic planning at the institutions. The participants were identified in one of three ways: 1) the college's current strategic plan, with committee members identified, was found on the college's website, 2) the

strategic planning committee, or its equivalent, was listed on the college's website, or 3) the president of the institution was contacted and asked to provide the names of individuals involved with strategic planning at the college. In addition, the survey was sent to the executive staff members at the ACCS Office.

The strategic planners at each institution were categorized based on their roles at the institution. First, "administrators" were classified in this study as the president, the chief academic officer, the chief student affairs officer, and the chief financial officer. Numerous scholars have noted that these individuals often have the most prominent role related to goal setting on a community college campus (Astin & Scherrei, 1980; Birnbaum, 1988; Eddy, 2010). The "faculty" category included those strategic planners whose primary role is instruction. The faculty who may be involved in strategic planning, and therefore goal setting, are crucial to creating a culture of shared governance (Kater, 2017; Magloire, 2019; Nevarez & Wood, 2010). Finally, in the context of this study, the term "staff" was used to describe other individuals involved in the strategic planning process who are not captured in the previous groups.

Using the survey instrument for the study, the Community College Goals Inventory (CCGI), participants were asked to identify the extent to which specific goals *are* being pursued at their institutions and the extent to which specific goals *should be* pursued at their institutions. The CCGI was designed to elicit a measure of perceptions in twenty goal areas. Ten of the goal areas are defined as process goals, and ten of the goal areas are defined as outcome goals (Peterson & Uhl, 1977). Borrowing from Gross and Grambsch's (1968) terminology, outcome goals are defined as the goals that correlate to a college's purposes and ends, while process goals refer to those goals dealing with means and survival. The survey is described in detail in Chapters 2 and 3 of this study.

## Research Questions

In this study, following research questions were investigated:

1. What are the aggregated perceptions of goal priorities of all personnel engaged in strategic planning at both the comprehensive colleges and the system office of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS):
  - a. concerning current (*is*) community college goals?
  - b. concerning preferred (*should be*) community college goals?
2. In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, between the comprehensive colleges of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and the ACCS Office:
  - a. based on the perceived importance of current (*is*) community college goals?
  - b. based on the preferred (*should be*) importance of community college goals?
3. In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, by participant role:
  - a. based on the perceived importance of current (*is*) community college goals?
  - b. based on the preferred (*should be*) importance of community college goals?
4. In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, by college size:
  - a. based on the perceived importance of current (*is*) community college goals?
  - b. based on the preferred (*should be*) importance of community college goals?
5. In what ways do the discrepancies between the perceptions of current (*is*) college goals and preferred (*should be*) college goals differ, if at all, for the comprehensive colleges of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and the ACCS Office?

6. In what ways do the discrepancies between the perceptions of current (*is*) college goals and preferred (*should be*) college goals differ, if at all, for each participant role?
7. In what ways do the discrepancies between the perceptions of current (*is*) college goals and preferred (*should be*) college goals differ, if at all, for each size category of college?
8. To what extent does the Community College Goals Inventory continue to be a reliable and valid instrument for evaluating the goal priorities of community colleges?

### **Assumptions**

The study was conducted based on the following *a priori* assumptions:

1. The Community College Goals Inventory (CCGI) exhibits content and construct validity, making it appropriate for the study.
2. The participants were honest and forthcoming with their responses.
3. The reliability of the CCGI, as established by the Educational Testing Service, was correct.
4. The CCGI continues to be a reliable instrument in an electronic format.

### **Delimitations**

The following delimitations were established for this study:

1. Although the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) includes 24 institutions, the study only included the 21 comprehensive community colleges. The study focused on goals priorities within the context of mission comprehensiveness, and the colleges that were not included, two technical colleges and a two-year military institution, do not have a comprehensive mission.
2. The participants in the study were delimited to strategic planners in each of the colleges studied and the executive office staff in the ACCS Office.

## **Limitations**

I recognized, *a priori*, that limitations existed within the present study. These limitations are as follows:

1. The study was delimited to strategic planners in the 21 comprehensive community colleges of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS). The results may not be generalizable to either the other colleges of the ACCS or other community colleges outside of Alabama.
2. The responses to the survey represent perceptions about community college goals at the time the survey was administered. The results do not reflect past or future beliefs.
3. Rankings of the twenty goals based on the results of the survey do not indicate depth of goal priority.
4. The respondents to the survey may not have been honest in the reporting of their beliefs.

## **Organization of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. The first chapter introduced the study by providing background information, the problem and purpose statements, an explanation of the significance of the study, and a brief description of the study's methodology, including the research questions, assumptions, delimitations, and limitations. The second chapter provides a review of pertinent literature by covering three major topics. First, the study's conceptual framework, the goal model of organizational effectiveness (Daft, 1995; Etzioni, 1964; Perrow, 1961; Richman & Farmer, 1974), is discussed. Second, the literature review highlights the missions and goals of community colleges. Finally, the researcher couches the present study within the literature of past university and college goal studies.

The third chapter of this dissertation offers an explanation of the methods used to carry out the study including a rationale for the research design, a summary of the research design, the research questions, the population studied, and the instrumentation. The chapter continues with a description of the procedures for data collection and analysis, data confidentiality and security, and researcher positionality. The fourth chapter provides an analysis of the data collected. The last chapter includes a discussion of the results, conclusions drawn from the results of the study, recommendations for further research, and implications for policy and practice.

## CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the scholarly literature that informs the current study. In order to frame a study of the goals of the Alabama Community College System, three major lines of research were examined. First, the conceptual framework for the study is presented by describing the goal model of organizational effectiveness. The foundation of the goal model can be found in the concepts and theories of Perrow (1961), Etzioni (1964), Richman and Farmer (1974), and Daft (1995). The section on organizational goals covers definitions of goals, the importance of goals, understand multiple goals, goal setting, and goal displacement. Second, the literature review includes a description of the traditional goals of community colleges from an organizational and curricular perspective. The section is divided into three parts based on Bailey and Morest's (2003) categorization of the functions of the community college: the core, vertical, and horizontal foci. The final section of the literature review presents an examination of goal studies in higher education and is organized around three major surveys used to study college and university goals. Gross and Grambsch (1968) conducted the first nationwide study of college and university goals, and the instrument they developed for the process became the prototype for future instruments. The Institutional Goals Inventory (IGI) developed by ETS and Peterson (1973) was created to standardize the Gross and Grambsch instrument for all types of institutions. The Community College Goals Inventory (CCGI), described in detail by Cross (1981), was a revision of the IGI to specifically address the needs and functions of community colleges.

## **Organizational Goals**

The study of goals plays a substantial role within the framework of organizational theory, and the goal model of organizational effectiveness served as the conceptual foundation of the present study. Gross and Grambsch (1968) contended that the presence of goals in an organization is the marker by which formal organizations are distinguished from other types of systems. Goals serve multiple purposes for an organization which include providing the organization with a sense of direction, defining success for the organization, identifying outputs, and framing a means for evaluation of change (Bedeian & Zammuto, 1991; Conrad, 1974; Fenske, 1980). Especially important is the notion that defining goals gives the organization legitimacy in the eyes of its external constituencies. The legitimizing role of goals allows the organization to form worthwhile relationships with its stakeholders as well as to seek out and obtain needed resources from the environment (Bedeian & Zammuto, 1991; Conrad, 1974; Fenske, 1980). Before continuing with a discussion of organizational goals, the term “goals” is defined within the context of organizational theory. After exploring the definition of the term, the literature review turns to an examination of the importance of understanding goals in organizations, including institutions of higher education, how goals are determined in organizations, and the problems associated with multiple goals. Finally, the section concludes with an explanation of goal displacement in organizations.

### **Definition of Goals**

The term “goals” is often used interchangeably with other terms such as mission, function, purpose, and objective. However, organizational theorists are careful to distinguish between the definitions of these terms. Fenske (1980) and Lenning and Micek (1976) defined “mission” as an aspirational statement that articulates the organization’s most general focus.

Missions are usually derived from the legal or societal expectations of an organization (Fenske, 1980), and Lenning and Micek (1976) found that for organizations of the same type, mission statements tend to be very similar. Ayers (2017) found that mission statements are largely public relations documents that also serve as sensemaking documents for stakeholders, but he noted that they have little value in setting functional priorities for the organization. Tuckman and Chang (1988) acknowledged that missions are used to help the organization choose its goals, or those aims and objects that the organization is trying to accomplish. Etzioni (1964) described goals as “a desired state of affairs which the organization attempts to realize” (p. 6). Fenske (1980) suggested that goals “usually refer to the aspirations, functions, and purposes of the institution itself as viewed by its internal constituents...and usually include reference to a clientele being served, a process, and an outcome or outcomes” (p. 176).

Goals are sometimes described as value statements that allow the organization to make decisions (Birnbaum, 1988; Lenning & Micek, 1976). As value statements, all goals may not be equally important, and organizations must rank the goals and prioritize the activities related to goal-seeking behavior (Birnbaum, 1988; Conrad, 1974; Lenning & Micek, 1976). According to Connor (1980), goals express intent and action, and goals serve as the foundation of the entire process of organizational management by operating as the basis for planning and control (Richards, 1978). In this way, goals act as the constraints on what organizations can and should do (March & Simon, 1958; Richards, 1978).

Perrow (1961) and Conrad (1974) made the distinction between official and operational goals. Official goals are those goals that are publicly stated and usually derived from the organization’s charter, mission, or annual reports. Official goals are often intentionally vague. They neither indicate the priorities that exist when multiple goals are present, nor do they

represent the decisions that have to be made to achieve the goals (Perrow, 1961). In his research, Perrow (1973) found that the stated goals of organizations are not their real goals, and these official goals do little to explain organizational behavior. In contrast, operational goals are those goals, whether conscious or unconscious, that are reflected in operating policies and in the decisions that are made on a daily basis by the organization's personnel (Conrad, 1974; Perrow, 1961). Since they arise out of the daily work of the organization, they are automatically assigned priority and reflect the choices among competing values. The operative goals could even undermine an official goal of the organization (Perrow, 1961).

### **The Importance of Organizational Goals**

Organizational theorists acknowledge that the existence of goals legitimize organizations, serve to constrain organizations, and help to explain organizational behavior. Gross and Grambsch (1968) indicated that the dominance of goals in an organization distinguish formal organizations from other types of systems, and they go so far as to suggest that without the concept of goals, there could not be the concept of organization. Similarly, Parsons, Shils, Naegele, and Pitts (1960) believed that the preeminent problem of formal organizations is goal attainment. Goals also serve to constrain organizations. Goals establish boundaries with the external environment and within the organization (Cyert & March, 1963; Kast & Rosenzweig, 1974; Richards, 1978), but they also are a means of establishing interactions across those boundaries (Conrad, 1974; Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975). Understanding organizational goals allows researchers and practitioners to gain better insight into how organizations and the organizations' personnel behave (Conrad, 1974; Perrow, 1961). Bess and Dee (2012) proposed that organizational goals can be used to inform the way an organization is designed in order to make it more effective, but Conrad (1974) suggested that analyzing organizational goals help

researchers to determine if the goals actually explain organizational behavior or if they are only symbols of the organization. Clark (1983) believed that organizational goals, especially official goals, do not really guide members' behavior. However, he did acknowledge that coalescence around organizational goals increases member morale and organizational legitimacy to outside groups.

In the goal model of organizational theory, goals are fundamental to institutional effectiveness. An effective organization is one that not only sets realistic goals but also achieves them (Bess & Dee, 2012; Daft, 1995; Richman & Farmer, 1974). Richman and Farmer (1974) argued that goals cannot be an unrealistic set of hopes, but rather, goals should provide a logical direction for the organization with identifiable actions for the organization's members. Daft (1995) suggested that the achievement of all goals, both official and operational, contributes to organizational effectiveness, but since operative goals are not often articulated concretely, it is even more important to clearly identify and analyze those operative goals. Otherwise, there is no way for an organization to take steps to reach a goal if the organization does not know what the goal is (Richman & Farmer, 1974). In addition, March and Simon (1958) found that the more clarity surrounding an organizational goal, the better inclination to achieve the goal.

### **Multiple Goals**

Organizational goals are not fixed, and large, complex organizations can be expected to have a large number of goals (Gross & Grambsch, 1968; Perrow, 1973). Connor (1980) found that multiple goals in organizations, referred to as goal mix, result from the interactions of groups with different and conflicting interests. The goal mix can change over time because members face varying internal and external demands, and they are unable to manage all goals at one time (Cyert & March, 1963). Goals, even those in conflict, can be pursued simultaneously

within the same organization, but the goal mix is forced to become a system of goal priorities (Connor, 1980).

In higher education, as institutions and systems become more diverse and coupled to other social institutions, the mission and goals of the organization does not become clearer. Instead, goals multiply, and the goal mix can generate conflict. Borrowing from Etzioni's (1964) definition of goals as "a desired state of affairs" (p. 6), Gross and Grambsch (1968) insisted that institutions must ask the question about to whose state of affairs the goal is referring. The researchers highlighted the notion that there can be as many states of affairs as there are people in the organization. Fenske (1980) contended that the institutional goals in higher education are almost always socially acceptable; therefore, the conflict that is generated is over priority of the goals, not the acceptability of them. Birnbaum (1988) highlighted another problem with multiple goals—because goals compete for organizational resources, the achievement of all goals cannot be optimized. However, he pointed out that most people are content for the achievement of goals to fall within a range of suitability.

### **Setting Goals**

Lenning and Micek (1976) described three major ways that goals are set in higher education organizations: top-down, bottom-up, or down-up-down-up. In the top-down process, goals are set at the high levels of administration and passed down through the organization. According to Birnbaum (1988), this is generally true for community college organizations. The opposite is true using the bottom-up pathway. Goals are set at the lower levels of the institution and then passed up to the upper administration where they are analyzed and finalized. In the down-up-down-up process, information about potential goals is shared by the upper administration to the lower levels of the institution, and then, an iterative process of sharing

information and choosing goals is undertaken at all levels of the organization. Similarly, Cyert and March (1963) as well as Etzioni (1964) presented two goal-setting processes. From classical organizational theory, they described goal setting as a mechanical process in which the organizational goal is dictated in a top-down process. From this classical perspective, organizations typically have only one overarching goal. On the other hand, a more modern system theory perspective views goal setting as a give-and-take political process in which interest groups within the organization determine the goals of the institution (Daft, 1995).

No matter the process, organizations do not have complete freedom to set any goals that they like. Most organizations are forced by their environments to adapt to the goals that are expected by the constituencies external to the organization as well as the organization's competitors (Bess & Dee, 2012; Perrow, 1973). Conrad (1974) identified several major constraints on goal setting behavior in higher education: institutional values, governing boards, the state and federal government, competing organizations, external clients, the public, students, and staff. Setting goals within these constraints involves a power play among all of these constituencies (Cyert & March, 1963; Etzioni, 1964).

Cyert and March (1963) suggested that goals are formed when individuals or groups of individuals come together to determine a common purpose for the organization. However, these scholars acknowledged that all groups of individuals will not share the same commitment to all organizational goals, and the groups will try to maximize their own goals. This process creates internal coalitions of goal-setting, and Richards (1978) outlines five major coalitions within an organization. The executive coalition consists of the highest level of administration, namely the CEO. The expert coalition is made up of those in the organization with technical expertise. The bureaucratic coalition are all the individuals with administrative power, and the politicized

coalition are the people in the organization who, through whatever means, have developed influencing power. Finally, the external coalition are those individuals outside of the organization who may exert some level of control over the goals of the organization. The particular tasks of the organization that are emphasized at a particular time will determine which coalition dominates the goal-setting processes of the organization (Perrow, 1961). In a bureaucratic organization such as the community college, the bureaucratic coalition dominates the goal setting process, and the coalition's goals become the operative goals of the organization (Birnbaum, 1988; Smart & Hamm, 1993). Birnbaum (1988) noted that in hierarchical systems, administrators want to appear to make rational decisions that will move the organization toward achieving its stated goals, and this often requires complex planning and budgeting systems.

### **Goal Displacement**

Goals of organizations often change over time, and the transformation of goals can be caused by several factors (Bess & Dee, 2012). One type of goal displacement occurs when resources are diverted to goals that are not legitimate. For example, official goals for building and maintaining the organization could be displaced if powerful interest groups are more concerned with preserving their status than that of the institution (Etzioni, 1964; Kast & Rosenzweig, 1974). Another type of goal displacement occurs if chaos and problems within the organization force it to fixate on those internal problems rather than the stated goals (Bess & Dee, 2012). As organizations grow in complexity and missions become more and more blurred, the operative goals cease to conform to the official, stated goals of the organization, and this change can cause energy to be spent focusing on means rather than ends (Huskey, 1988).

Organizations are sometimes required to evaluate and change goals when their environment changes (Bess & Dee, 2012). As changes in the organizational environment occur

or when that stated mission and operational goals greatly diverge, the organization should conduct a goals analysis to determine a path forward toward effectiveness (Huskey, 1988). One important type of information that is needed for such an analysis deals with how individuals in the organization perceive and feel about the organization's goals (Gross & Grambsch, 1968; Nevarez & Wood, 2010).

### **The Goals of Community Colleges**

Like other organizations, community colleges are institutions that set goals and attempt to achieve those goals. Bailey (2002) asserted that the basic, historic function of community colleges is to serve the needs of the communities in which the colleges reside. As society and communities have evolved and become more complex, the number of goals of community colleges have increased. Now, community colleges have multiple missions, and they have embraced a comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of the community (Amey, 2017). In this section, the multiple goals of community colleges from an organizational and curricular perspective are explored. This perspective explains community college goals based on what service is provided, to whom, and for what purpose. This organizational/curricular perspective follows the divisions set out by Bailey and Morest's (2003) framework of core, vertical, and horizontal categories of community college functions.

#### **Core Focus**

Bailey and Morest (2003) defined the core focus of community colleges as the activities of the college that relate directly to the degree-granting programs. These programs can lead to an associate degree or certificate, either transferrable or terminal. The core activities correlate to what Harlacher (1969) and Phelan (1994) called transfer education, vocational education, and general education. Similarly, Cohen et al. (2014) associated transfer education, occupational

education, developmental education and integrative/general education with the core focus of community colleges.

Transferable, liberal arts programs are still considered by many community college supporters to be the essential element of community college programming (Bailey & Averianova, 1998). As the initial offerings of junior colleges, liberal arts programs were designed to provide lower-level offerings in general education for universities. The beginning of the two-year college movement is largely credited with the founding of Joliet Junior College in 1901 by the local school superintendent and the president of the University of Chicago, William Rainey Harper, and the college was designed to offer the first two years of undergraduate studies to local high school students in an effort to remove some of the burden from the university (Cohen et al., 2014; Medsker, 1960; Thelin, 2019; Vaughan, 2006).

In addition, Cohen et al. (2014) characterized the transferable liberal arts curriculum as fulfilling both a popularizing and democratizing role in higher education. Initially, the liberal arts provided a context for understanding our world, for evaluating our role in society, and for determining what is right. The concept of liberal arts morphed into academic disciplines and include the humanities, social sciences, sciences, and basic studies (Cohen et al., 2014).

Occupational education is another of the key, core activities of the community college. The term occupational education encompasses expressions such as terminal, vocational, technical, semiprofessional, and career education. Occupational programs are those credit-bearing programs that are designed to teach students skills that they can use to obtain and maintain employment upon graduation from the two-year college (Cohen et al., 2014). Cejda and Leist (2006) emphasized the importance of occupational education programs for meeting community economic needs, and Cohen et al. (2014) suggested that occupational education will

continue to be a prominent fixture in the community college landscape. Currently, money is flowing from state legislatures to fund vocational projects in order to fill the needs of America's workforce (Garza Mitchell & Sawyer, 2017).

Bridging the space between liberal arts and occupational education is the community college's integrative education, or general education, program. Essentially a component of the liberal arts/transfer program, the general education portion of the curriculum consists of that coherent set of courses that all graduates should take in order to demonstrate a broad base of knowledge. More specifically, integrative education requires students to learn those skills that allow them to be successful in their upper-level academic pursuits and/or their careers. Examples of these general education skills include critical thinking, communication, cultural sensitive, collaboration, etc. (Cohen et al., 2014; Dougherty, 2002).

Many students who enter community college, though, do not have the requisite skills to be successful in an academic liberal arts program or an occupational program. Cohen et al. (2014) noted that there was an apparent breakdown in the education provided to students in secondary schools in the 1960s, and this breakdown, coupled with an increase in enrollments by non-traditional students, led to the need for developmental education. These students are required or encouraged to enroll in developmental education courses. Developmental education, also referred to as remedial, compensatory, preparatory, or basic skills studies, allows students to develop skills, most commonly in basic reading, writing, and mathematics, before taking college-level English and mathematics courses (Cohen et al., 2014; Desai, 2012). Bailey and Averianova (1998) as well as Hornak and Garza Mitchell (2016) argued that with problems in high schools and the increasing numbers of non-traditional students, including non-English speakers, enrolling in community colleges, the need for developmental education will continue to increase.

## **Vertical Focus**

According to Bailey and Morest (2003), the activities that make up the vertical focus of the community college are those pursuits that move a student through the educational pipeline—from high school to an associate degree and then transfer to an upper-level institution. The liberal arts-based Associate in Art and Associate in Science programs are generally those that lead to transfer to a four-year university. Cohen et al. (2014) refer to this collegiate function as student flow from K-12 education through the thirteenth and fourteenth years of education into baccalaureate degrees and on to graduate school.

In addition, this focus encompasses granting four-year degrees as well as dual enrollment programs and early college programs. Dual enrollment allows students to take college courses for both college and high school credit, and early college programs allow high school students to enroll into college prior to receiving a high school diploma. This expansion downward by community college into grades 11 and 12 is mirrored on the upper end of the spectrum as more and more colleges are offering baccalaureate degrees. Related to the developmental education mentioned in the previous section, many colleges are partnering with K-12 schools to provide pre-college remediation and preparation (D'Amico, 2017). For many years universities have offered courses on community college campuses, but now community colleges themselves are offering their own four-year degrees, especially in applied and workforce-related programs (Barringer & Jaquette, 2018; Cohen et al., 2014).

## **Horizontal Focus**

Bailey and Morest (2003) defined horizontal activities as those activities outside of the core and vertical functions in which the community college reaches out to the communities that it serves. In 1947, the President's Commission on Higher Education released its report, *Higher*

*education for American democracy*. The Commission was among the first to use the term “community college,” and it stressed the importance of the two-year, community college in providing for the educational needs of its community (President’s Commission on Higher Education, 1947). The report recommended that institutions stop being campus-based and instead, take the offerings of the college to all areas of the community in order to stimulate communication and curiosity.

Changing enrollment patterns during the 1950s and 1960s, especially with returning G.I.s and enrollment increases in groups of previously underserved populations such as women, older adults, students with disabilities, African Americans, and economically disadvantaged students, spurred the need for different priorities and added functions (Cohen et al., 2014; Vaughan, 2006). There began to be calls for more priority to be given to the needs of the local community as was encouraged by the Truman Commission Report. Colleges began to refocus their offerings, resulting in a significant increase in the number and types of noncredit, lifelong learning courses that were available to individuals in the community (Boggs, 2011; D’Amico, 2017; Kane & Rouse, 1999; Vaughan, 2006). These transformations of added goals and increased access to education during the 1950s and 1960s led to the phrase that is often attributed to the mission of community colleges: “All things for all people.”

In 1988, the Commission on the Future of Community Colleges released its report *Building Communities*, and the Commission suggested that the creation and development of community should be the rallying cry for community colleges. Arnsperger (2002) stated

The innovative community college will be more closely connected to its own community, far more knowledgeable about its community’s everchanging composition, aware of the

learning needs and expectations of community members and local businesses, and increasingly more agile in anticipating and responding to community needs. (p. 62)

Harlacher (1969) produced one of the seminal works related to how community colleges should interact with their communities. He believed that colleges were obliged to become the center of community life, to provide educational services to *all* age groups, to engage the community in long-range planning, and to “promote the cultural, intellectual, and social life” of the community (p. v). Similarly, Gleazer (1980) reimagined the entire focus of community colleges by declaring,

*It would seem that it is time to affirm that a primary function of community colleges is to aid those in the community who want to learn how to secure certain basic necessities. Among these are: housing, health, employment, food, and citizenship rights and responsibilities. (p. 20)*

Another common horizontal function of the community college, often related to community education, is adult basic education. Dougherty and Townsend (2006) noted that although adult basic education had existed since the 1930s, the 1970s brought increased attention to the need for adult basic education, and community colleges stepped in to fill that need. In many states, community colleges are the only organizations that provide GED programming, whereby adults are able to earn the equivalent of a high school diploma (Davidson, 2017).

However, the majority of community college practitioners steered the community service focus toward economic development. Phelan (1994) maintained that the 1980s and 1990s was marked by a recognition by community colleges that they could be more effective if they worked together and with other agencies. Therefore, there was an increased reliance on collaboration with other colleges, government entities, business, industries, and other development agencies. Generally, these partnerships were directed toward economic development. Levin (2005)

acknowledged that even though the overarching purpose of community colleges—open access—was not replaced, it may have been overshadowed by a focus on economic development beginning in the mid-1980s. He argued that the *community* in community college was narrowly focused to an economic community.

Similarly, Grubb et al. (1997) described the increase in workforce development and economic development during this period. They described workforce development as the service of providing training to employees of business and industries, and they described economic development as the actions of the college to increase employment in their communities. Grubb et al. (1997) called this part of the horizontal focus the entrepreneurial college. Besides the social welfare of the community, the entrepreneurial college focuses on providing training for employees of business in the community, and the college advises companies and communities in areas related to job growth and employment. Numerous scholars agreed that the workforce and economic development activities have become essential functions for the modern community college—as the foundation of collaboration between business leaders and community leaders, as providers of contract training and noncredit offerings to business and industry, and as promoters of human capital (21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, 2012; Friedel, 2008; Jacobs & Dougherty, 2006; Levin, 2005) .

### **Goal Studies in Higher Education**

This section of the literature review explores the use of goal studies in higher education and in community colleges. The review begins with an explanation of the Gross and Grambsch (1968) study of university goals and then continues with a description of the development and use of the Institutional Goals Inventory (IGI) and the Community College Goals Inventory

(CCGI). A description of how the IGI and CCGI have been used to analyze goals in single institutions and in state studies completes the literature review.

### **The Gross and Grambsch Study**

The first major national study of institutional goals was conducted by Gross and Grambsch in 1964 and reported in their book *University goals and academic power* in 1968. Their study was born from a desire to understand the connection between the power wielded by university administrators and the goals of the university. In the study, the researchers surveyed the faculty and administrators from 68 doctoral degree-granting universities in the United States using an instrument developed by the researchers. The survey contained 47 goal statements, and the respondents were asked to rate each statement according to the perceived importance of the goal at the university and the preferred importance of the goal at the university. The goals used by Gross and Grambsch were characterized as two types of goals, output goals and support goals. The output goals were the goals of a university that deal with student training, student character and identity development, research, and service. The support goals were based on the four categories of Parsons' (1951) framework of organizational power: environment, staff motivation, management, and institutional competition. The output goals were essentially the products of the institutions while the support goals reflected the healthy functioning of the institution.

Gross and Grambsch (1968) found that faculty and administrators tended to agree on the priorities of goals (both perceived and preferred) to a much larger extent than was expected. In fact, there was no statistical difference between the faculty and the administration in the perceived importance of 34 of the 47 goals. For both groups, the most important perceived and preferred goal was protecting academic freedom. Of the other top goals, only one was related to

students. Also, it is interesting to note that the difference between the perceived importance and the preferred importance of the goals was significant for both groups.

The Gross and Grambsch (1968) study had a significant impact on the study of university and college goals in the decades after its publishing. Doucette, Richardson, and Fenske (1985) noted that the study exposed higher education researchers and scholars to the potential of studying institutional goals using an analytical perspective. Doucette (1983) pointed out that the Gross and Grambsch approach introduced the idea that goals could be categorized according to function (output or support). This change was significant because it meant that the support goals were actually *means* that should become *ends* in order for the organization to function effectively. Also important for the current study is that the format of soliciting the perceived importance and the preferred importance of goals became characteristic of future goal inventories (Fenske, 1980).

### **The Institutional Goals Inventory**

Modeling the work of Gross and Grambsch, Peterson (1973), a researcher at ETS, began to develop an instrument to identify basic goals in an institution and to establish priorities among the various goals. The instrument became known as the Institutional Goals Inventory (IGI), and it measures the perceived and preferred importance of institutional goals using “is” (perceived) and “should be” (preferred) statements. The inventory is based on an *a priori* identification of the goals of higher education, and the researchers established two requirements for determining the goals. First, the goals needed to be all-inclusive; that is, the list of goals should encompass all the major goals of all types of higher education institutions. Second, the goals needed to be specific enough to provide meaningful information that could be used practically by institutions (Peterson & Uhl, 1977).

Mirroring Gross and Grambsch's (1968) output and support goals, the IGI divides the goals into two categories, outcome goals and process goals. There are thirteen outcome goals and seven process goals. The outcome goals are as follows: academic development, intellectual orientation, individual personal development, humanism/altruism, cultural/aesthetic awareness, traditional religiousness, vocational preparation, advanced training, research, meeting local needs, public service, social egalitarianism, and social criticism/activism. The process goals are as follows: freedom, democratic governance, community, intellectual/aesthetic environment, innovation, off-campus learning, and accountability/efficiency. On the IGI respondents are asked to react to ninety statements of goals, marking the level of importance that the respondent perceives the goal *is* at the institution and the level of importance the respondent believes the goal *should be* at the institution (Peterson & Uhl, 1977).

Fenske (1980) suggested that the IGI became popular for three major reasons—it met a need for a standardized inventory for studying university and college goals, it is easily understood and adopted by users, and it meets standard psychometric tests for quality. He also argued that by employing the perceived and preferred importance dichotomy, the IGI could be used as a point of analysis for goal discrepancies as well as goal priorities.

In 1972 the California legislature and ETS sponsored a study in California led by Peterson (1973), constituting the first major use of the IGI. The study consisted of over 24,000 participants from 116 colleges and universities in California. There were three major objectives for using the IGI on such a wide scale. The first was to gain input for the California Joint Committee on the Master Plan for Higher Education. Second, the legislature wanted to allow a large number of constituents to express their beliefs about the goals of higher education, and finally, the state wanted the colleges and universities to use the results to engage in self-studies.

Known as the California Study, the research led by Peterson (1973) found that there were a large range of goal priorities by institution type throughout the state of California. Even among the eight campuses of the University of California, the goals ranked by importance varied widely except for one—a strong sense of campus community. This goal was in the top three goals of all eight campuses. The researcher also found that among the CEOs who responded, there were substantially higher *is* scores and somewhat higher *should be* scores than the other constituencies, pointing to the CEOs' desire to paint their institutions in positive lights. Among all respondents, there was more agreement on the *should be* scores than on the *is* scores. When disaggregating the data from community colleges, Peterson discovered that the community college participants responded very differently than their four-year counterparts; community college constituents placed much more emphasis on the personal development of the student and on vocational education.

Prior to the California Study, Bushnell (1973) used 25 of the goal statements from a preliminary version of the IGI to conduct a national study of 92 public and private junior and community colleges. The study, sponsored by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, involved 2,500 faculty members, 10,000 students, and 90 presidents. Bushnell (1973) reported that there was “a high degree of consensus among community and junior college administrators, faculty, and students on the major goals to be served by their colleges” (p. 63). However, the main priority for each constituent group was different. The faculty pointed to issues around student development as their main concern. The presidents felt that community education should be the top priority, and students were more interested in open access and financial aid. Bushnell noted a significant difference in these findings compared to the findings of Gross and Grambsch (1968). Overall, student development seemed to be a much higher

priority for two-year institutions than for four-year institutions where faculty development and faculty satisfaction played a more substantial role.

The IGI was used at multiple institutions throughout the 1970s to help colleges understand the beliefs of their constituents concerning institutional goals. Brevard Community College in Florida used the IGI in 1974 to allow stakeholders to express their beliefs about the college's goals to administrators. The study indicated that administrators, faculty, and students agreed on the top three perceived and preferred goals—Academic Development, Vocational Education, and Community (Brevard Community College, 1974). A study by Mossman (1976) at Yavapai Community College in Arizona produced similar results. The researcher surveyed 88 faculty members using the IGI and discover that Vocational Preparation was the number one perceived and preferred goal of the faculty. Academic Development tied for the top spot for perceived goals but ranked fifth among the preferred goals. Bers (1975) conducted a study at Oaktown Community College in Illinois, surveying 98 faculty and 13 administrators. The number one perceived goal was Individual Personal Development, and the top two preferred goals were Community and Vocational Education. As is common in almost all these goal studies, the *should be* goals were ranked higher than the *is* goals, and this speaks to the desire of the respondents to improve the functioning of the institutions.

### **The Community College Goals Inventory**

Continued use of the IGI in the 1970s led researchers at ETS to conclude that there were substantial differences in the goals of community colleges and universities (Doucette, 1983). Therefore, the ETS, the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, and representatives from six community colleges came together to develop a new form of the IGI, the Community College Goals Inventory (CCGI), specifically for use with community colleges

(Coyan, 1985; Doucette, 1983; Fenske, 1980). The format of the CCGI is the same as the format of the IGI. However, the goals that are measured by the inventory are different. The ten outcome goals for the CCGI are General Education, Intellectual Orientation, Lifelong Learning, Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness, Personal Development, Humanism/Altruism, Vocational/Technical Preparation, Developmental/Remedial Preparation, Community Services, and Social Criticism. The ten process goals are Counseling and Advising, Student Services, Faculty/Staff Development, Intellectual Environment, Innovation, College Community, Freedom, Accessibility, Effective Management, and Accountability (ETS, 1991). Each goal is measured using four goal statements, and participants are asked to decide the extent to which they believe the statement *is* important and *should be* important.

A field test of the new CCGI was conducted by ETS in 1979, and the results were reported by Cross in 1981. The inventory was distributed to 18 community colleges throughout the country. Respondents included 1,500 faculty, administrators, and trustees as well as 200 community members and 3,000 full- and part-time students. The results show Vocational/Technical Preparation and General Education as the top perceived goals for all constituencies. All groups believed that Developmental/Remedial Preparation should be more important than it is. Each constituency group had a different top *should be* goal. Faculty ranked Community as the highest *should be* goal while giving it very low *is* scores. Students ranked Personal Development and Counseling/Advising as their top preferred goals. Administrators indicated that Effective Management was their highest ranked *should be* goal, and trustees preferred Accountability as the top goal (Cross, 1981). One of the lowest rankings among all groups on the perceived and the preferred scales was Innovation, leading Cross (1981) to

speculate that after decades of progress, community colleges were on a plateau and needed a new direction.

Cross and Fideler (1989) followed up the field test with a report which compared the administration of the CCGI in 1985 at ten community colleges with the 1979 results, focusing only on administrators. They found that the top three *is* goals remained the same—General Education, Vocational/Technical Education, and Accessibility. There were no major changes in the preferred goals of administrators; the top six goals remained the same with minor changes in the order. General Education moved up to the top spot of preferred goals from the rank of fourth in the 1979 study. The perceived goals that increased significantly between 1979 and 1985 were Developmental/Remedial Education, Lifelong Learning, Community Services, and Faculty/Staff Development. The overall results, though, show that there was very little change in goal priorities of college administrators.

The CCGI has been used in several state studies. Huskey (1988) studied the consonance and dissonance of goal perceptions in Pennsylvania's community colleges by surveying five groups of administrators—presidents, chief academic officers, chief financial officers, chief student affairs officers, chief community service officers. The only goal that elicited significantly different responses about current importance was Lifelong Learning, and the only goal that showed a significant difference in preferred importance was Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness. She discovered that there was a high degree of agreement in the overall priority rankings of the goals. Also, the researcher noted that all the goals indicated a significant difference between the *is* score and the *should be* score, with the *should be* score higher each time.

Fitch (1989) conducted a study of Wyoming community colleges using the CCGI after the state legislature created a state governing board for the community colleges in the state. He

distributed the instrument to all administrators, professional support staff, and members of the local boards for all seven of Wyoming's community colleges. The results showed significant differences in the perceived and preferred scores of all twenty goals. The researcher also found that size was a contributing factor to goal importance. The smaller colleges had lower *is* scores than the larger colleges, but the smaller colleges had much higher *should be* scores than the larger colleges.

Findt and Sullins (1990) led a study in the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) in order to assist the system in developing a plan to lead the System into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Four groups were surveyed from the 24 community colleges and the state office. The groups include presidents, chief academic officers, local board members, and state office administrators/state board. Five of the goal areas were the top priorities for all groups. Vocational/Technical Preparation was the number one goal for all groups except state administrators for whom it was the second most important goal. The other goals making up the top five were Accessibility, General Education, Accountability, and Developmental/Remedial Education. The inclusion of Accessibility in the top five is different from the findings of Cross (1981) and Cross and Fideler (1989) who found that open door access was no longer a goal priority for community college largely because it had already been achieved. Findt and Sullins (1990) also found that local college boards tended to indicate higher importance for the goals than the other groups, and the state administrators gave lower importance scores to the goals. Overall, the researchers discovered that there was a high level of agreement in the rank order of goals by all groups, and this was an unexpected outcome of the study.

A similar study was carried out in Mississippi by Harville-Clayton (2003). During a time of reduced funding, the development of a state online education program, and increased focus on

workforce development, the researcher was hopeful that the results could be used to assist the state in prioritizing its goals for community colleges. The study involved all 15 community colleges in the state, and the inventory was distributed to all local college board members, administrators, and local workforce council members. The top perceived and preferred outcome goals were General Education and Vocational/Technical Preparation, and the top perceived and preferred process goals were Accountability and Effective Management.

Two other state studies that used instruments patterned after the CCGI are worth mentioning. Doucette (1983) developed his own model for identifying the operational mission of colleges, and in his study of Arizona community colleges, he discovered wide gaps between the formal mission of the colleges and the operational missions of the colleges. He did find overwhelming support for the traditional functions of the community college, namely transfer education, general education, and occupational education. He also noted that the constituencies supported those functions that had public benefit more than those with private benefit. Galiazzo's (1990) study used a researcher-developed instrument patterned after the CCGI to determine the perceptions of lawmakers and community college administrators in Maryland. He found widespread agreement between state and local government legislatures and college administrators on the perceived and preferred importance of college goals. Similar to Doucette (1983), the traditional community college functions—General Education, Vocational/Technical Preparation, Lifelong Learning, Accessibility—were ranked high by all groups. However, legislators ranked Accessibility lower than the other groups.

Goal studies such as those described in this literature review and the IGI and CCGI instruments do have their critics. Conrad (1974) asserted that the IGI and the Gross and Grambsch (1968) instruments only measure institutional beliefs, especially when administered to

members of the university. He suggested that institutional beliefs are only one constraint on the goals of institutions, and institutional beliefs alone do not take into account all of the other external factors that determine institutional goals. Fenske (1980) and Doucette et al. (1985) acknowledged that descriptive studies employing instruments such as the IGI and CCGI only give participants passive input into making decisions for the institution, and the scholars encouraged the use of additional techniques for assisting institutions about what goals are best for the institution in terms of funding, politics, and other external realities. Here, it is important to note that these critics have not suggested that the IGI and CCGI are not useful instruments. Instead, they seem to indicate that they should not be the only instruments used in goal and effectiveness planning for institutions. The researcher agrees and suggests that these instruments can be used as a starting point for understanding and analyzing goal priorities among the constituents of institutions. Even in his critique of descriptive goal studies, Fenske (1980) pointed out that a fruitful exercise for institutions and systems would be to focus on those areas where major discrepancies exist between the *is* score and the *should be* score of goal importance. Cross (1981) concurred. She suggests that an appropriate function of administrators should be to alleviate the major discrepancies between the perceived and preferred goal priorities of college stakeholders.

### **Summary**

This literature review has highlighted three lines of inquiry—the goal model of organizational effectiveness, the functions of the community college, and goal studies in higher education—in order to provide a rationale and frame for the current study. Within the conceptual framework of the goal model of organizational effectiveness, it is recognized that identifying and understanding goals is essential for organizational existence (Cyert & March, 1963; Richman &

Farmer, 1974). Richman and Farmer (1974) noted that goals serve as the logical path forward for an organization, providing operable actions for the members of the organization. Fenske (1980) argued that for higher education, the institutional goals are already accepted by society, and the tension that exists in goal identification is actually tension caused by goal prioritization. Especially when an organization has multiple, competing goals and goals that can be displaced easily, the priorities of the goals in the goal mix is a determining factor in organizational effectiveness (Birnbaum, 1988; Gross & Grambsch, 1968).

When internal and environmental changes occur for an organization, the organization should evaluate and consider changing or refining its goals (Bess & Dee, 2012). According to Nevarez and Wood (2010), in order to conduct a meaningful goals analysis, information about how individuals in the organization perceive the goals would prove useful. A goals analysis should engage the goal-setting coalitions within an organization described by Richards (1978), including the executive coalition, the expert coalition, the bureaucratic coalition, and the politicized coalition. For community colleges, those coalitions correspond to the president and upper-level administrators (executive coalition), the faculty (the expert coalition), administrators (bureaucratic coalition), and other staff (politicize coalition). These groups are the individuals targeted in this study.

Evaluations of the functions of the community college show, that almost from the time of its inception, the institution has had to deal with multiple goals that vie for priority status. Since its beginning as an extension of high schools designed to prepare students for entrance into four-year institutions, community colleges have added a multitude of functions throughout the decades (Vaughan, 2006). Occupational education, developmental education, adult basic education, community service, workforce development, and economic development are just a

few of the functions that have been added to the expected roles of the nation's community college as they remain open-door, low-cost options for many individuals (Cohen et al., 2014). The attempt to remain an open access avenue for education while becoming a comprehensive community college with multiple missions is a risk-reward relationship. Desai (2012) declares that the reward is the ability to increase educational opportunities for individuals while the risk is the difficulty in maintaining effectiveness in the face of an ever-growing number of mission goals. Adherence to the "all things to all people" mantra strains financial and human resources (Breneman & Nelson, 1981; Dougherty & Townsend, 2006; Phelan, 2014). Therefore, community colleges are required to make strategic choices about which goals to prioritize (Nevarez & Wood, 2010).

In order to assist in developing goal priorities for institutions, numerous scholars have conducted studies to determine the perceived and preferred goal mix of institutional constituencies. The first empirical goal study of its kind, the Gross and Grambsch (1968) study focused on four-year doctoral universities, but it became the foundation for future goal studies in higher education (Doucette et al., 1985). In addition, the Gross and Grambsch (1968) study was the first to categorize goals as output or support goals. One of the first subsequent instruments used to study goals in higher education was the Institutional Goals Inventory (IGI) (Peterson & Uhl, 1977). Like the Gross and Grambsch (1968) study, the participants using the IGI responded to goal statements by indicating the current and preferred level of importance of the goal. After multiple administrations of the IGI to various institutions, ETS realized that the goals of community colleges were sufficiently different from other institutions that the development of a separate instrument was warranted (Doucette, 1983).

The Community College Goals Inventory (CCGI) was developed by ETS in collaboration with the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges and representatives from various community colleges around the country (Coyan, 1985). Following the format of the IGI, the CCGI used goal statements that were specific to the community college form. Since its debut in 1979, the CCGI has been used to analyze goal priorities and goal importance in numerous institutions and states (Coyan, 1985; Cross, 1981; Cross & Fideler, 1989; Findt & Sullins, 1990; Fitch, 1989; Harville-Clayton, 2003; Huskey, 1988).

This study attempts to fill in gaps in the scholarly literature related to goal priorities in the community college, in general, and the Alabama Community College System in particular. As was emphasized in the review of the ever-evolving functions of community colleges, the community college is perpetually attempting to find the balance between the core, vertical, and horizontal activities of its comprehensive mission (Bailey & Morest, 2003). This is presumably true in Alabama, but there is no current empirical evidence of how colleges are trying to balance those priorities. In fact, after thoroughly reviewing the literature, the researcher did not find any instances of a state study of the goals of the community colleges in Alabama. Nevarez and Wood (2010) as well as Amey (2017) noted that goal priorities must constantly be evaluated in order for a community college to be effective, and since any study of the perceptions of goal priorities is time bound (Peterson & Uhl, 1977), such studies should be conducted regularly. In addition, none of the state studies of community college goals included faculty in the analysis. Therefore, this present study seeks to continue the tradition of goal studies in higher education, using the CCGI, in order to understand the goal mix of the Alabama Community College System by surveying college administrators, college staff, college faculty, and system office administrators.

## CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to understand the goal priorities of individuals involved in strategic planning in community colleges and the extent to which individuals with different roles and in different locations agree on those priorities. The focus of the study was delimited to the colleges and administrators of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS). The study examined the congruence and dissonance of the perceptions of goal priorities among the strategic planners in the ACCS colleges and the executive staff of the ACCS Office. This chapter describes the methods that were used to conduct the study, and it is divided into five parts. The first four sections describe the rationale for the research approach, the research design, the research questions, and the institutional and participant populations used in the study. The next sections describe the instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis, and the chapter concludes with discussions about confidentiality and security of the research data and researcher positionality.

### **Rationale for Research Approach**

I subscribe to a postpositivist worldview, and the current study was shaped by this paradigm. According to Creswell (2013), the postpositivist worldview is associated with being “reductionistic, logical, empirical, cause-and-effect oriented, and deterministic based on *a priori* theories” (p. 24). Postpositivism revises the paradigm of positivism by addressing one of the major criticisms of positivism: the belief that reality and truth can be fully known through

observation (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Like Mertens (2005) and Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009), the researcher believes that an objective reality does exist but that it can only be known imperfectly. Similarly, postpositivism recognizes that there is a *probability* that causes lead to effects and outcomes, but those effects and outcomes cannot be certain (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Mertens, 2005). The inability to identify an objective reality and a perfect truth is the result of the imperfections of the investigator and any observations made by that investigator (Mertens, 2005). Postpositivist researchers, including me, believe that one of the shortcomings of observations is the observer's bias, which while being undesirable is also inevitable. For this, the researcher should be diligent in detecting and correcting any biases (Mertens, 2005).

Currently, quantitative methods are much more common than qualitative methods within the framework of postpositivism (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Mertens, 2005). Quantitative strategies of inquiry are divided into two groups, experimental designs and non-experimental designs, both of which use observations, surveys, and types of quantifiable records for data collection (Creswell, 2009).

### **Research Design**

One of the types of non-experimental, quantitative research designs described by Mertler (2018) is descriptive research. He described descriptive research as a study of “the phenomenon of interest *as it exists naturally*” (p. 111) without any attempt to manipulate people, environments, or procedures (Mertler, 2018). One of the principal means of conducting descriptive research is through the use of surveys (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Mertler, 2018). Surveys are a particular type of research tool that provides quantitative data about opinions, attitudes, perceptions, and trends for both populations and samples of populations (Creswell &

Plano Clark, 2011). In addition, Mertler (2018) noted that survey research can be used to analyze the differences in opinions between subsets of a population.

Based on a postpositivist worldview (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009), the descriptive and comparative nature of the current study, and the desire to ascertain differences in goal perceptions of strategic planners and administrators within the Alabama Community College System, the researcher chose to employ a quantitative, non-experimental survey research design in order to guide the data collection and data analysis of this study. The Community College Goals Inventory (CCGI) developed by Peterson and Uhl at ETS (1991) was utilized to determine the perceived and preferred goals of the ACCS. The CCGI measures attitudes about 20 community college goal areas by asking respondents to describe the current (*is*) level and preferred (*should be*) level of importance of 80 goal statements. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to analyze the data that were collected using the CCGI.

### **Research Questions**

In order to determine the perception of goal priorities among strategic planners in the colleges of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and the executive staff of the ACCS, the following research questions were investigated.

1. What are the aggregated perceptions of goal priorities of all personnel engaged in strategic planning at both the comprehensive colleges and the system office of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS):
  - a. concerning current (*is*) community college goals?
  - b. concerning preferred (*should be*) community college goals?

2. In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, between the comprehensive colleges of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and the ACCS Office:
  - a. based on the perceived importance of current (*is*) community college goals?
  - b. based on the preferred (*should be*) importance of community college goals?
3. In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, by participant role:
  - a. based on the perceived importance of current (*is*) community college goals?
  - b. based on the preferred (*should be*) importance of community college goals?
4. In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, by college size:
  - a. based on the perceived importance of current (*is*) community college goals?
  - b. based on the preferred (*should be*) importance of community college goals?
5. In what ways do the discrepancies between the perceptions of current (*is*) college goals and preferred (*should be*) college goals differ, if at all, for the comprehensive colleges of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and the ACCS Office?
6. In what ways do the discrepancies between the perceptions of current (*is*) college goals and preferred (*should be*) college goals differ, if at all, for each participant role?
7. In what ways do the discrepancies between the perceptions of current (*is*) college goals and preferred (*should be*) college goals differ, if at all, for each size category of college?
8. To what extent does the Community College Goals Inventory continue to be a reliable and valid instrument for evaluating the goal priorities of community colleges?

## **Institutional and Participant Populations**

The study was conducted within the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and focused on strategic planners in ACCS colleges and the executive staff of the ACCS Office. The state system of community colleges was founded in 1963, and the system was managed by the Alabama State Board of Education until 2015 when the Alabama legislature created the ACCS Board of Trustees to oversee the system as a separate state agency (Cason, 2015). Currently, there are 24 institutions that make up the ACCS, including 21 community colleges, two technical colleges (one exclusively serving incarcerated adults), and one two-year military institute. Since the purpose of this study was to distinguish goal priorities within a context of comprehensiveness, only the 21 comprehensive community colleges in the ACCS were included in this study. The colleges with their locations and sizes according to the 2018 Carnegie Classification (National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.-b) are listed in Table 1.

The participants in the group of strategic planners from each college were identified in one of three ways: 1) the college's current strategic plan, with committee members identified, was found on the college's website, 2) the strategic planning committee, or its equivalent, was listed on the college's website, or 3) the president of the institution was contacted and asked to provide the names of individuals involved with strategic planning at the college. The strategic planners at each institution were asked to self-report membership in one of the following categories: administrators, faculty, or staff. For the purposes of this study, "administrators" are defined as the president, the chief academic officer, the chief student affairs officer, and the chief financial officer. This classification corresponds with Richards' (1978) description of the

Table 1

*Comprehensive Community Colleges of the Alabama Community College System*

College	Location	Size
Bevill State Community College	Jasper, AL	Medium
Bishop State Community College	Mobile, AL	Medium
Central Alabama Community College	Alexander City, AL	Small
Chattahoochee Valley Community College	Phenix City, AL	Small
Coastal Alabama Community College	Bay Minette, AL	Large
Drake State Technical and Community College	Huntsville, AL	Very Small
Enterprise State Community College	Enterprise, AL	Small
Gadsden State Community College	Gadsden, AL	Medium
George C. Wallace Community College	Dothan, AL	Medium
George Corley Wallace Community College	Selma, AL	Small
Jefferson State Community College	Birmingham, AL	Medium
John C. Calhoun Community College	Tanner, AL	Large
Lawson State Community College	Birmingham, AL	Medium
Lurleen B. Wallace Community College	Andalusia, AL	Small
Northeast Alabama Community College	Rainsville, AL	Small
Northwest-Shoals Community College	Muscle Shoals, AL	Medium
Shelton State Community College	Tuscaloosa, AL	Medium
Snead State Community College	Boaz, AL	Small
Southern Union State Community College	Wadley, AL	Medium
Trenholm State Community College	Montgomery, AL	Small
Wallace State Community College	Hanceville, AL	Medium

Note: From the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, no date.  
(<https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data>)

executive goal-setting coalition. “Faculty” are defined as those individuals who consider instruction as their primary duty at the institution. This group corresponds to Richards’ (1978) depiction of the expert goal-setting coalition. He suggested that the expert coalition is made up of individuals with the technical expertise of the institution. These faculty involved in strategic planning, and therefore goal setting, are crucial to creating a culture of shared governance (Kater, 2017; Magloire, 2019; Nevarez & Wood, 2010). Finally, in the context of this study, the category of “staff” is used to describe other individuals involved in the strategic planning process who are not captured in the other two groups. This category corresponds to Richards’ (1978) description

of the bureaucratic goal-setting coalition, or those individuals who have administrative power in the organization. Table 2 includes the number of strategic planners in each group disaggregated by college.

Table 2

*Population Size of Administrators, Faculty, and Staff from each College*

College	Administrators	Faculty	Staff	Total
Bevill State Community College	4	14	20	38
Bishop State Community College	4	7	14	25
Central Alabama Community College	4	5	12	21
Chattahoochee Valley Community College	4	7	4	15
Coastal Alabama Community College	4	1	14	19
Drake State Technical and Community College	4	5	9	18
Enterprise State Community College	4	6	5	15
Gadsden State Community College	4	7	12	23
George C. Wallace Community College (Dothan)	4	4	7	15
George Corley Wallace Community College (Selma)	4	4	10	18
Jefferson State Community College	4	3	20	27
John C. Calhoun Community College	4	22	31	57
Lawson State Community College	4	18	22	44
Lurleen B. Wallace Community College	4	4	4	12
Northeast Alabama Community College	4	6	20	30
Northwest-Shoals Community College	4	7	12	23
Shelton State Community College	4	11	18	33
Snead State Community College	4	7	10	21
Southern Union State Community College	4	12	18	34
Trenholm State Community College	4	6	13	23
Wallace State Community College (Hanceville)	4	28	12	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>555</b>

The participants in the group of administrators from the ACCS Office included the executive staff of the system, i.e., all employees with the title of director and above. These individuals serve in roles with the responsibility of crafting and interpreting Board of Trustees policies, creating procedures to address aspects of the policies, and overseeing the implementation of ACCS initiatives in the local colleges. Table 3 lists the titles of the 29 members of the ACCS executive staff.

Table 3

*Members of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) Office Executive Staff*

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Title
Chancellor
Vice Chancellor, System Development and ACCS Chief of Staff
Executive Director of External Affairs
Director of Special Projects and System Initiatives
Vice Chancellor, Administrative and Financial Services
Executive Director, Fiscal Services
Director of Facilities
Director of Compliance
Director of Human Resources
Chief Information Officer
Deputy Chief Information Officer
Vice Chancellor, Teaching and Learning
Interim Associate Vice Chancellor, Teaching and Learning
Director of Academic Affairs (researcher, not included in the study)
Director of Career and Technical Education
Director of Health Programs
Interim Vice Chancellor, Student Success
Associate Vice Chancellor, Teaching and Learning
State Director of Strategic Projects
Executive Director, Research, Grants, and Development
Director of Organizational Effectiveness and Research
Director of Virtual Programs
Director of Correctional and Post-Correctional Education Services
Vice Chancellor for Workforce and Economic Development
Executive Director of Workforce and Economic Development
Regional Director of Workforce and Economic Development
Regional Workforce Director
Interim Regional Director (I) for Adult Education and GED Testing Program
Interim Regional Director (II) for Adult Education and GED Testing Program

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From Alabama Community College System. (2019). Staff directory. Retrieved from <https://www.accs.edu/contact/staff-directory/>

Table 4 lists the groups and population numbers of individuals who were asked to participate in the study. The groups listed in the table encompass the total population of strategic planners in the Alabama Community College System and the executive staff of the ACCS office. Since the entire population of strategic planners was invited to participate in the study, realizing that there would most likely not be a 100% response rate, Table 3 also includes the sample size needed to indicate a representative sample of the population according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

Table 4

*Population and Suggested Sample Sizes of All Groups in the Study*

Group	<i>N</i>	<i>n</i>
Administrators	84	69
Faculty	184	125
Staff	287	165
ACCS Office Executive Staff	28	27
Total Participants	583	232

### **Instrumentation**

The instrument that was used to collect data in this research is the Community College Goals Inventory (CCGI) published by ETS in 1979. The researcher obtained permission from ETS to use the Community College Goals Inventory (CCGI) in this study (Appendix A). The CCGI was developed as an outgrowth of Peterson's (1973) Institutional Goals Inventory (IGI). Prior to the development of the IGI, the few instruments that were used to study goals in higher education were institution-specific (Gross & Grambsch, 1968; Medsker, 1960). The IGI was unique in that it could be used for all types of postsecondary institutions. The higher education goals that were measured with the IGI were gleaned from previous empirical studies, statements from college and university associations, board of higher education, and statements of education

advocates (Peterson & Uhl, 1977). After the use of the IGI became widespread, it became evident that the goals of community colleges were very different from those of four-year institutions (Cross, 1981). Therefore, Peterson and Uhl partnered with the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges to develop an inventory specifically for community colleges. The work of a six-person taskforce made up of representatives from community colleges resulted in the Community College Goals Inventory (Huskey, 1988). The CCGI measures the perceived current and preferred levels of importance of community college goals, and it can be used to help colleges determine their goals and establish priorities among those various goals (Cross, 1981; Cross & Fideler, 1989). The goal statements used in the survey are appropriate for use at both the institutional and the system levels without adaptation (Cross, 1981; Peterson & Uhl, 1977).

The CCGI is used to collect data about 20 goal areas associated with the community college, and these goal areas are divided into two categories—outcome goals and process goals. Outcome goals refer to the objectives that colleges seek to achieve, and process goals refer to objectives for the college environment and for the process of education. These process goals are often defined as the procedures or practices necessary for the college to reach the outcome goals (Cross, 1981; Peterson & Uhl, 1977). In order to measure the importance of the goals, the original inventory asked each participant to respond to 90 goal statements. Eighty of the goal statements relate directly to the 20 goal areas that are assessed, with four statements measured per goal area. The ten extra goal statements in the original inventory were deemed sufficiently important by Peterson and Uhl (1977) to include in the survey but miscellaneous enough not to be included within any one of the 20 goal areas. Because of the disparate nature of these ten extra statements, they were not included in the survey for this study.

Each of the 90 goal statements elicits two responses, the present, perceived (*is*) importance of the goal statement and the preferred (*should be*) importance of the goal statement. Each *is* and *should be* response is measured on a five-point Likert-type scale with the following levels:

- 5—of extremely high importance
- 4—of high importance
- 3—of medium importance
- 2—of low importance
- 1—of no importance or not applicable

The mean of the scores of each of the four statements that correspond to each goal area is calculated in order to determine the level of importance for each of the 20 goals.

The 20 goal areas, with their definitions and corresponding question numbers (in parentheses) from the 1991 form of the survey, are quoted below from the Community College Goals Inventory Profile Chart, Form No. 5720846-Y44P.1-241841 (ETS, 1991).

#### Outcome Goals

1. General Education—Has to do with acquisition of general knowledge, achievement of some level of basic competencies, preparation of students for further, more advanced work, and the acquisition of skills and knowledge to live effectively in society (1,4,6,9)
2. Intellectual Orientation—Relates to an attitude about learning and intellectual work. It means familiarity with research and problem-solving methods, the desire and ability for self-directed learning, the ability to synthesize knowledge from many sources, and an openness to new ideas and ways of thinking (2,5,7,10)
3. Lifelong Learning—Means providing courses to community adults so they can pursue a variety of interests, instilling in students a commitment to lifetime of learning, providing learning opportunities to adults of all ages, and awarding degree credit for knowledge and skills acquired in non-school settings (3,8,11,13)
4. Developmental/Remedial Preparation—Includes recognizing, assessing, and counseling students with basic skills needs, providing developmental programs that recognize different learning styles and rates, assuring that students in developmental programs achieve appropriate levels of competence, and evaluation basic skills programs (27,31,32,41)
5. Community Services—Is concerned with the college's relationship with the community: encouraging community use of college resources (meeting rooms, computer facilities, faculty skills), conducting community forums on topical issues, promoting cooperation among diverse community organizations to

- improve availability of services, and working with local government agencies, industry, unions, and other groups on community problems (28,34,35,37)
6. Vocational/Technical Preparation—Means offering specific occupational curricula (such as bookkeeping, computer science, or cosmetology), programs geared to emerging career fields, opportunities for upgrading or updating present job skills, and retraining for new careers or new job skills (26,30,36,38)
  7. Personal Development—Means identification by students of personal goals and the development of ways of achieving them, enhancement of feelings of self-worth, self-confidence, and self-direction, and encouragement of open and honest relationships (15,18,21,24)
  8. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness—Entails a heightened appreciation of a variety of art forms, encouraging study in the humanities and art beyond requirements, exposure to non-Western art and literature, and encouragement of student participation in artistic activities (14,17,20,23)
  9. Humanism/Altruism—Reflects a respect for diverse cultures, a commitment to working for peace in world, an understanding of the important moral issues of the time, and concern about the general welfare of the community (16,19,22,25)
  10. Social Criticism—Means providing critical evaluation of current values and practices, serving as a source of ideas to change social institutions, helping students learn how to bring about change in our institutions, and being engaged, as an institution, in working for needed changes in our society (29,33,39,40)

#### Process Goals

11. Counseling and Advising—Means providing career counseling services, personal counseling services, and academic advising services for students and providing a student job-placement service (44,47,50,51)
12. Student Services—Means developing support services for students with special needs, providing comprehensive student activities program, providing comprehensive advice about financial aid sources, and making available health services that offer health maintenance, preventive medicine, and referral services (42,45,48,52)
13. Faculty/Staff Development—Entails commitment of college resources to provide opportunities and activities for professional development of faculty and staff, appropriate faculty evaluation to improve teaching, and flexible leave and sabbatical opportunities for faculty and staff (43,46,49,53)
14. Intellectual Environment—Means a rich program of cultural events, a college climate that encourages student free-time involvement in intellectual and cultural activities, and one in which students and faculty can easily interact informally, and a college that has a reputation in the community as an intellectually exciting place (54,57,60,63)
15. Innovation—Is defined as a climate in which continuous educational innovation is an accepted way of life. It means established procedures for readily initiating curricular or instructional innovations, and, more specifically, it means experimentation with new approaches to individualized instruction and to evaluating and grading student performance (55,58,61,64)

16. College Community—Is defined as fostering a climate in which there is faculty and staff commitment to the goals of the college, open and candid communication, open and amicable airing of differences, and mutual trust and respect among faculty, students, and administrators (56,59,62,65)
17. Freedom—Has to do with protecting the right of faculty to present controversial ideas in the classroom, not preventing students from hearing controversial points of view, placing no restrictions on off-campus political activities by faculty or students, and ensuring faculty and students the freedom to choose their own lifestyles (66,69,73,76)
18. Accessibility—Means maintaining costs to students at a level that will not deny attendance because of financial need, offering programs that accommodate adults in the community, recruiting students who have been denied, have not valued, or have not been successful in formal education, and, with a policy of open admission, developing worthwhile educational experiences for all those admitted (67,70,74,77)
19. Effective Management—Means involving those with appropriate expertise in making decisions, achieving general consensus regarding fundamental college goals, being organized for systematic short- and long-range planning, and engaging in systematic evaluation of all college programs (68,72,75,78)
20. Accountability—Is defined to include consideration of benefits in relation to costs in deciding among alternative programs, concern for the efficiency of college operations, accountability to funding sources for program effectiveness, and regular provision of evidence that the college is meeting its stated goals (79,81,83,87)

In addition to the goal statements, the CCGI allows for the collection of demographic data in order to disaggregate the data by different groups.

It has been demonstrated that the CCGI is a reliable and valid instrument. The reliability of an instrument refers to the extent to which the instrument is accurate and consistent, yielding similar results after it has been administered multiple times (Salkind, 2003). The reliability of the CCGI was established using Cronbach's alpha measure of internal consistency during a national field test conducted in 1979 and reported by Cross (1981). It is generally accepted that a minimum Cronbach's alpha coefficient to establish instrument reliability in the social sciences is .70 (Mertler, 2018). The reliability coefficient for the CCGI ranges between .66 and .87 on the *is* scale and between .62 and .85 on the *should be* scale for the original field test of 18 community

colleges (Cross, 1981). The researcher for this study calculated the reliability coefficients for each of the 20 goal areas, and the results are reported in Chapter IV.

The validity of an instrument refers to the concept that an instrument actually measures the constructs for which it was designed to measure and is often described in three ways, content validity, criterion-related validity, and construct validity (Salkind, 2003). Since this study is designed to be descriptive and the CCGI was not designed to be predictive, criterion-related validity is not a concern for this study, Peterson and Uhl (1977) demonstrated that the CCGI does possess both content and construct validity. Content validity requires that the goals areas measured by the CCGI represent the goal areas that are important to community colleges and that the statements are a representative sample of the elements of the goals as they are commonly understood by community college stakeholders. Peterson and Uhl (1977) worked with community college researchers and practitioners from the American Association of Junior Colleges to write and refine goal areas and goal statements based on a scan of scholarly literature as well as their collective experience in community colleges. Salkind (2003) described construct validity as the extent to which the survey measures the constructs that it is designed to measure. For the CCGI, this means that the responses to the present and preferred importance of goal statements actually measure the importance of the 20 goal areas. In order to establish construct validity, Peterson and Uhl (1977) used results of piloted administrations of the survey to compare results with institutional data, to compare the goal profiles of different constituent groups, and to compare the goal profiles of different community colleges. In addition, numerous scholars, practitioners, and researchers report the applicability of the CCGI in determining goal priorities for strategic planning and self-study in community colleges (Cross, 1981; Cross & Fideler, 1989; Fitch, 1989; Harville-Clayton, 2003; Huskey, 1988; Peterson & Uhl, 1977).

## **Data Collection**

After submitting the research proposal and gaining approval from the Alabama Community College System (ACCS), the proposal was submitted and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Alabama. Appendix B contains the IRB approval from the University of Alabama. Using Qualtrics®, an electronic survey software, as the platform for conducting the survey, the 80 questions associated with the 20 goal areas of the CCGI were transferred from its paper form to an electronic form using the Qualtrics® tool. The survey, printed from the Qualtrics® site, can be found in Appendix C.

An invitation email, found in Appendix D, was sent to all members of the population requesting that they participate in the survey. The invitation email included an explanation of the study, the benefits of participating in the study, and an offer to email the completed study to participants. The invitation email also included a pdf attachment, found in Appendix E, which contained the informed consent information. The email notified the participants that they would spend between 20 and 30 minutes completing the survey. In addition, the email contained a link by which participants would access the survey. Once the participants selected the survey link, they saw the informed consent notice and could agree to participate. The survey, including the informed consent request, can be found in Appendix B. After two weeks, a follow-up email was sent to the participants asking them to complete the survey if they had not already done so. This email can be found in Appendix E. One week later, a last reminder email was sent to the participants, and the text of this email can be found in Appendix F.

Once the participants started the survey and agreed to continue after reading the informed consent information, they were asked to complete two demographic questions: The first was the participant role category to which they belonged (ACCS Office staff, administrator, faculty,

staff). Each of the groups were defined so that participants could easily determine the appropriate response. Then, the participants were asked to identify the size of their institutions (small, medium, large) based on a chart containing the name of the ACCS comprehensive community colleges identified with the size of the college. Next, the participants were asked to mark the current (*is*) importance and the preferred (*should be*) importance of 80 goal statements. The last question on the survey asked participants to list any missions, goals, or functions of a community college that were not included in the scope of the 80 goal statements. The survey ended with a statement thanking the participants for responding to the survey and directing them to send any questions to the researcher.

### **Data Analysis and Presentation**

This study has eight research questions. The research questions and a description of how the data were analyzed follows.

#### **Research Question 1a**

*What are the aggregated perceptions of goal priorities of all personnel engaged in strategic planning at both the comprehensive colleges and the system office of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) concerning current (is) community college goals?*

For each participant, the researcher calculated the mean for each of the 20 goal areas by calculating the mean of the scores reported for each of the four *is* goal statements per goal area. Then, a grand mean (mean of the means) and standard deviation were calculated for all each of the 20 goal areas. The 20 goal areas were then assigned a rank, first through 20<sup>th</sup>, based on the grand mean, with first being the highest grand mean and 20<sup>th</sup> being the lowest grand mean. This ranking indicated the relative perceived current priority of each goal area.

### **Research Question 1b**

*What are the aggregated perceptions of goal priorities of all personnel engaged in strategic planning at both the comprehensive colleges and the system office of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) concerning preferred (should be) community college goals?*

For each participant, the mean for each of the 20 goal areas was calculating by averaging the scores reported for each of the four *should be* goal statements per goal area. Then, a grand mean (mean of the means) and standard deviation were calculated for each of the 20 goal areas. The 20 goal areas were then assigned a rank, first through 20<sup>th</sup>, based on the grand mean, with first being the highest grand mean and 20<sup>th</sup> being the lowest grand mean. This ranking indicates the relative preferred priority of each goal area.

### **Research Question 2a**

*In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, between the comprehensive colleges of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and the ACCS Office based on the perceived importance of current (is) community college goals?*

The participants were divided according to their locations (ACCS colleges vs. the ACCS Office). Using the individual means calculated in the analysis of Research Question 1a for the *is* goal statements, a grand mean (mean of the means) and standard deviation were calculated for the participants from the ACCS Colleges and reported for each of the 20 goal areas. The 20 goal areas were then assigned a rank, first through 20<sup>th</sup>, based on the grand mean, with first being the highest grand mean and 20<sup>th</sup> being the lowest grand mean. Similarly, the grand means, standard deviations, and rankings were determined for the participants from the ACCS Office. These rankings indicated the relative priority of each goal area based on perceived current importance.

In order to determine the extent to which the two groups (ACCS Colleges and ACCS Office) agreed on the rankings of the goal areas, the researcher utilized Kendall's tau-b. Kendall's tau-b is a nonparametric measure of association or agreement of the ranks of two groups of ordinal data (Sheskin, 2007). The degree of agreement between the two groups of rankings is determined according to the relative ordering of all possible pairs of rankers/objects, and each pair of ranks is considered to be either concordant or discordant. In the data set for this question, for example, a pair of ranks is concordant if the sign of the difference in rank numbers between two goal areas for the group of colleges is the same sign as the difference in rank numbers between two goal areas for the ACCS Office. According to Sheskin (2007), the value of Kendall's tau-b, ranging from -1 to +1, "will equal +1 when there is complete agreement among the rankings (i.e., all of the pairs of ranks are concordant) and will equal -1 when there is complete disagreement among the rankings (i.e., all of the pairs of ranks are discordant)" (p. 1372). A value of zero (0) indicates no association. Kendall's tau-b is calculated using the following equation:

$$\tau = \frac{n_c - n_d}{\binom{n(n-1)}{2}} \quad (1)$$

In the equation,  $n_c$  represents the number of concordant pairs of ranks,  $n_d$  is the number of discordant pairs of ranks, and  $n$  is the total number of possible pairs of ranks (Sheskin, 2007). Kendall's tau-b was reported using a standard correlation table identifying the value of Kendall's tau-b, the significance, and the number of objects. The statistic provided the researcher with data to describe how closely the ACCS Colleges and the ACCS Office ranked the goal areas by perceived current importance.

## **Research Question 2b**

*In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, between the comprehensive colleges of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and the ACCS Office based on the perceived importance of preferred (should be) community college goals?*

The participants were divided according to their locations (the ACCS Colleges vs. the ACCS Office). Using the individual means calculated in the analysis of Research Question 1b for the *should be* goal statements, a grand mean (mean of the means) and standard deviation were calculated for the participants from the ACCS Colleges and reported for each of the 20 goal areas. The 20 goal areas were then assigned a rank, first through 20<sup>th</sup>, based on the grand mean, with first being the highest grand mean and 20<sup>th</sup> being the lowest grand mean. Similarly, the grand means, standard deviations, and rankings were determined for the participants from the ACCS Office. These ranking indicated the relative preferred priority of each goal area based on preferred importance.

In order to determine the extent to which the two groups (the ACCS Colleges and the ACCS Office) agreed on the rankings of the goal areas, Kendall's tau-b, as described in the discussion of Research Question 2a, was utilized. Kendall's tau-b was reported using a standard correlation table identifying the value of Kendall's tau-b, the significance, and the number of objects. The statistic provided the researcher with data to describe how closely the ACCS Colleges and the ACCS Office ranked the goal areas by preferred importance.

## **Research Question 3a**

*In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, by participant role based on the perceived importance of current (is) community college goals?*

The participants were divided according to their role (ACCS Office Staff, College Administrator, College Faculty, or College Staff). Using the individual means described in the discussion of Research Question 1a for the *is* goal statements, a grand mean (mean of the means) and standard deviation were calculated for the participants according to each role and reported for each of the 20 goal areas. The 20 goal areas were then assigned a rank, first through 20<sup>th</sup>, based on the grand mean, with first being the highest grand mean and 20<sup>th</sup> being the lowest grand mean. This ranking was accomplished for each participant role. These rankings indicated the relative priority of each goal area based on perceived current importance.

In order to determine the extent to which the four groups (ACCS Office Staff, College Administrator, College Faculty, or College Staff) agreed on the rankings of the goal areas, Kendall's *W* was utilized by the researcher. Kendall's *W*, an extension of Kendall's tau-b, is recommended as a nonparametric measure of association or agreement of the ranks of more than two groups (Siebert & Siebert, 2018). The statistic allows researchers to analyze the level of agreement between *m* sets of ranks for *n* items or subjects (Sheskin, 2007). Kendall's *W* ranges from 0 (no similarity) to 1 (total similarity) (Siebert & Siebert, 2018), and according to Sheskin (2007), "the coefficient of concordance is a ratio of the variance of the sums of the ranks for the subjects divided by the maximum possible value which can be computed for the variance of the sums of the ranks" (p. 1389).

Kendall's *W* is calculated using the equations that are described below (Sheskin, 2007). First, the sum of the ranks for each object (in this study, each goal area) must be calculated, and the total sum of all ranks is calculated (*T*). Then, the sum of the square of each total of ranks is calculated (*U*). Next, the variance of the sum of rank values (*S*) is computed using (2).

$$S = \frac{nU - T^2}{n} \quad (2)$$

The variable  $n$  is the number of objects ranked. Then, Kendall's  $W$  is calculated using (3).

$$W = \frac{S}{\left(\frac{m^2 n(n^2-1)}{12}\right)} \quad (3)$$

In the formula for Kendall's  $W$ ,  $n$  is the number of objects ranked, and  $m$  represents the number of judges. Kendall's  $W$  was reported using a standard correlation table identifying the value of Kendall's  $W$ , the significance, and the number of objects. The statistic provided the researcher with data to describe how closely each group ranked the goal areas based on perceived current importance.

### **Research Question 3b**

*In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, by participant role based on the preferred (should be) importance of community college goals?*

The participants were divided according to their roles (ACCS Office Staff, College Administrator, College Faculty, or College Staff). Using the individual means described in the discussion of Research Question 1b for the *should be* goal statements, a grand mean (mean of the means) and standard deviation were calculated for the participants according to each role and reported for each of the 20 goal areas. The 20 goal areas were then assigned a rank, first through 20<sup>th</sup>, based on the grand mean, with first being the highest grand mean and 20<sup>th</sup> being the lowest grand mean. This ranking was accomplished for each participant role. These rankings indicated the relative priority of each goal area based on preferred importance.

In order to determine the extent to which the four groups (ACCS Office Staff, College Administrator, College Faculty, or College Staff) agreed on the rankings of the goal areas, the researcher utilized Kendall's  $W$  as described in the discussion of Research Question 3a.

Kendall's  $W$  was reported using a standard correlation table identifying the value of Kendall's  $W$ ,

the significance, and the number of objects. The statistic provided the researcher with data to describe how closely the groups ranked the goal areas by preferred importance.

#### **Research Question 4a**

*In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, by college size based on the perceived importance of current (is) community college goals?*

The participants were divided according to the size of their college (Small, Medium, Large). Using the individual means described in the discussion of Research Question 1a for the *is* goal statements, a grand mean (mean of the means) and standard deviation were calculated for the participants according to college size and reported for each of the 20 goal areas. The 20 goal areas were then assigned a rank, first through 20<sup>th</sup>, based on the grand mean, with first being the highest grand mean and 20<sup>th</sup> being the lowest grand mean. This ranking was accomplished for each college size. These rankings indicated the relative perceived priority of each goal area based on perceived current importance.

In order to determine the extent to which the three groups (Small, Medium, and Large Colleges) agree on the rankings of the goal areas, Kendall's *W*, as described in the discussion of Research Question 3a, was utilized. Kendall's *W* was reported using a standard correlation table identifying the value of Kendall's *W*, the significance, and the number of objects. The statistic provided the researcher with data to describe how closely the groups based on college size rank the goal areas by perceived current importance.

#### **Research Question 4b**

*In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, by college size based on the perceived importance of preferred (should be) community college goals?*

The participants were divided according to the size of their college (small, medium, large). Using the individual means described in the discussion of Research Question 1b for the *should be* goal statements, a grand mean (mean of the means) and standard deviation were calculated for the participants according to college size and reported for each of the 20 goal areas. The 20 goal areas were then assigned a rank, first through 20<sup>th</sup>, based on the grand mean, with first being the highest grand mean and 20<sup>th</sup> being the lowest grand mean. This ranking was accomplished for each college size. These rankings indicated the relative priority of each goal area based on preferred importance.

In order to determine the extent to which the three groups (Small, Medium, and Large Colleges) agreed on the rankings of the goal areas, the researcher used Kendall's *W* as described in the discussion of Research Question 3a. Kendall's *W* was reported using a standard correlation table identifying the value of Kendall's *W*, the significance, and the number of objects. The statistic provided the researcher with data to describe how closely the groups ranked the goal areas by preferred importance.

### **Research Question 5**

*In what ways do the discrepancies between the perceptions of current (is) college goals and preferred (should be) college goals differ, if at all, for the comprehensive colleges of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and the ACCS Office?*

The participants were divided according to their locations (the ACCS College vs. the ACCS Office). Using the grand means calculated in the analysis of Research Question 2a for the *is* goal statements and the grand means calculated in the analysis of Research Question 2b for the *should be* goal statements, a discrepancy score was calculated by subtracting the *is* grand mean from the *should be* grand mean for each of the goal areas. The 20 goal areas were then assigned a

rank, first through 20<sup>th</sup>, based on the discrepancy score, with first being the highest discrepancy score and 20<sup>th</sup> being the lowest discrepancy score. This ranking was accomplished for both groups.

In order to determine the extent to which the two groups (ACCS Colleges and ACCS Office) agreed on the rankings of the goal areas by discrepancy score, the researcher utilized Kendall's tau-b as described in the discussion of Research Question 2a. Kendall's tau-b was reported using a standard correlation table identifying the value of Kendall's tau-b, the significance, and the number of objects. The statistic provided the researcher with data to describe how closely the ACCS Colleges and the ACCS Office ranked the goal areas according to which areas they believed should be given more importance.

### **Research Question 6**

*In what ways do the discrepancies between the perceptions of current (is) college goals and preferred (should be) college goals differ, if at all, for each participant role?*

The participants were divided according to their roles (ACCS Office Staff, College Administrators, College Faculty, and College Staff). Using the grand means calculated in the analysis of Research Question 3a for the *is* goal statements and the grand means calculated in the analysis of Research Question 3b for the *should be* goal statements, a discrepancy score was calculated by subtracting the *is* grand mean from the *should be* grand mean for each of the goal areas. The 20 goal areas were then assigned a rank, first through 20<sup>th</sup>, based on the discrepancy score, with first being the highest discrepancy score and 20<sup>th</sup> being the lowest discrepancy score. This ranking was accomplished for all four groups.

In order to determine the extent to which the four groups (ACCS Office Staff, ACCS College Administrators, ACCS College Faculty, and ACCS College Staff) agreed on the

rankings of the goal areas by discrepancy score, Kendall's *W*, as described in the discussion of Research Question 3a, was used by the researcher. Kendall's *W* was reported using a standard correlation table identifying the value of Kendall's *W*, the significance, and the number of objects. The statistic provided the researcher with data to describe how closely the groups ranked the goal areas according to which areas they believed should be given more importance.

### **Research Question 7**

*In what ways do the discrepancies between the perceptions of current (is) college goals and preferred (should be) college goals differ, if at all, for each size category of college?*

The participants were divided according to the size of their colleges (Small, Medium, and Large). Using the grand means calculated in the analysis of Research Question 4a for the *is* goal statements and the grand means calculated in the analysis of Research Question 4b for the *should be* goal statements, a discrepancy score was calculated by subtracting the *is* grand mean from the *should be* grand mean for each of the goal areas. The 20 goal areas were then assigned a rank, first through 20<sup>th</sup>, based on the discrepancy score, with first being the highest discrepancy score and 20<sup>th</sup> being the lowest discrepancy score. This ranking was accomplished for all three groups.

In order to determine the extent to which the three groups (Small, Medium, and Large Colleges) agreed on the rankings of the goal areas by discrepancy score, the researcher utilized Kendall's *W* as described in the discussion of Research Question 3a. Kendall's *W* was reported using a standard correlation table identifying the value of Kendall's *W*, the significance, and the number of objects. The statistic provided the researcher with data to describe how closely the groups ranked the goal areas according to which areas they believed should be given more importance.

### **Research Question 8**

*To what extent does the Community College Goals Inventory continue to be a reliable and valid instrument for evaluating the goal priorities of community colleges?*

In order to answer this question, the researcher evaluated the responses to the last survey question (number 81), that asked the participants to list any missions, functions, or goals of community colleges that they believe were not reflected in the goal statements to which they just responded. The suggestions given by participants were categorized according to a goal category into which the suggestion might fit. Then, the goal categories were listed in a table with the number of times that the suggested goal occurred in the answers of all participants. In addition, Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the survey items (Cronbach, 1951). Each goal area construct is made up four goal statements in the survey, and Cronbach's alpha was calculated to determine how closely related the four goal statements are as a group.

Table 5 contains a summary of the analysis of the data.

Table 5

*Data Analysis Summary*

Research Question	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Data Analysis Methods
Research Question 1a: What are the aggregated perceptions of goal priorities of all personnel engaged in strategic planning at both the comprehensive colleges and the system office of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) concerning current ( <i>is</i> ) community college goals?	None	The 20 goal area constructs measured by the survey responses for the current ( <i>is</i> ) importance of the goal statements listed in parentheses:  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. General Education (1,4,6,9)</li> <li>2. Intellectual Orientation (2,5,7,10)</li> <li>3. Lifelong Learning (3,8,11,12)</li> <li>4. Developmental/Remedial Preparation (26,30,31,40)</li> <li>5. Community Services (27,33,34,36)</li> <li>6. Vocational/Technical Preparation (25,29,35,37)</li> <li>7. Personal Development (14,17,20,23)</li> <li>8. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness (13,16,19,22)</li> <li>9. Humanism/Altruism (15,16,21,24)</li> <li>10. Social Criticism (28,32,38,39)</li> <li>11. Counseling and Advising (43,46,49,50)</li> <li>12. Student Services (41,44,47,51)</li> <li>13. Faculty/Staff Development (42,45,48,52)</li> <li>14. Intellectual Environment (53,56,59,62)</li> <li>15. Innovation (54,57,60,63)</li> <li>16. College Community (55,58,61,64)</li> <li>17. Freedom (65,68,71,74)</li> <li>18. Accessibility (66,69,72,75)</li> <li>19. Effective Management (67,70,73,76)</li> <li>20. Accountability (77,78,79,80)</li> </ol>	Grand means and standard deviation of the grand means for each goal area  Ranking, highest to lowest, of the 20 goal areas by grand mean for the current ( <i>is</i> ) importance responses

Research Question	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Data Analysis Methods
<p>Research Question 1b:            What are the aggregated perceptions of goal priorities of all personnel engaged in strategic planning at both the comprehensive colleges and the system office of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) concerning preferred (<i>should be</i>) community college goals?</p>	None	The 20 goal areas measured by the survey responses for the preferred ( <i>should be</i> ) importance of the goal statements listed above in question 1a.	<p>Grand means and standard deviation of the grand means for each goal area</p> <p>Rankings, first to twentieth, of the 20 goal areas by grand mean for the preferred (<i>should be</i>) importance responses</p>
<p>Research Question 2a:            In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, between the comprehensive colleges of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and the ACCS Office based on the perceived importance of current (<i>is</i>) community college goals?</p>	Location (ACCS Colleges, ACCS Office)	<p>The 20 goal areas measured by the survey responses for the current (<i>is</i>) importance of the goal statements listed above in question 1a.</p> <p>Rankings, first to twentieth, of the 20 goal areas by grand mean for the current (<i>is</i>) importance responses for both levels of the independent variable</p>	<p>Grand means and standard deviation of the grand means for each goal area, for both levels of the independent variable</p> <p>Measurement of the level of association between the rankings for both levels of the independent variable using Kendall's tau-b</p>
<p>Research Question 2b:            In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, between the comprehensive colleges of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and the ACCS Office based on the perceived importance of preferred (<i>should be</i>) community college goals?</p>	Location (ACCS Colleges, ACCS Office)	<p>The 20 goal areas measured by the survey responses for the preferred (<i>should be</i>) importance of the goal statements listed above in question 1a.</p> <p>Rankings, first to twentieth, of the 20 goal areas by grand mean for the preferred (<i>should be</i>) importance responses for both levels of the independent variable</p>	<p>Grand means and standard deviation of the grand means for each goal area, for both levels of the independent variable</p> <p>Measurement of the level of association between the rankings for both levels of the independent variable using Kendall's tau-b</p>

Research Question	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Data Analysis Methods
<p>Research Question 3a: In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, by participant role based on the perceived importance of current (<i>is</i>) community college goals?</p>	<p>Participant Role (<i>ACCS Office Staff, ACCS College Administrators, ACCS College Faculty, ACCS College Staff</i>)</p>	<p>The 20 goal areas measured by the survey responses for the current (<i>is</i>) importance of the goal statements listed above in questions 1a.</p> <p>Rankings, first to twentieth, of the 20 goal areas by grand mean for the current (<i>is</i>) importance responses for the four levels of the independent variable</p>	<p>Grand means and standard deviation of the grand means for each goal area, for the 4 levels of the independent variable</p> <p>Measurement of the level of association between the rankings for the four levels of the independent variable using Kendall's <i>W</i></p>
<p>Research Question 3b: In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, by participant role based on the perceived importance of preferred (<i>should be</i>) community college goals?</p>	<p>Participant Role (<i>ACCS Office Staff, ACCS College Administrators, ACCS College Faculty, ACCS College Staff</i>)</p>	<p>The 20 goal areas measured by the survey responses for the preferred (<i>should be</i>) importance of the goal statements listed above in question 1a.</p> <p>Rankings, first to twentieth, of the 20 goal areas by grand mean for the preferred (<i>should be</i>) importance responses for the four levels of the independent variable</p>	<p>Grand means and standard deviation of the grand means for each goal area, for the four levels of the independent variable</p> <p>Measurement of the level of association between the rankings for the four levels of the independent variable using Kendall's <i>W</i></p>

Research Question	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Data Analysis Methods
<p>Research Question 4a: In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, by college size based on the perceived importance of current (<i>is</i>) community college goals?</p>	<p>College Size (<i>Small, Medium, Large</i>)</p>	<p>The 20 goal areas measured by the survey responses for the current (<i>is</i>) importance of the goal statements listed above in questions 1a.</p> <p>Rankings, first to twentieth, of the 20 goal areas by grand mean for the current (<i>is</i>) importance responses for the three levels of the independent variable</p>	<p>Grand means and standard deviation of the grand means for each goal area, for the three levels of the independent variable</p> <p>Measurement of the level of association between the rankings for the three levels of the independent variable using Kendall's <i>W</i></p>
<p>Research Question 4b In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, by college size based on the perceived importance of preferred (<i>should be</i>) community college goals?</p>	<p>College Size (<i>Small, Medium, Large</i>)</p>	<p>The 20 goal areas measured by the survey responses for the preferred (<i>should be</i>) importance of the goal statements listed above in question 1a.</p> <p>Rankings, first to twentieth, of the 20 goal areas by grand mean for the preferred (<i>should be</i>) importance responses for the three levels of the independent variable</p>	<p>Grand means and standard deviation of the grand means for each goal area, for the four levels of the independent variable</p> <p>Measurement of the level of association between the rankings for the three levels of the independent variable using Kendall's <i>W</i></p>

Research Question	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Data Analysis Methods
<p>Research question 5: In what ways do the discrepancies between the perceptions of current (<i>is</i>) college goals and preferred (<i>should be</i>) college goals differ, if at all, for the comprehensive colleges of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and the ACCS Office?</p>	<p>Location (<i>ACCS Colleges, ACCS Office</i>)</p>	<p>The 20 goal areas measured by the survey responses for both the current (<i>is</i>) and the preferred (<i>should be</i>) importance of the goal statements listed above in question 1a.</p>	<p>Discrepancy scores between the grand means for the current (<i>is</i>) importance and the preferred (<i>should be</i>) importance for each goal area</p>
		<p>Rankings, first to twentieth, of the 20 goal areas by discrepancy score for the two levels of the independent variable</p>	<p>Measurement of the level of association between the rankings for both levels of the independent variable using Kendall's tau-b</p>
<p>Research Question 6: In what ways do the discrepancies between the perceptions of current (<i>is</i>) college goals and preferred (<i>should be</i>) college goals differ, if at all, for each participant role?</p>	<p>Participant Role (<i>ACCS Office Staff, ACCS College Administrators, ACCS College Faculty, ACCS College Staff</i>)</p>	<p>The 20 goal areas measured by the survey responses for both the current (<i>is</i>) and the preferred (<i>should be</i>) importance of the goal statements listed above in question 1a.</p>	<p>Discrepancy scores between the grand means for the current (<i>is</i>) importance and the preferred (<i>should be</i>) importance for each goal area</p>
		<p>Rankings, first to twentieth, of the 20 goal areas by discrepancy score for the four levels of the independent variable</p>	<p>Measurement of the level of association between the rankings for the four levels of the independent variable using Kendall's <i>W</i></p>

Research Question	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Data Analysis Methods
<p>Research Question 7: In what ways do the discrepancies between the perceptions of current (<i>is</i>) college goals and preferred (<i>should be</i>) college goals differ, if at all, for each size category of college?</p>	<p>College Size (<i>Small, Medium, Large</i>)</p>	<p>The 20 goal areas measured by the survey responses for both the current (<i>is</i>) and the preferred (<i>should be</i>) importance of the goal statements listed above in question 1a.</p> <p>Rankings, first to twentieth, of the 20 goal areas by discrepancy score for the three levels of the independent variable</p>	<p>Discrepancy scores between the grand means for the current (<i>is</i>) importance and the preferred (<i>should be</i>) importance for each goal area</p> <p>Measurement of the level of association between the rankings for the three levels of the independent variable using Kendall's <i>W</i></p>
<p>Research Question 8: To what extent does the Community College Goals Inventory continue to be a reliable and valid instrument for evaluating the goal priorities of community colleges</p>	<p>The 20 goal areas listed as the dependent variable in question 1a.</p>	<p>Survey Item: Please list any missions, goals, or functions of the modern community college that you believe may not have been represented on this survey.</p> <p>The four goal statements associated with each of the 20 goal area constructs.</p>	<p>Count of the number of responses for each suggested goal</p> <p>Cronbach's alpha</p>

## **Data Confidentiality and Security**

I used the highest ethical standards to complete this study. As such, the research proposal was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Alabama, and the researcher sought approval from the Chief of Staff/Vice Chancellor of System Operations in the Alabama Community College System. Approval was acquired from both groups prior to inviting participants to the study. Participation in the study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to the participant's completion of the study. The informed consent information was included in the opening of the survey instrument and can be found in Appendix E.

A description and explanation of the purpose of the study was provided in the invitation to all study participants so that the participants could make an informed decision about their willingness to participate in the study. The survey participants were given the option of discontinuing their participation in the study at any time while they were completing the online survey. The anonymity of the participants in the study was protected in two important ways. First, the IP address collection feature of Qualtrics® was turned off for this survey. In addition, no personally identifying information (name, college, official job title, department, etc.) was collected.

Data collected from this research was protected in several ways. First, a password was required by Qualtrics® to access the online survey and the survey data, and the survey and the associated data were stored on a secure server by Qualtrics®, the survey system provider utilized by the College of Education at The University of Alabama. The password to access the survey site was not shared with anyone. When the researcher downloaded the data for analysis, the data were stored on UA Box. UA Box provides a secure cloud-based system for file and data storage.

All data were encrypted both in transit and storage and were maintained on domestic servers.

Data were only be available to the researcher and were deleted and destroyed upon completion of the study. Only aggregated, summarized data will be presented at meetings or in publications.

Likewise, no individual responses will be published or provided to any institution.

### **Researcher Positionality**

I have worked in a community-college setting in Alabama for 15 years as a faculty member, an institutional effectiveness and research officer, and now, as director of academic affairs at the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) Office. As a stakeholder who is invested in the goals of community colleges and the ACCS, I acknowledge my personal bias concerning the importance of the goals of community colleges. In addition, I acknowledge that I hold beliefs about which goals of the community college are currently prioritized and which goals should be prioritized. However, even though I am a part of the executive staff of the ACCS Office, I did not complete a survey in this study.

By using quantitative analysis of the data, including descriptive and correlational statistics, the quantitative results should be immune from my preconceived notions. I do realize, though, that there exists the possibility of bias in the interpretation of results, and I have strived to limit this bias in a number of ways. First, the interpretation of results was reviewed and approved by the dissertation committee prior to publication. Second, as noted by Nickerson (1998), simply acknowledging the existence of bias, especially confirmation bias, helped me to become more cautious about making up my mind about the meaning of the results. Finally, Nickerson (1998) suggested that recognizing all conflicting hypotheses early in the study helps to combat bias, and I attempted to design the research in a manner that avoided focus on one type of hypothesis (null or alternative).

## **Summary**

This chapter has provided a description of the methodology that was used for this research study including explanations of the research design, the study population, the instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. The researcher holds a worldview closely associated with postpositivism in which it is believed that reality can be known through empirical means even though observations are often imperfect and outcomes from causes are only probable, not certain (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). This paradigm has informed the design of the study and its use of the Community College Goals Inventory to survey the constituency groups from the Alabama Community College System in order to determine the perceptions of goal priorities in the System. The data collected using the survey instrument are presented using descriptive and inferential statistics in order to answer the research questions proposed in this study.

CHAPTER IV:  
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

**Introduction**

In order to better understand the perception of goal priorities of strategic planners in the modern community college, this chapter presents and describes the results of the present study. The purpose of this quantitative study was to understand the goal priorities of strategic planners and policymakers in the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and the extent to which these different stakeholders agreed on those priorities. Using a conceptual framework based on the goal model of institutional effectiveness (Daft, 1995; Etzioni, 1964; Perrow, 1961; Richman & Farmer, 1974), the researcher sought to understand how stakeholders perceived the importance of different goals of the community college and how the same stakeholders preferred that those goals were prioritized. The researcher also examined how these goals priorities might differ by participant role, namely whether the participant was an ACCS Office employee, a college administrator, a faculty member, or a college staff member. In addition, the differences in goal priorities with regard to the location of the participants (in a college or in the ACCS office) and the size of the participant's college were analyzed. Finally, the researcher attempted to understand if the survey that was used for the study, the Community College Goals Inventory, has remained a valid and reliable instrument for measuring the goal priorities of today's community colleges.

## **Description of the Sample**

The entire population of strategic planners in the comprehensive community colleges of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS), as identified on the colleges' websites or by the college president, were invited to participate in this study. In addition, the entire population of the ACCS Office executive staff (director level or above) were eligible to participate in the study. In total, there were 583 individuals who were identified as part of the study population. These individuals were invited to participate through an email written by me and sent to the potential participants by Qualtrics®, the survey software used in the study. The initial invitation emailed returned 27 emails as undeliverable, and two other potential participants notified me that they would not be participating in the study. Adjusting for the undeliverable emails and the non-participants, there were a total of 554 individuals who were potential participants in the study.

The participants in the study were asked to respond to a survey instrument consisting of a total of 83 questions. The first two questions were demographic questions asking the respondents to identify their role (ACCS Office Staff, College Administrator, College Faculty, or College Staff) and the size of their college, if applicable. The next 80 items, from the Community College Goals Inventory written by Peterson and Uhl (1977), were goal statements that required the respondent to indicate the level of perceived importance at their institution and the level of importance they preferred the goal to have at their institution. These items were measured on a five-point Likert-scale, and four items converged to measure the importance of 20 different goals of the community college. The last item in the survey asked respondents to list any goals, functions, or missions of the modern community college that they believed were not accounted for in the previous 80 items.

The data were exported from Qualtrics® into Microsoft Excel® for data analysis and stored in UA Box. Because any of the four items that make up a given goal construct are randomized throughout the total of 80 items, only the results of entirely completed surveys (with the exception of the last, open-ended question) were downloaded. A total of 157 respondents accessed the instrument in Qualtrics® through the initial and reminder invitation emails during the 40-day open period. Of those 157, 124 submitted a complete survey, resulting in a response rate of 21.3%. Jin (2011), in his meta-analysis of 45 web-based studies, found that typical online response rates fall between 6% and 15%. Even though the response rate for this study is higher than the typical response rate, Pazzaglia, Stafford, and Rodriguez (2016) have warned that a response rate less than 85% could indicate nonresponse bias, potentially causing the conclusions to not be representative of the population. However, Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) recommended that descriptive studies include a minimum of 100 participants. Therefore, despite the low response rate, it is believed that this is an acceptable number of respondents to continue with data analysis.

Tables 6, 7, and 8 summarize the number of participants disaggregated by role, by location, and by college size, respectively. There is a wide variation in the percentage of the population that responded to the survey based on participant role, location, and college size. It appears that College Faculty were underrepresented in the study when compared to the other participants by role in the college. Similarly, the number of participants from the large colleges in the ACCS seems low compared to the response rate from small and medium college. However, the underrepresentation of faculty and participants from large colleges in the study does not negate the importance of the perceptions that were shared. The study, as a descriptive study, is not generalizable to other contexts, thereby alleviating any concern with the variability

in participation of the population. In addition, the statistical tests used in the study, Kendall's tau and Kendall's coefficient of concordance ( $W$ ), are nonparametric tests that do not assume equal sample sizes of each group.

Table 6

*Participants by role*

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>N</i>	%
College Administrators	45	84	53.6%
College Faculty	26	184	14.1%
College Staff	39	287	13.6%
ACCS Office Executive Staff	14	28	50.0%
Total Participants	124	583	21.3%

Table 7

*Participants by location*

Location	<i>n</i>	<i>N</i>	%
ACCS Colleges	110	555	19.8%
ACCS Office	14	28	50.0%
Total Participants	124	583	21.3%

Table 8

*Participants by college size*

Size of the College	<i>n</i>	<i>N</i>	%
Small	43	155	27.7%
Medium	55	324	17.0%
Large	12	76	15.6%
Total College Participants	110	555	19.8%

## Results

This study used the Community College Goals Inventory to determine the goal priorities of strategic planners within the colleges of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and executive members of the ACCS Office staff. The strategic planners in the ACCS Colleges

consisted of college administrators, college faculty members, and college staff members. The results of the study are presented below, organized by research question.

### **Research Question 1a**

*What are the aggregated perceptions of goal priorities of all personnel engaged in strategic planning at both the comprehensive colleges and the system office of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) concerning current (is) community college goals?*

Grand means for each of the 20 goal areas were calculated for all participants. The reported means indicated a perceived level of importance based on the following scale:

- 5—of extremely high importance
- 4—of high importance
- 3—of medium importance
- 2—of low importance
- 1—of no importance or not applicable

These grand means are reported in Table 9. Of the 20 goal areas, participants indicated that two of the goal areas were perceived to be of high to extremely high importance—General Education, with a mean *is* score of 4.13, and Vocational/Technical Preparation, with a mean *is* score of 4.12. The other 18 goal areas fell in the range of 2.00-4.00. None of the goal areas were perceived to be of no importance.

The rankings of the goal areas by grand mean can be found in Table 10. The five goal areas that were perceived to be the most important by all participants, as indicated in the leftmost columns of Table 10, were General Education, Vocational/Technical Preparation, Developmental/Remedial Preparation, Accountability, and Effective Management. The five goal areas that were perceived to be the least important were College Community, Humanism/Altruism, Innovation, Intellectual Environment, Social Criticism, and Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness.

Table 9

*Grand means of perceived current (is) importance and preferred (should be) importance and discrepancy scores for the 20 goal areas for all participants listed by survey goal order*

Goal Area	Mean <i>IS</i>		Mean <i>SHOULD</i> <i>BE</i>		Discrepancy Score
	Score	<i>SD</i>	score	<i>SD</i>	
General Education	4.13	0.67	4.60	0.47	0.47
Intellectual Orientation	3.32	0.78	4.30	0.54	0.98
Lifelong Learning	3.47	0.72	4.24	0.61	0.77
Developmental/Remedial Preparation	3.78	0.79	4.54	0.52	0.76
Community Services	3.24	0.89	4.01	0.72	0.77
Vocational/Technical Preparation	4.12	0.71	4.69	0.40	0.57
Personal Development	3.22	0.88	4.12	0.69	0.90
Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	2.64	0.89	3.33	0.96	0.69
Humanism/Altruism	2.89	0.85	3.95	0.74	1.06
Social Criticism	2.65	0.92	3.40	0.97	0.75
Counseling and Advising	3.32	0.92	4.39	0.62	1.07
Student Services	3.25	0.67	4.13	0.62	0.88
Faculty/Staff Development	3.25	0.86	4.30	0.52	1.05
Intellectual Environment	2.86	0.97	3.97	0.78	1.11
Innovation	2.88	0.93	4.00	0.67	1.12
College Community	2.97	1.00	4.48	0.54	1.51
Freedom	3.08	0.94	3.60	0.84	0.52
Accessibility	3.49	0.90	4.20	0.70	0.71
Effective Management	3.54	0.98	4.51	0.56	0.97
Accountability	3.74	0.98	4.46	0.61	0.72

Table 10

*Goal areas listed in order of mean perceived current (is) importance and preferred (should be) importance for all participants*

Goal Area	Mean <i>IS</i> Score	Goal Area	Mean <i>SHOULD</i> <i>BE</i> score
1. General Education	4.13	1. Vocational/Technical Preparation	4.69
2. Vocational/Technical Preparation	4.12	2. General Education	4.60
3. Developmental/Remedial Preparation	3.78	3. Developmental/Remedial Preparation	4.54
4. Accountability	3.74	4. Effective Management	4.51
5. Effective Management	3.54	5. College Community	4.48
6. Accessibility	3.49	6. Accountability	4.46
7. Lifelong Learning	3.47	7. Counseling and Advising	4.39
8. Intellectual Orientation	3.32	8. Intellectual Orientation	4.30
9. Counseling and Advising	3.32	9. Faculty/Staff Development	4.30
10. Student Services	3.25	10. Lifelong Learning	4.24
11. Faculty/Staff Development	3.25	11. Accessibility	4.20
12. Community Services	3.24	12. Student Services	4.13
13. Personal Development	3.22	13. Personal Development	4.12
14. Freedom	3.08	14. Community Services	4.01
15. College Community	2.97	15. Innovation	4.00
16. Humanism/Altruism	2.89	16. Intellectual Environment	3.97
17. Innovation	2.88	17. Humanism/Altruism	3.95
18. Intellectual Environment	2.86	18. Freedom	3.60
19. Social Criticism	2.65	19. Social Criticism	3.40
20. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	2.64	20. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	3.33

**Research Question 1b**

*What are the aggregated perceptions of goal priorities of all personnel engaged in strategic planning at both the comprehensive colleges and the system office of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) concerning preferred (should be) community college goals?*

The preferred (*should be*) level of importance for each of the 20 goal areas for all participants are listed in Table 9. All means for preferred (*should be*) importance are above 3.00, indicating that participants believe that all goals should rise to the level of “of medium importance” or higher. The ranking of the goal areas by preferred (*should be*) importance can be found on the right side of Table 10. The five goal areas that respondents preferred to be the most important were Vocational/Technical Preparation, General Education, Developmental/Remedial

Preparation, Effective Management, and College Community, in that order. The five goal areas ranking the lowest in terms of preferred importance were Intellectual Environment, Humanism/Altruism, Freedom, Social Criticism, and Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness. The discrepancy scores, indicated in the last column of Table 9, indicate the differences in the means for preferred (*should be*) importance and the means for the perceived current (*is*) importance. Five of the goal areas have discrepancy scores that are 1.00 or above, and these goal areas are College Community, Innovation, Intellectual Environment, Humanism/Altruism, and Faculty/Staff Development. The discrepancy score of 1.00 or higher denotes that the participants preferred that those goals have at least a level of importance higher than the current importance.

### **Research Question 2a**

*In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, between the comprehensive colleges of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and the ACCS Office based on the perceived importance of current (is) community college goals?*

Grand means related to the perceived current (*is*) importance of the 20 goal areas disaggregated by location (the ACCS Office and the ACCS Colleges) are listed in Table 11. For respondents at the ACCS Office none of the goal areas were perceived to be of high importance or of extremely high importance, i.e., none of the grand means were equal to or higher than 4.00. However, respondents at the ACCS Colleges perceived both General Education and Vocational/Technical Preparation to be very important with grand means higher than 4.00.

The rankings of the 20 goal areas by grand mean can be found in Table 12. The rankings based on the current (*is*) importance are listed on the left side of the table. Using SPSS® to calculate Kendall's tau-b, the rankings of priority of goals based on perceived current (*is*) importance for the ACCS Office and the ACCS Colleges were analyzed for concordance.

Kendall's tau-b is a nonparametric test for the correlation between two groups of rankings. The value of Kendall's tau-b can range from -1.00 (complete disagreement in rankings) to +1.00 (complete agreement in ranking) with 0 representing no association at all. The researcher found a positive and strong correlation between the two sets of rankings,  $\tau_b = .76, p = .00$ . Results are reported in Table 13.

As listed in Table 12, the respondents from the ACCS Office ranked the following goal areas as the five most important: Vocational/Technical Preparation, General Education, Developmental/Remedial Preparation, Accountability, and Counseling and Advising. The top five goal areas for the ACCS Colleges were General Education, Vocational/Technical Preparation, Developmental/Remedial Preparation, Accountability and Effective Management. The five lowest ranked goals in terms of current importance were the same for both groups, albeit in different orders. These goal areas were Humanism/Altruism, Intellectual Environment, Innovation, Social Criticism, and Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness.

Table 11

*Grand means of perceived current (is) importance and preferred (should be) importance for the 20 goal areas disaggregated by location*

Goal Area	ACCS Office				ACCS Colleges			
	Mean <i>IS</i> Score	<i>SD</i>	Mean <i>SHOULD BE</i> score	<i>SD</i>	Mean <i>IS</i> Score	<i>SD</i>	Mean <i>SHOULD BE</i> score	<i>SD</i>
General Education	3.66	0.77	4.45	0.53	4.19	0.64	4.62	0.47
Intellectual Orientation	2.95	0.63	4.04	0.56	3.37	0.78	4.33	0.53
Lifelong Learning	3.05	0.79	4.09	0.66	3.53	0.69	4.26	0.60
Developmental/Remedial Prep	3.38	0.89	4.45	0.57	3.83	0.77	4.55	0.51
Community Services	2.82	0.94	3.82	0.96	3.29	0.87	4.03	0.68
Vocational/Technical Prep	3.73	0.91	4.59	0.47	4.17	0.67	4.70	0.40
Personal Development	2.86	1.14	3.96	0.58	3.27	0.84	4.14	0.70
Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	2.20	0.77	2.89	0.90	2.70	0.90	3.39	0.95
Humanism/Altruism	2.64	0.92	3.88	0.75	2.92	0.84	3.96	0.74
Social Criticism	2.27	0.85	3.13	1.05	2.70	0.92	3.43	0.96
Counseling and Advising	3.20	1.02	4.34	0.82	3.33	0.91	4.40	0.59
Student Services	3.13	0.86	4.07	0.59	3.27	0.64	4.13	0.63
Faculty/Staff Development	2.98	1.05	4.25	0.51	3.28	0.83	4.30	0.53
Intellectual Environment	2.50	1.03	3.55	0.86	2.90	0.96	4.02	0.76
Innovation	2.48	1.06	3.91	0.52	2.93	0.90	4.01	0.69
College Community	2.70	1.11	4.29	0.73	3.01	0.98	4.50	0.51
Freedom	2.71	0.83	2.95	0.64	3.13	0.94	3.69	0.82
Accessibility	3.02	0.97	4.27	0.64	3.55	0.88	4.19	0.71
Effective Management	2.88	0.99	4.18	0.68	3.63	0.95	4.55	0.53
Accountability	3.20	1.05	4.34	0.62	3.81	0.95	4.48	0.60

Table 12

*Goal areas listed in order of mean perceived current (is) importance by location and goal areas listed in order of mean current (is) and mean preferred (should be) importance by location*

Goal Area Ranks for Mean IS Score		Goal Area Ranks for Mean SHOULD BE Score	
ACCS Office	ACCS Colleges	ACCS Office	ACCS Colleges
1 Vocational/Technical Prep	1 General Education	1 Vocational/Technical Prep	1 Vocational/Technical Prep
2 General Education	2 Vocational/Technical Prep	2 General Education (tie)	2 General Education
3 Developmental/Remedial Prep	3 Developmental/Remedial Prep	2 Developmental/Remedial Prep (tie)	3 Effective Management
4 Accountability (tie)	4 Accountability	4 Accountability (tie)	4 Developmental/Remedial Prep
4 Counseling and Advising (tie)	5 Effective Management	4 Counseling and Advising (tie)	5 College Community
6 Student Services	6 Accessibility	6 College Community	6 Accountability
7 Lifelong Learning	7 Lifelong Learning	7 Accessibility	7 Counseling and Advising
8 Accessibility	8 Intellectual Orientation	8 Faculty/Staff Development	8 Intellectual Orientation
9 Faculty/Staff Development	9 Counseling and Advising	9 Effective Management	9 Faculty/Staff Development
10 Intellectual Orientation	10 Community Services	10 Lifelong Learning	10 Lifelong Learning
11 Effective Management	11 Faculty/Staff Development	11 Student Services	11 Accessibility
12 Personal Development	12 Personal Development	12 Intellectual Orientation	12 Personal Development
13 Community Services	13 Student Services	13 Personal Development	13 Student Services
14 Freedom	14 Freedom	14 Innovation	14 Community Services
15 College Community	15 College Community	15 Humanism/Altruism	15 Intellectual Environment
16 Humanism/Altruism	16 Innovation	16 Community Services	16 Innovation
17 Intellectual Environment	17 Humanism/Altruism	17 Intellectual Environment	17 Humanism/Altruism
18 Innovation	18 Intellectual Environment	18 Social Criticism	18 Freedom
19 Social Criticism	19 Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	19 Freedom	19 Social Criticism
20 Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	20 Social Criticism	20 Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	20 Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness

Table 13

*Results of Kendall's tau-b test for rankings of perceived current (is) importance of the 20 goal areas by location*

			ACCS IS	Colleges IS
Kendall's tau-b	ACCS_IS	Correlation Coefficient	1.00	.76
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.00
		N	20	20
	Colleges_IS	Correlation Coefficient	.76	1.00
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.
		N	20	20

**Research Question 2b**

*In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, between the comprehensive colleges of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and the ACCS Office based on the perceived importance of preferred (should be) community college goals?*

Grand means related to the preferred (*should be*) importance of the 20 goal areas disaggregated by location (the ACCS Office and the ACCS Colleges) are listed in Table 11. There were only two goal areas with grand means lower than 3.00 for the ACCS Office respondents, indicating less than preferred medium importance. These two goal areas were Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness and Freedom. ACCS Office respondents indicated that their preference was for 12 of the 20 goal areas to be very important or higher. For the ACCS Colleges, there were no goal areas that had grand means less than 3.00. This indicates that respondents from the colleges preferred that all 20 goals areas should have medium importance or higher. There were only four goal areas that respondents from the ACCS Colleges did not prefer to be of high importance. These goals were Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness, Humanism/Altruism, Social Criticism, and Freedom.

The priority rankings of the 20 goal areas by grand mean based on preferred (*should be*) importance can be found on the right side of Table 12. Like the rankings based on perceived current importance, Kendall's tau-b was calculated using SPSS® in order to determine the level of concordance between the two groups of priority rankings based on the preferred (*should be*) importance of goals for the ACCS Office and the ACCS Colleges. There was a positive and strong correlation between the two sets of rankings,  $\tau_b = .78, p = .00$ . Results are reported in Table 14.

As listed in Table 12, the five goals indicated by ACCS Office respondents as having the highest preferred (*should be*) importance did not change from the top five goals for the perceived current (*is*) importance. These top five goal areas were Vocational/Technical Preparation, General Education, Developmental/Remedial Preparation, Accountability, and Counseling and Advising. For the ACCS College respondents the top five goals by preferred (*should be*) importance were Vocational/Technical Preparation, General Education, Effective Management, Developmental/Remedial Preparation, and College Community. The bottom five goals for the ACCS Office respondents were Community Services, Intellectual Environment, Social Criticism, Freedom, and Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness. For the ACCS College respondents, the bottom three goals were the same as the bottom three for the ACCS Office—Social Criticism, Freedom, and Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness. The other two goal areas that make up the bottom five for the ACCS College respondents were Innovation and Humanism/Altruism.

Table 14

*Results of Kendall's tau-b test for rankings of preferred (should be) importance of the 20 goal areas by location*

			ACCS SB	Colleges SB
Kendall's tau-b	ACCS_SB	Correlation Coefficient	1.00	.78
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.00
		<i>N</i>	20	20
	Colleges_SB	Correlation Coefficient	.78	1.00
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.
		<i>N</i>	20	20

### Research Question 3a

*In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, by participant role based on the perceived importance of current (is) community college goals?*

Grand means related to the perceived current (*is*) importance of the 20 goal areas disaggregated by respondent role (ACCS Office Staff, College Administrators, College Faculty, and College Staff) are listed in Table 15. As described in the results for Research Question 2a, none of the goal areas were perceived to be of high importance or of extremely high importance for the ACCS Office Staff. The other three groups indicated a level of importance for General Education and Vocational/Technical Preparation at the very important to extremely important level, and even though the ACCS Office Staff ranked Vocational/Technical Preparation and General Education as the two goals with the highest current (*is*) importance, these goals still fell below the grand mean of 4.00 (3.73 and 3.66, respectively). In addition, the College Staff respondents gave the goal area of Accountability a score of 4.01, indicating a very high current importance.

The rankings of the 20 goal areas by mean perceived current (*is*) importance can be found in Table 16. Using SPSS® to calculate Kendall's coefficient of concordance, or Kendall's *W*, the

four groups of priority rankings based on the current (*is*) importance of goals for the ACCS Office Staff, the ACCS College Administrators, the ACCS College Faculty, and the ACCS College Staff were analyzed for concordance. Kendall's *W* is a nonparametric test for the correlation between more than two groups of rankings. The value of Kendall's *W* can range from 0 (complete disagreement in rankings) to +1 (complete agreement in rankings). Results are reported in Table 17. There was a strong level of concordance among the four sets of rankings,  $W = .93, p = .00$ .

For each group, four of the same goal areas fell into the top five goals ranked by current importance. These goals were Vocational/Technical Preparation, General Education, Developmental/Remedial Preparation, and Accountability. The other goal area in the top five was different for each group. For the ACCS Office Staff the different goal was Counseling and Advising, for the College Administrators it was Lifelong Learning, for the College Faculty it was Accessibility, and for the College Staff it was Effective Management. For the goals that were deemed to be the least important, three of the groups had the same five goals. The ACCS Office Staff, College Administrators, and College Staff all perceived the following goals to be the least important: Humanism/Altruism, Intellectual Environment, Innovation, Social Criticism, and Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness. The College Faculty, reported in column three of Table 16, also included Innovation, Social Criticism, and Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness in the least important goals at their institutions, but they also put Freedom and College Community in that group. It is important to note that Freedom and College Community were the next lowest ranked goals for the other three groups.

Table 15

*Grand means of perceived current (is) importance and preferred (should be) importance for the 20 goal areas disaggregated by participant role*

Goal Area	ACCS Office Staff				College Administrators			
	Mean		Mean		Mean		Mean	
	<i>IS</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SHOULD</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>IS</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SHOULD</i>	<i>SD</i>
	Score		Score		Score		Score	
General Education	3.66	0.77	4.45	0.53	4.23	0.54	4.61	0.45
Intellectual Orientation	2.95	0.63	4.04	0.56	3.51	0.68	4.31	0.51
Lifelong Learning	3.05	0.79	4.09	0.66	3.56	0.68	4.28	0.67
Developmental/Remedial Prep	3.38	0.89	4.45	0.57	3.72	0.78	4.52	0.55
Community Services	2.82	0.94	3.82	0.96	3.07	0.85	3.88	0.74
Vocational/Technical Prep	3.73	0.91	4.59	0.47	4.03	0.67	4.67	0.42
Personal Development	2.86	1.14	3.96	0.58	3.21	0.78	4.05	0.72
Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	2.20	0.77	2.89	0.90	2.64	0.83	3.22	0.87
Humanism/Altruism	2.64	0.92	3.88	0.75	2.88	0.81	3.91	0.75
Social Criticism	2.27	0.85	3.13	1.05	2.53	0.90	3.24	0.95
Counseling and Advising	3.20	1.02	4.34	0.82	3.20	0.95	4.32	0.67
Student Services	3.13	0.86	4.07	0.59	3.25	0.70	4.11	0.63
Faculty/Staff Development	2.98	1.05	4.25	0.51	3.22	0.89	4.24	0.54
Intellectual Environment	2.50	1.03	3.55	0.86	2.84	0.96	3.91	0.85
Innovation	2.48	1.06	3.91	0.52	2.97	0.97	4.01	0.75
College Community	2.70	1.11	4.29	0.73	3.07	0.95	4.47	0.57
Freedom	2.71	0.83	2.95	0.64	3.14	0.94	3.60	0.91
Accessibility	3.02	0.97	4.27	0.64	3.41	0.90	4.13	0.78
Effective Management	2.88	0.99	4.18	0.68	3.54	0.92	4.45	0.59
Accountability	3.20	1.05	4.34	0.62	3.72	0.85	4.41	0.64

Goal Area	College Faculty				College Staff			
	Mean		Mean		Mean		Mean	
	<i>IS</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SHOULD</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>IS</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SHOULD</i>	<i>SD</i>
	Score		Score		Score		Score	
General Education	4.05	0.86	4.68	0.40	4.23	0.58	4.60	0.52
Intellectual Orientation	3.26	0.88	4.42	0.55	3.27	0.81	4.29	0.55
Lifelong Learning	3.51	0.71	4.25	0.51	3.50	0.71	4.24	0.60
Developmental/Remedial Prep	3.90	0.77	4.54	0.47	3.90	0.76	4.59	0.51
Community Services	3.47	0.93	4.20	0.62	3.43	0.81	4.09	0.63
Vocational/Technical Prep	4.22	0.77	4.64	0.49	4.29	0.60	4.78	0.28
Personal Development	3.42	0.88	4.21	0.71	3.23	0.89	4.20	0.67
Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	2.79	0.94	3.73	0.88	2.70	0.96	3.35	1.05
Humanism/Altruism	3.05	0.92	4.17	0.72	2.89	0.83	3.88	0.74
Social Criticism	2.87	1.04	3.64	0.85	2.79	0.86	3.51	1.03
Counseling and Advising	3.50	0.92	4.45	0.65	3.38	0.86	4.46	0.46
Student Services	3.24	0.70	4.27	0.68	3.30	0.54	4.07	0.59
Faculty/Staff Development	3.31	0.84	4.43	0.49	3.35	0.76	4.29	0.52
Intellectual Environment	3.01	1.15	4.24	0.58	2.90	0.82	4.01	0.74
Innovation	2.88	1.00	3.98	0.73	2.91	0.76	4.03	0.60
College Community	2.79	1.28	4.64	0.38	3.09	0.77	4.44	0.52
Freedom	3.00	1.10	3.81	0.69	3.19	0.84	3.71	0.81
Accessibility	3.54	0.83	4.21	0.65	3.72	0.89	4.25	0.66
Effective Management	3.49	1.16	4.54	0.55	3.82	0.82	4.69	0.41
Accountability	3.64	1.16	4.38	0.67	4.01	0.90	4.63	0.50

Table 16

*Goal areas listed in order of mean perceived current (is) importance by participant role*

Goal Area Ranks for Mean IS Score			
ACCS Office Staff	College Administrators	College Faculty	College Staff
1. Vocational/Technical Prep	1. General Education	1. Vocational/Technical Prep	1. Vocational/Technical Prep
2. General Education	2. Vocational/Technical Prep	2. General Education	2. General Education
3. Developmental/Remedial Prep	3. Developmental/Remedial Prep (tie)	3. Developmental/Remedial Prep	3. Accountability
4. Accountability (tie)	3. Accountability (tie)	4. Accountability	4. Developmental/Remedial Prep
4. Counseling and Advising (tie)	5. Lifelong Learning	5. Accessibility	5. Effective Management
6. Student Services	6. Effective Management	6. Lifelong Learning	6. Accessibility
7. Lifelong Learning	7. Intellectual Orientation	7. Counseling and Advising	7. Lifelong Learning
8. Accessibility	8. Accessibility	8. Effective Management	8. Community Services
9. Faculty/Staff Development	9. Student Services	9. Community Services	9. Counseling and Advising
10. Intellectual Orientation	10. Faculty/Staff Development	10. Personal Development	10. Faculty/Staff Development
11. Effective Management	11. Personal Development	11. Faculty/Staff Development	11. Student Services
12. Personal Development	12. Counseling and Advising	12. Intellectual Orientation	12. Intellectual Orientation
13. Community Services	13. Freedom	13. Student Services	13. Personal Development
14. Freedom	14. Community Services (tie)	14. Humanism/Altruism	14. Freedom
15. College Community	14. College Community (tie)	15. Intellectual Environment	15. College Community
16. Humanism/Altruism	16. Innovation	16. Freedom	16. Innovation
17. Intellectual Environment	17. Humanism/Altruism	17. Innovation	17. Intellectual Environment
18. Innovation	18. Intellectual Environment	18. Social Criticism	18. Humanism/Altruism
19. Social Criticism	19. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	19. College Community (tie)	19. Social Criticism
20. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	20. Social Criticism	19. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness (tie)	20. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness

Table 17

*Results of Kendall's W test for rankings of perceived current (is) importance of the 20 goal areas by participant role*

<i>N</i>	4
Kendall's <i>W</i>	.93
Chi-Square	70.73
<i>df</i>	19
Asymp Sig.	.000

**Research Question 3b**

*In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, by participant role based on the preferred (should be) importance of community college goals?*

Grand means related to the preferred (*should be*) importance of the 20 goal areas disaggregated by respondent role (ACCS Office Staff, College Administrators, College Faculty, and College Staff) are listed in Table 15. Based on the grand means, the ACCS Office Staff respondents indicated that they preferred that two goals, Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness and Freedom, fall at the level between medium and low importance. The other groups did not have any goal areas that fell below the grand mean of 3.00, indicating that they preferred that all goals should be of medium importance or higher.

In order to measure the level of agreement between the rankings of the goal areas by preferred importance for all four groups, SPSS® was used to calculate Kendall's *W*, the coefficient of concordance. Table 19 contains the test statistics. There was a strong level of concordance among the rankings of the goals for the four groups,  $W = .94, p = .00$ .

The rankings of the 20 goal areas by mean preferred (*should be*) importance can be found in Table 18. Three goals were included in the top five of the goals ranked by preferred importance for all four groups. These were Vocational/Technical Preparation, General Education, and Developmental/Remedial Preparation. Rounding out the top five for the ACCS

Office were Accountability and Counseling and Advising. The other two goals in the top five of the rankings for College Administrators were College Community and Effective Management. For College Faculty, the top five goals are completed with College Community and Effective Management. Finally, the remaining goals in the top five for the College Staff group were Effective Management and Accountability, as reported in the last column of Table 18.

The least preferred goal areas according to level of importance also have commonalities among the four groups. All four groups include three areas in their bottom five—Social Criticism, Freedom, and Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness. The ACCS Office included Community Services and Intellectual Environment in the bottom five. College Administrators considered Humanism/Altruism (tie), Intellectual Environment (tie), and Community Services to be in the group of five goals with the lowest priority. The list of bottom five goals were rounded out with Humanism/Altruism and Innovation for the College Faculty. The College Staff ranked Intellectual Environment and Humanism/Altruism in the bottom five.

Table 18

*Goal areas listed in order of mean preferred (should be) importance by participant role*

Goal Area Ranks for Mean SHOULD BE Scores			
ACCS Office Staff	College Administrators	College Faculty	College Staff
1. Vocational/Technical Prep	1. Vocational/Technical Prep	1. General Education	1. Vocational/Technical Prep
2. General Education (tie)	2. General Education	2. Vocational/Technical Prep (tie)	2. Effective Management
2. Developmental/Remedial Prep (tie)	3. Developmental/Remedial Prep	2. College Community (tie)	3. Accountability
4. Accountability (tie)	4. College Community	4. Developmental/Remedial Prep	4. General Education
4. Counseling and Advising (tie)	5. Effective Management	5. Effective Management	5. Developmental/Remedial Prep
6. College Community	6. Accountability	6. Counseling and Advising	6. Counseling and Advising
7. Accessibility	7. Counseling and Advising	7. Faculty/Staff Development	7. College Community
8. Faculty/Staff Development	8. Intellectual Orientation	8. Intellectual Orientation	8. Faculty/Staff Development (tie)
9. Effective Management	9. Lifelong Learning	9. Accountability	8. Intellectual Orientation (tie)
10. Lifelong Learning	10. Faculty/Staff Development	10. Student Services	10. Accessibility
11. Student Services	11. Accessibility	11. Lifelong Learning	11. Lifelong Learning
12. Intellectual Orientation	12. Student Services	12. Intellectual Environment	12. Personal Development
13. Personal Development	13. Personal Development	13. Accessibility (tie)	13. Community Services
14. Innovation	14. Innovation	13. Personal Development (tie)	14. Student Services
15. Humanism/Altruism	15. Intellectual Environment (tie)	15. Community Services	15. Innovation
16. Community Services	15. Humanism/Altruism (tie)	16. Humanism/Altruism	16. Intellectual Environment
17. Intellectual Environment	17. Community Services	17. Innovation	17. Humanism/Altruism
18. Social Criticism	18. Freedom	18. Freedom	18. Freedom
19. Freedom	19. Social Criticism	19. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	19. Social Criticism
20. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	20. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	20. Social Criticism	20. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness

Table 19

*Results of Kendall's W test for rankings of preferred (should be) importance of the 20 goal areas by participant role*

<i>N</i>	4
Kendall's <i>W</i>	.94
Chi-Square	71.59
<i>df</i>	19
Asymp Sig.	.000

**Research Question 4a**

*In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, by college size based on the perceived importance of current (is) community college goals?*

Grand means related to the perceived current (*is*) importance of the 20 goal areas disaggregated by college size (Small, Medium, and Large) are listed in Table 20. For all three groups, General Education and Vocational/Technical Preparation were the only two goals corresponding to perceived current levels of importance at very important or above (4.00 or higher). The Small Colleges group included five goal areas that were considered to be of less than medium importance, i.e., with grand means less than 3.00. In contrast, the Medium Colleges group only had three goals with a grand mean less than 3.00, and the Large Colleges only had two goals that had grand means less than 3.00. These data indicated that the Small Colleges and Medium Colleges generally ranked more goal areas lower in terms of perceived importance than the Large Colleges.

The rankings of the 20 goal areas by grand means for each group of college sizes can be found in Table 21. SPSS® was used to calculate Kendall's coefficient of concordance, or Kendall's *W*, in order to determine the level of agreement between the rankings of the three

groups. Results are reported in Table 22. There was a strong level of concordance among the three sets of rankings,  $W = .91, p = .00$ .

According to the rankings in the top half of Table 21, all three groups included three of the goal areas in the top five when ranked by grand mean of perceived current (*is*) importance. These common goal areas were General Education, Vocational/Technical Preparation, and Developmental/Remedial Preparation. Both the Small Colleges and the Medium Colleges also ranked Accountability and Effective Management in the top five most important current goals. The Large Colleges included Lifelong Learning and Intellectual Orientation in the top five most important current goals. Each of the groups had three goal areas in common in their least important goals. These were Intellectual Environment, Innovation, and Social Criticism. The Small Colleges and the Medium Colleges ranked Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness as the least important current goal. College Community was ranked as one of the lowest goal areas for Large Colleges.

#### **Research Question 4b**

*In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, by college size based on the perceived importance of preferred (should be) community college goals?*

Grand means related to the preferred (*should be*) importance of the 20 goal areas disaggregated by college size (Small, Medium, and Large) are listed in Table 20. All three groups indicated a level of preferred importance at a level of medium importance or higher for all goal areas. At least 15 of the goal areas for each size group had a grand mean of 4.00 or higher, indicating a preferred importance of very important or more.

Table 20

*Grand means of perceived current (is) importance and preferred (should be) importance for the 20 goal areas disaggregated by college size*

Goal Area	Small Colleges				Medium Colleges				Large Colleges			
	Mean		Mean		Mean		Mean		Mean		Mean	
	<i>IS</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SHOULD</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>IS</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SHOULD</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>IS</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SHOULD</i>	<i>SD</i>
General Education	4.19	0.61	4.64	0.43	4.19	0.68	4.64	0.45	4.21	0.60	4.48	0.65
Intellectual Orientation	3.26	0.68	4.33	0.51	3.38	0.83	4.32	0.56	3.69	0.89	4.42	0.48
Lifelong Learning	3.51	0.67	4.30	0.54	3.49	0.71	4.20	0.62	3.73	0.73	4.38	0.74
Developmental/Remedial Prep	3.87	0.78	4.59	0.50	3.79	0.76	4.52	0.52	3.83	0.81	4.54	0.56
Community Services	3.37	0.85	4.10	0.60	3.20	0.84	3.96	0.65	3.42	1.08	4.08	1.07
Vocational/Technical Prep	4.18	0.59	4.67	0.37	4.18	0.73	4.71	0.43	4.10	0.73	4.79	0.32
Personal Development	3.28	0.81	4.20	0.67	3.20	0.83	4.09	0.69	3.50	1.01	4.17	0.87
Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	2.64	0.85	3.45	0.95	2.60	0.88	3.33	0.92	3.33	0.95	3.40	1.20
Humanism/Altruism	2.84	0.77	3.97	0.80	2.93	0.83	3.91	0.70	3.19	1.11	4.15	0.78
Social Criticism	2.65	0.96	3.34	1.03	2.68	0.83	3.47	0.83	3.00	1.22	3.60	1.30
Counseling and Advising	3.40	0.77	4.41	0.56	3.26	0.95	4.40	0.58	3.44	1.22	4.35	0.81
Student Services	3.28	0.56	4.18	0.57	3.24	0.67	4.14	0.62	3.35	0.84	3.94	0.87
Faculty/Staff Development	3.22	0.71	4.26	0.57	3.30	0.88	4.32	0.49	3.42	1.02	4.40	0.56
Intellectual Environment	2.97	0.97	4.06	0.79	2.87	0.95	4.05	0.62	2.83	1.06	3.75	1.16
Innovation	2.92	0.85	4.06	0.62	2.92	0.98	3.96	0.73	3.00	0.80	4.02	0.73
College Community	3.06	0.98	4.48	0.53	2.97	1.03	4.52	0.52	3.00	0.78	4.52	0.46
Freedom	3.11	0.86	3.58	0.85	3.19	1.02	3.80	0.74	2.92	0.89	3.52	1.08
Accessibility	3.74	0.71	4.20	0.67	3.49	0.98	4.22	0.71	3.19	0.86	4.02	0.84
Effective Management	3.82	0.72	4.51	0.59	3.50	1.12	4.60	0.47	3.50	0.81	4.50	0.56
Accountability	3.97	0.75	4.50	0.54	3.71	1.11	4.50	0.63	3.67	0.77	4.31	0.72

Table 21

*Goal areas listed in order of mean perceived current (is) importance and mean preferred (should be) importance by college size*

Goal Area Ranks for Mean IS Score					
Small Colleges		Medium Colleges		Large Colleges	
1.	General Education	1.	General Education	1.	General Education
2.	Vocational/Technical Prep	2.	Vocational/Technical Prep	2.	Vocational/Technical Prep
3.	Accountability	3.	Developmental/Remedial Prep	3.	Developmental/Remedial Prep
4.	Developmental/Remedial Prep	4.	Accountability	4.	Lifelong Learning
5.	Effective Management	5.	Effective Management	5.	Intellectual Orientation
6.	Accessibility	6.	Lifelong Learning	6.	Accountability
7.	Lifelong Learning	7.	Accessibility	7.	Effective Management (tie)
8.	Counseling and Advising	8.	Intellectual Orientation	7.	Personal Development (tie)
9.	Community Services	9.	Faculty/Staff Development	9.	Counseling and Advising
10.	Personal Development	10.	Counseling and Advising	10.	Faculty/Staff Development (tie)
11.	Student Services	11.	Student Services	10.	Community Services (tie)
12.	Intellectual Orientation	12.	Community Services (tie)	12.	Student Services
13.	Faculty/Staff Development	12.	Personal Development (tie)	13.	Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness
14.	Freedom	14.	Freedom	14.	Accessibility (tie)
15.	College Community	15.	College Community	14.	Humanism/Altruism (tie)
16.	Intellectual Environment	16.	Humanism/Altruism	16.	College Community (tie)
17.	Innovation	17.	Innovation	16.	Innovation (tie)
18.	Humanism/Altruism	18.	Intellectual Environment	16.	Social Criticism (tie)
19.	Social Criticism	19.	Social Criticism	19.	Freedom
20.	Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	20.	Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	20.	Intellectual Environment

Goal Area Ranks for Mean SHOULD BE Scores					
Small Colleges		Medium Colleges		Large Colleges	
1.	Vocational/Technical Prep	1.	Vocational/Technical Prep	1.	Vocational/Technical Prep
2.	General Education	2.	General Education	2.	Developmental/Remedial Prep
3.	Developmental/Remedial Prep	3.	Effective Management	3.	College Community
4.	Effective Management	4.	Developmental/Remedial Prep (tie)	4.	Effective Management
5.	Accountability	4.	College Community (tie)	5.	General Education
6.	College Community	6.	Accountability	6.	Intellectual Orientation
7.	Counseling and Advising	7.	Counseling and Advising	7.	Faculty/Staff Development
8.	Intellectual Orientation	8.	Faculty/Staff Development	8.	Lifelong Learning
9.	Lifelong Learning	9.	Intellectual Orientation	9.	Counseling and Advising
10.	Faculty/Staff Development	10.	Accessibility	10.	Accountability
11.	Accessibility	11.	Lifelong Learning	11.	Personal Development
12.	Personal Development	12.	Student Services	12.	Humanism/Altruism
13.	Student Services	13.	Personal Development	13.	Community Services
14.	Community Services	14.	Intellectual Environment	14.	Accessibility (tie)
15.	Innovation (tie)	15.	Community Services (tie)	14.	Innovation (tie)
15.	Intellectual Environment (tie)	15.	Innovation (tie)	16.	Student Services
17.	Humanism/Altruism	17.	Humanism/Altruism	17.	Intellectual Environment
18.	Freedom	18.	Freedom	18.	Social Criticism
19.	Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	19.	Social Criticism	19.	Freedom
20.	Social Criticism	20.	Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	20.	Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness

Table 22

*Results of Kendall's W test for rankings of perceived current (is) importance of the 20 goal areas by college size*

<i>N</i>	3
Kendall's <i>W</i>	.91
Chi-Square	51.84
<i>df</i>	19
Asymp Sig.	.00

The rankings of the 20 goal areas by mean preferred (*should be*) importance for each group of college sizes can be found in Table 21. The researcher calculated Kendall's *W*, or Kendall's coefficient of concordance, using SPSS® to determine the level of concordance between the rankings of the three groups. Results are reported in Table 23. There was a strong level of concordance among the three sets of rankings,  $W = .95, p = .00$ .

In the rankings of the 20 goal areas, reported in the bottom half of Table 21, all three groups of colleges ranked four goal areas in the top five. These were Vocational/Technical Preparation, General Education, Developmental/Remedial Preparation, and Effective Management. The list of top five goals for the Medium Colleges and for the Large Colleges was rounded out with College Community. The fifth ranked goal area for the Small Colleges was Accountability. The five least important goals for each group included the common goal areas of Freedom, Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness, and Social Criticism. The Small Colleges also included Innovation, Intellectual Environment, and Humanism/Altruism among the lowest ranked goal areas. The Medium Colleges also ranked Innovation and Humanism/Altruism in the bottom five ranked goals. The Medium Colleges also included Community Services as a goal in the bottom five *should be* goal areas. The Large Colleges included Student Services and Intellectual Environment in the five least important goals.

Table 23

*Results of Kendall's W test for rankings of preferred (should be) importance of the 20 goal areas by college size*

<i>N</i>	3
Kendall's <i>W</i>	.95
Chi-Square	54.28
<i>df</i>	19
Asymp Sig.	.00

**Research Question 5**

*In what ways do the discrepancies between the perceptions of current (is) college goals and preferred (should be) college goals differ, if at all, for the comprehensive colleges of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and the ACCS Office?*

Discrepancy scores are the differences in the grand means based on the *should be* goal statements and the grand means based on the *is* goal statements for each goal area. The discrepancy score indicates the gap in how important the respondents believe the goal should be and how important it currently is perceived. Table 24 lists the 20 goal areas and their discrepancy scores for the ACCS Office and the ACCS Colleges, ranked in descending order by discrepancy score. For every goal area, the *should be* score was higher than the *is* score, resulting in positive discrepancy scores.

In order to measure the strength of correlation between the rankings of discrepancy scores, Kendall's tau-b was calculated using SPSS® for the rankings of the two groups. The results are reported in Table 25. The analysis found that there is a low level of agreement between the rankings of the goal areas based on discrepancy score,  $\tau_b = .48, p = .00$ . The top five goals for the ACCS Office when ranked by discrepancy score were College Community, Innovation, Effective Management, Faculty/Staff Development, and Accessibility. The top five

Table 24

*Goal areas, disaggregated by location, listed in order of discrepancy score between the grand means for the current (is) importance and the preferred (should be) importance for each goal area*

ACCS Office			ACCS Colleges		
Goal Area	Discrepancy Score		Goal Area	Discrepancy Score	
1. College Community	1.59		1. College Community	1.49	
2. Innovation	1.43		2. Intellectual Environment	1.12	
3. Effective Management	1.30		3. Innovation	1.08	
4. Faculty/Staff Development	1.27		4. Counseling and Advising	1.07	
5. Accessibility	1.25		5. Humanism/Altruism	1.04	
6. Humanism/Altruism	1.24		6. Faculty/Staff Development	1.02	
7. Counseling and Advising (tie)	1.14		7. Intellectual Orientation	0.96	
7. Accountability (tie)	1.14		8. Effective Management	0.92	
9. Personal Development	1.10		9. Personal Development	0.87	
10. Intellectual Orientation	1.09		10. Student Services	0.86	
11. Developmental/Remedial Prep	1.07		11. Community Services	0.74	
12. Intellectual Environment	1.05		12. Lifelong Learning (tie)	0.73	
13. Lifelong Learning	1.04		12. Social Criticism (tie)	0.73	
14. Community Services	1.00		14. Developmental/Remedial Prep	0.72	
15. Student Services	0.94		15. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	0.69	
16. Vocational/Technical Prep (tie)	0.86		16. Accountability	0.67	
16. Social Criticism (tie)	0.86		17. Accessibility	0.64	
18. General Education	0.79		18. Freedom	0.56	
19. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	0.69		19. Vocational/Technical Prep	0.53	
20. Freedom	0.24		20. General Education	0.43	

Table 25

*Results of Kendall's tau-b test for rankings of the 20 goal areas based on discrepancy score by location*

			ACCS DISC	COLLEGES DISC
Kendall's tau-b	ACCS_DISC	Correlation Coefficient	1.00	.48
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.00
		N	20	20
	COLLEGES_DISC	Correlation Coefficient	.48	1.00
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.
		N	20	20

goal areas for the ACCS Colleges, listed on the right side of Table 24, were College Community, Intellectual Environment, Innovation, Counseling and Advising, and Humanism/Altruism. Three of the goal areas, General Education, Vocational/Technical Preparation, and Freedom, fell in the bottom five of the rankings of both groups. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness and Social Criticism

were the other two goals in the bottom five for the ACCS Office, and Accountability and Accessibility were the remaining goal areas in the bottom five for the ACCS Colleges.

### **Research Question 6**

*In what ways do the discrepancies between the perceptions of current (is) college goals and preferred (should be) college goals differ, if at all, for each participant role?*

The 20 goal areas and their discrepancy scores for the respondents, disaggregated by role (ACCS Office, College Administrators, College Faculty, and College Staff), ranked in descending order by discrepancy score can be found in Table 26. For every goal area, the *should be* score was higher than the *is* score, resulting in positive discrepancy scores. The level of concordance among the goal rankings of the four groups was determined using the Kendall's *W* statistic. Results are reported in Table 27. There was a moderate to strong level of agreement among the rankings,  $W = .79, p = .00$ .

The top-ranked goal area based on discrepancy scores was the same for all groups—College Community. The other top four goals with the highest discrepancy scores for the ACCS Office were Innovation, Effective Management, Faculty/Staff Development, and Accessibility. For College Administrators, the other top four goals based on discrepancy scores were Counseling and Advising, Intellectual Environment, Innovation, and Humanism/Altruism. The goal areas, besides College Community, with the highest discrepancy scores according to the College Faculty were Intellectual Environment, Intellectual Orientation, Faculty/Staff Development, and Humanism/Altruism.

Table 26

*Goal areas, disaggregated by participant role, listed in order of discrepancy score between the grand means for the current (is) importance and the preferred (should be) importance for each goal area*

ACCS Office		College Administrators	
Goal Area	Discrepancy Score	Goal Area	Discrepancy Score
1. College Community	1.59	1. College Community	1.40
2. Innovation	1.43	2. Counseling and Advising	1.12
3. Effective Management	1.30	3. Intellectual Environment	1.07
4. Faculty/Staff Development	1.27	4. Innovation	1.04
5. Accessibility	1.25	5. Humanism/Altruism	1.03
6. Humanism/Altruism	1.24	6. Faculty/Staff Development	1.02
7. Counseling and Advising (tie)	1.14	7. Effective Management	0.91
7. Accountability (tie)	1.14	8. Student Services	0.86
9. Personal Development	1.10	9. Personal Development	0.84
10. Intellectual Orientation	1.09	10. Community Services	0.81
11. Developmental/Remedial Prep	1.07	11. Developmental/Remedial Prep (tie)	0.80
12. Intellectual Environment	1.05	11. Intellectual Orientation (tie)	0.80
13. Lifelong Learning	1.04	13. Lifelong Learning (tie)	0.72
14. Community Services	1.00	13. Accessibility (tie)	0.72
15. Student Services	0.94	15. Social Criticism	0.71
16. Vocational/Technical Prep (tie)	0.86	16. Accountability	0.69
16. Social Criticism (tie)	0.86	16. Vocational/Technical Prep	0.64
18. General Education	0.79	18. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	0.58
19. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	0.69	19. Freedom	0.46
20. Freedom	0.24	20. General Education	0.38
College Faculty		College Staff	
Goal Area	Discrepancy Score	Goal Area	Discrepancy Score
1. College Community	1.85	1. College Community	1.35
2. Intellectual Environment	1.23	2. Innovation	1.12
3. Intellectual Orientation	1.16	3. Intellectual Environment	1.11
4. Faculty/Staff Development (tie)	1.13	4. Counseling and Advising	1.08
4. Humanism/Altruism (tie)	1.13	5. Intellectual Orientation	1.02
6. Innovation	1.10	6. Humanism/Altruism	0.99
7. Effective Management	1.05	7. Personal Development	0.97
8. Student Services	1.03	8. Faculty/Staff Development	0.94
9. Counseling and Advising	0.95	9. Effective Management	0.87
10. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	0.94	10. Student Services	0.77
11. Freedom	0.81	11. Lifelong Learning	0.74
12. Personal Development	0.79	12. Social Criticism	0.72
13. Social Criticism	0.77	13. Developmental/Remedial Prep	0.69
14. Accountability (tie)	0.74	14. Community Services	0.66
14. Lifelong Learning (tie)	0.74	15. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	0.65
16. Community Services	0.73	16. Accountability	0.62
17. Accessibility	0.67	17. Accessibility	0.53
18. Developmental/Remedial Prep	0.64	18. Freedom	0.52
19. General Education	0.63	19. Vocational/Technical Prep	0.49
20. Vocational/Technical Prep	0.42	20. General Education	0.37

Table 27

*Results of Kendall's W test for rankings of the 20 goal areas by discrepancy scores disaggregated by respondent role*

<i>N</i>	4
Kendall's <i>W</i>	.79
Chi-Square	59.97
<i>df</i>	19
Asymp Sig.	.00

**Research Question 7**

*In what ways do the discrepancies between the perceptions of current (is) college goals and preferred (should be) college goals differ, if at all, for each size category of college?*

The 20 goal areas and their discrepancy scores for the respondents, disaggregated by college size (Small, Medium, and Large), ranked in descending order by discrepancy score, are listed in Table 28. For every goal area, the *should be* score was higher than the *is* score, resulting in positive discrepancy scores. Kendall's *W*, the coefficient of concordance, was calculated using SPSS® in order to determine the level of concordance among the goal rankings of the three groups. Results are reported in Table 29. There was a moderate to strong level of agreement among the rankings,  $W=.80, p=00$ .

For all three groups, College Community was the goal area with the highest discrepancy score (1.42, 1.55, and 1.52). Innovation was another goal area that was in the top five goals based on discrepancy score for all three groups. The Small Colleges group included Humanism/Altruism, Intellectual Environment, and Intellectual Orientation in the goals with the top five discrepancy scores. The Medium Colleges ranked Intellectual Environment, Counseling and Advising, and Effective Management in the top five discrepancy scores. Effective Management, Faculty/Staff Development and Humanism/Altruism rounded out the top five

Table 28

*Goal areas, disaggregated by college size, listed in order of discrepancy score between the grand means for the current (is) importance and the preferred (should be) importance for each goal area*

Small Colleges		Medium Colleges		Large Colleges	
Goal Area	Discrepancy Score	Goal Area	Discrepancy Score	Goal Area	Discrepancy Score
1. College Community	1.42	1. College Community	1.55	1. College Community	1.52
2. Innovation	1.14	2. Intellectual Environment	1.18	2. Innovation	1.02
3. Humanism/Altruism	1.13	3. Counseling and Advising	1.14	3. Effective Management	1.00
4. Intellectual Environment	1.09	4. Effective Management	1.10	4. Faculty/Staff Development	0.98
5. Intellectual Orientation	1.07	5. Innovation	1.04	5. Humanism/Altruism	0.96
6. Faculty/Staff Development	1.04	6. Faculty/Staff Development	1.02	6. Intellectual Environment	0.92
7. Counseling and Advising	1.01	7. Humanism/Altruism	0.98	7. Counseling and Advising	0.91
8. Personal Development	0.92	8. Intellectual Orientation	0.94	8. Accessibility	0.83
9. Student Services	0.90	9. Student Services	0.90	9. Intellectual Orientation	0.73
10. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	0.81	10. Personal Development	0.89	10. Developmental/Remedial Prep	0.71
11. Lifelong Learning	0.79	11. Social Criticism (tie)	0.79	11. Vocational/Technical Prep	0.69
12. Community Services	0.73	11. Accountability (tie)	0.79	12. Personal Development	0.67
13. Developmental/Remedial Prep	0.72	13. Community Services	0.76	13. Community Services	0.66
14. Social Criticism (tie)	0.69	14. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness (tie)	0.73	14. Lifelong Learning	0.65
14. Effective Management (tie)	0.69	14. Developmental/Remedial Prep (tie)	0.73	15. Accountability	0.64
16. Accountability	0.53	16. Accessibility	0.74	16. Social Criticism (tie)	0.60
17. Vocational/Technical Prep	0.49	17. Lifelong Learning	0.71	16. Freedom (tie)	0.60
18. Freedom	0.47	18. Freedom	0.61	18. Student Services	0.59
19. Accessibility	0.46	19. Vocational/Technical Prep	0.53	19. General Education	0.27
20. General Education	0.45	20. General Education	0.45	20. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	0.07

Table 29

*Results of Kendall's W test for rankings of the 20 goal areas by discrepancy scores disaggregated by respondent role*

<i>N</i>	3
Kendall's <i>W</i>	.80
Chi-Square	45.79
<i>df</i>	19
Asymp Sig.	.00

discrepancy scores for the Large Colleges. For all three groups, the goal area of General Education had the lowest or next-to-lowest discrepancy score. The Small Colleges included Accountability, Vocational/Technical Preparation, Freedom, and Accessibility in the five smallest discrepancy scores. The Medium Colleges ranked Vocational/Technical Preparation, Freedom, Lifelong Learning, and Accessibility in the bottom five goal areas based on discrepancy score. The Large Colleges included Social Criticism, Freedom, Student Services, and Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness in the bottom five.

**Research Question 8**

*To what extent does the Community College Goals Inventory continue to be a reliable and valid instrument for evaluating the goal priorities of community colleges?*

The Community College Goals Inventory was developed in 1979, and the age of the instrument warrants an analysis of its continued reliability and validity. Each goal area construct in the survey is made up four goal statements, and the researcher used SSPS® to determine the internal consistency of the survey items by calculating Cronbach's alpha for each goal area construct. The results of these scale reliability tests are reported in Table 30. Kline (2000) reported the commonly accepted rules for the levels of Cronbach's alpha. An alpha in the area of .70 is good, with .80 better and .90 the best. An alpha of .60 is considered questionable, and an

alpha of .50 is considered poor. However, Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) wrote that an alpha of .60 is acceptable in exploratory research but not for higher levels of research.

For the goal areas on the scale of perceived current (*is*) importance, Cronbach's alpha ranged from .67 to .90. Only two goal areas fell below .70—Lifelong Learning ( $\alpha = .67$ ) and Student Services ( $\alpha = .68$ ). All other goal areas had alpha scores higher than .70. For the goal areas on the scale of preferred (*should be*) importance, Cronbach's alpha ranged from .59 to .89. Only one construct, Faculty/Staff Development, fell below .60 with  $\alpha = .59$ . Three other goal areas fell below .70, and these were Intellectual Orientation ( $\alpha = .68$ ), Lifelong Learning ( $\alpha = .65$ ), and Student Services ( $\alpha = .60$ ).

Research Question 8 was also answered by analyzing the responses to an open-ended survey question that asked participants to list any missions, goals, or functions of the modern community college that were not represented in the items of the survey. Of the 124 total respondents, only 29 answered the open-ended question. Of those 29 respondents, ten indicated that there were no necessary additions, leaving viable responses from only 19 participants. Each of the responses was categorized in terms of a goal or function. Table 31 lists the categorized goals with the number of times the goal was mentioned. A complete list of viable question responses with their goal categorizations can be found in Appendix G. Many of the responses fell into goal areas that were already covered by items in the survey. However, five new goal areas were mentioned by the participants. These new goal areas include Training for Business and Industry, Diversity, Transfer Preparation, Distance Education, and Correctional/Post-Correctional Education.

Table 30

*Reliability Coefficients for each set of items making up the 20 goal areas*

Goal Area	<i>IS</i> Items	<i>SHOULD BE</i> Items
General Education	.82	.71
Intellectual Orientation	.84	.68
Lifelong Learning	.67	.65
Developmental/Remedial Preparation	.83	.77
Community Services	.78	.74
Vocational/Technical Preparation	.80	.72
Personal Development	.87	.79
Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness	.85	.88
Humanism/Altruism	.83	.80
Social Criticism	.90	.89
Counseling and Advising	.78	.72
Student Services	.68	.60
Faculty/Staff Development	.78	.59
Intellectual Environment	.86	.83
Innovation	.87	.79
College Community	.88	.82
Freedom	.79	.71
Accessibility	.74	.71
Effective Management	.89	.80
Accountability	.90	.84

Table 31

*Frequency of goals mentioned in the open-ended survey question regarding additional goals of the community college*

Goal Area	Frequency
Vocational/Technical Preparation	9
Transfer Preparation	4
College Community	3
Faculty Development	3
Student Services	3
Counseling and Advising	3
Effective Management	2
Training for Business and Industry	1
Community Services	1
Personal Development	1
Diversity	1
Distance Education	1
Correctional and Post-Correctional Education	1

## Summary

This chapter presented the results of the data analyses that were conducted to answer the eight research questions related to the perceptions of strategic planners and System Office staff regarding goal priorities in the Alabama Community College System. First, a description of the population and the sample of those responding to the study survey was provided in order that readers may understand who participated in the study. Descriptive statistics and coefficients of concordance, including Kendall's tau-b and Kendall's *W*, were presented to understand the priorities of the different groups studied. Instrument validity and reliability were presented through a presentation of Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the goal area constructs that were measured and a description, as reported by respondents, of goals that make up the modern, comprehensive community college mission that were not included in the present instrument. Chapter V continues the discussion of the results by presenting research findings, conclusions, and recommendations for practice, policy, and future research.

CHAPTER V:  
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to understand the goal priorities of strategic planners and policymakers in the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and the extent to which these different stakeholders agree on those priorities. Five hundred eighty-three individuals were invited to complete an online version of the Community College Goals Inventory (ETS, 1991), and after removing 27 individuals with invalid email addresses and two who notified me that they would not be participating in the study, 554 individuals were potential participants. A total of 124 individuals completed the entire survey for a response rate of 21.3%. The responses from these 124 respondents were used for study analysis purposes.

Many scholars have suggested that the community college mission should be analyzed in order to determine the need for a redefinition and/or reinterpretation of the modern community college mission, and understanding goal priorities is instrumental in examining that mission (21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, 2012; Dougherty & Townsend, 2006; Nevarez & Wood, 2010). In addition, understanding the goals and goal priorities of the organization is essential in developing plans for achieving the mission. Connecting the institutional mission and the decision-making processes of college leaders can be more effective when goal priorities are determined (Hornak & Garza Mitchell, 2016; Nevarez & Wood, 2010; Perez-Vegara et al., 2018).

This chapter presents the findings for the eight research questions that were posed in this study. The findings of the study are followed by the conclusions that have been made based on those findings. Next, the chapter includes recommendations for policy and practice in higher education as well as recommendations for future research. The chapter concludes with an overall summary of the study.

### **Discussion of Research Findings**

This section is organized by the eight research questions that drove the study. The questions are restated and are followed by a discussion of the research findings.

#### **Research Question 1 (a & b)**

*What are the aggregated perceptions of goal priorities of all personnel engaged in strategic planning at both the comprehensive colleges and the system office of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) concerning current (is) community college goals?*

*What are the aggregated perceptions of goal priorities of all personnel engaged in strategic planning at both the comprehensive colleges and the system office of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) concerning preferred (should be) community college goals?*

The goal areas of General Education, Vocational/Technical Preparation, and Developmental/Remedial Preparation were the top three goal areas in terms of both perceived current importance and preferred importance. The only difference in the rankings based on current and preferred importance for these three goals is that General Education was ranked first in current importance (with Vocational/Technical Preparation ranked second), and Vocational/Technical Preparation was ranked first in preferred importance (with General Education ranked second). Like this study, the top three goals ranked by current and preferred importance—General Education, Vocational/Technical Preparation, and

Developmental/Remedial Preparation—appeared in the top five most important goals (both *is* and *should be*) in a number of previous state studies including those by Huskey (1988), Fitch (1989), and Findt and Sullins (1990). These findings suggest that principle functions of the community college were and continue to be General Education, Vocational/Technical Preparation, and Developmental/Remedial Preparation. In the rankings of current importance, Accountability and Effective Management round out the top five. In the rankings of preferred importance, Effective Management is ranked fourth just ahead of College Community. These findings are consistent with other national and state studies (Cross, 1981; Findt & Sullins, 1990; Harville-Clayton, 2003).

One of the overarching goals of the community college throughout its history has been to open up access to educational opportunities to students who may not have had those opportunities otherwise. Levin (2005) called open-access, or accessibility, one of the sacred missions of the community college. It is interesting to note, then, that the goal of Accessibility is prioritized sixth in terms of current importance but falls to a rank of 11<sup>th</sup> in terms of preferred importance. One reason for this decrease in priority ranking could be that respondents believe that open access is a given reality that does not require continued intentional focus.

The results regarding the goal of College Community provides an interesting finding. The goal is ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in the rankings by current importance but fifth in terms of preferred importance. Also, the discrepancy score, or the difference between the grand mean indicating level of importance for the *should be* goal and the *is* goal, for College Community is 1.51, indicating a wide disparity between the level of importance that all respondents believe College Community should be versus how it is currently perceived. In this study and all of the abovementioned state studies, College Community was the goal area with the highest

discrepancy score. College Community is defined by ETS (1991) as “fostering a climate in which there is faculty and staff commitment to the goals of the college, open and candid communication, open and amicable airing of differences, and mutual trust and respect among faculty, students, and administrators” (p. 50). A repeatedly high discrepancy score for this area through past goal studies demonstrates that the community colleges and community college systems represented by these studies have had a difficult time addressing the creation of an open and respectful college community.

Dougherty and Townsend (2006) and Phelan (2014) noted that liberal arts/general education, occupation education, and community services have historically been the three functions at the heart of the community college mission. It was found that this only partially continues to be true in the Alabama Community College System (ACCS). As mentioned earlier, General Education and Vocational/Technical Preparation are the top priorities in terms of current and preferred importance. However, the goal of Community Services ranks 12<sup>th</sup> in priority based on current importance and 14<sup>th</sup> in priority based on preferred importance. That result would suggest that the function of community services is not at the heart of the community college mission.

Innovation is another goal that deserves attention. It is ranked 17<sup>th</sup> in priority based on current importance and 15<sup>th</sup> in priority based on preferred importance. In addition, the goal of Innovation has the second highest discrepancy score of 1.12. Despite the high discrepancy score, it is still ranked relatively low in priority on both scales. Both the ranking and the discrepancy score for Innovation reflect what Cross (1981, 1985) lamented as a lack of innovation in the community college as far back as the 1980s. She argued that community colleges had been

innovative in developing their missions and achieving success through the 1960s and 1970s but had reached a plateau in the 1980s.

### **Research Question 2 (a & b)**

*In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, between the comprehensive colleges of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and the ACCS Office based on the perceived importance of current (is) community college goals?*

*In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, between the comprehensive colleges of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and the ACCS Office based on the perceived importance of preferred (should be) community college goals?*

Before addressing the differences in priorities of the two groups (ACCS Office and ACCS Colleges), it is important to understand the overall perceptions of the groups. The ACCS Office respondents perceived Vocational/Technical Preparation as the most important goal for community colleges, and they preferred Vocational/Technical Preparation to be the most important goal. The goal area of General Education was the second ranked goal on the scales of both current importance and preferred importance. For the ACCS Office respondents, the ranks of three goal areas changed substantially between the rankings by current importance and the rankings by preferred importance. The researcher has defined a substantial change as a change of five ranks or more. The goal area of Student Services dropped from a rank of sixth in priority by current importance to a rank of 11<sup>th</sup> in priority by preferred importance, and the goal area of Freedom dropped from a rank of 14<sup>th</sup> (current importance) to a rank of 19<sup>th</sup> (preferred importance). In contrast, the goal area of College Community rose in rank from 15<sup>th</sup> (current importance) to sixth (preferred importance).

The respondents from the ACCS Colleges perceived General Education to be the most important current goal. However, General Education fell to second in terms of preferred importance. General Education was replaced by Vocational/Technical Preparation as the number one goal as ranked by preferred importance. There were two goal areas whose rankings changed substantially between the ranking by perceived current (*is*) rankings and the preferred (*should be*) rankings. Accessibility was dropped from a rank of sixth in priority by current importance to a rank of 11<sup>th</sup> in priority by preferred importance by ACCS College respondents. The goal area of College Community rose by ten ranks, from 15<sup>th</sup> by priority based on current importance to a rank of fifth by priority based on preferred importance.

The results used for answering Research Question 2 were found by calculating grand means for each of the goals areas, both for the perceived current (*is*) importance and the preferred (*should be*) importance, and ranking the goal areas by the calculated grand mean. Then, Kendall's tau-b was used to determine the extent to which the two groups agree on those rankings. There was a moderate level of agreement between the two groups about the rankings of goals both by perceived current (*is*) importance by preferred (*should be*) importance ( $\tau_b = .76$  and  $\tau_b = .78$ , respectively). For all goal areas, the mean score for current importance was lower for the ACCS Office than for the ACCS Colleges. Also, the mean score for preferred importance was lower for the ACCS Office than for the ACCS Colleges for every goal area except Accessibility.

The top two most important goals, current and preferred, for both groups were Vocational/Technical Preparation and General Education, in that order, except for the current importance ranked by the ACCS Colleges. The ACCS Colleges ranked General Education first and Vocational/Technical Preparation second in terms of current importance, but the margin of

difference between the two grand means was only 0.02 points (4.19 and 4.17).

Developmental/Remedial Preparation was the third ranked goal by current importance for both groups, and the goal area was also ranked third by the ACCS Office in terms of preferred importance, while the ACCS Colleges ranked it fourth. Similarly, Accountability was ranked fourth by current importance for both groups, and it was also ranked fourth by the ACCS Office in terms of preferred importance, while the ACCS Colleges ranked it sixth. These findings indicate that there is a high level of agreement concerning the priorities of current and preferred goals of the Alabama Community College System.

One goal area, Effective Management, ranks high in priority for the ACCS Colleges, based on both current importance (fifth) and preferred importance (third). Surprisingly, the ACCS Office ranked Effective Management lower in priority based on both current importance (11<sup>th</sup>) and preferred importance (ninth). The grand mean for the level of current importance for Effective Management for the ACCS Office was 2.88, indicating that respondents believed it to be between low and medium importance. The grand mean for the level of preferred importance for the ACCS Colleges was 3.63, indicating that respondents from the colleges believed it to be between medium and high importance. The premise behind Effective Management for the purpose of this survey is that colleges engage in short- and long-range planning and that they evaluate all college programs in a systematic manner (ETS, 1991). Perhaps because this is a goal that is exclusively controlled by the colleges, often as a result of accreditation processes, the ACCS Office does not view it as much of a priority as do the ACCS Colleges.

In terms of the lowest ranked goal areas, Social Criticism and Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness were two of the least prioritized goals for both groups based on current importance and preferred importance. The Social Criticism goal area refers to the community college both

teaching students how to change societal institutions and being instruments of societal change. The low priority ranking is not surprising given the critiques of scholars such as Harbour (2015), Kisker (2016), and Mathews (2016), all who have suggested that community colleges have neglected civic education and solving community problems that are unrelated to the college due to a focus on the Completion Agenda.

### **Research Question 3 (a & b)**

*In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, by participant role based on the perceived importance of current (is) community college goals?*

*In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, by participant role based on the preferred (should be) importance of community college goals?*

Research Question 3 was designed to determine if the role that strategic planners play at their institutions affects their beliefs about the goals of the community college. Cyert and March (1963) found that groups of individuals in an institution may have different goals for the institution, and Richards (1978) described different coalitions in an institution that correspond to the groups studied by this research question—ACCS Office, College Administrators, College Faculty, and College Staff. Before addressing the differences in priorities of the four groups (ACCS Office, College Administrators, College Faculty, and College Staff), it is important to understand the overall perceptions of the groups. The perceptions of ACCS Office respondents are addressed in the research findings for Research Question 2 above. College Administrators prioritized General Education as the most important current goal for community colleges, but they prioritized it at a lower level (2<sup>nd</sup>) in terms of preferred importance. Conversely, they preferred Vocational/Technical Preparation to be the most important goal after ranking it as second in terms of current importance. The rankings of three goal areas changed substantially

between the ranking by perceived current (*is*) importance and preferred (*should be*) importance.

The goal area of Freedom dropped from a rank of 13<sup>th</sup> in priority by current importance to a rank of 18<sup>th</sup> in priority by preferred importance. The goal area of Counseling and Advising rose from a ranking of 12<sup>th</sup> (current importance) to seventh (preferred importance), and College Community rose from a ranking of tied for 14<sup>th</sup> (current importance) to fourth (preferred importance).

The College Faculty respondents perceived Vocational/Technical Preparation to be the most important current goal of community colleges, and the same goal area tied for second in terms of most important preferred goal. General Education was perceived to be the second most important goal but preferred to be most important goal. There were five goals that had substantial changes in rankings between the rankings based on current importance and the rankings based on preferred importance. Lifelong Learning was ranked sixth in terms of current importance but dropped to 11<sup>th</sup> in terms of preferred importance. The goal area of Community Services dropped from a rank of ninth in priority by current importance to a rank of 15<sup>th</sup> in priority by preferred importance. Accessibility fell from a ranking of fifth (current importance) to tied for 13<sup>th</sup> (preferred importance), and Accountability fell from a ranking of tied for fourth (current importance) to ninth (preferred importance). Similar to the other groups, College Faculty ranked College Community as tied for 19<sup>th</sup> based on current importance but ranked the goal area as tied for second in terms of preferred importance.

College Staff ranked Vocational/Technical Preparation as the most prioritized goal by current importance, and it remained the most important goal in terms of preferred importance. General Education was second in priority based on current importance, but it fell to fourth in ranking in terms of preferred importance. For College Staff the second most prioritized goal in

terms of preferred importance was Effective Management, which was ranked fifth based on current importance. Only two goal areas had substantial changes in rankings between the rankings based on current importance and the rankings based on preferred importance—Community Services and College Community. Community Services dropped from eighth (current importance) to 13<sup>th</sup> (preferred importance). College Community rose from 15<sup>th</sup> (current importance) to seventh (preferred importance).

The results for Research Question 3 were found by calculating grand means for each of the goal areas, both for the perceived current (*is*) importance and the preferred (*should be*) importance, and ranking the goal areas by the calculated grand mean. Then, Kendall's *W* was used to determine the extent to which the four groups (ACCS Office, College Administrators, College Faculty, and College Staff) agree on those rankings. There was a strong level of concordance among the rankings by the four groups both for perceived current (*is*) importance and for preferred (*should be*) importance ( $W = .93$  and  $W = .94$ , respectively).

Similar to the findings for the previous research questions, in terms of priority rankings, three goal areas were in the top five for all four groups for both current and preferred levels of importance. The reality that these three goals—General Education, Vocational/Technical Preparation, and Developmental/Remedial Preparation—appear in the top five on both scales and for all groups suggests that these goals are entrenched in the Alabama Community College System as they are for most of the community colleges in the nation.

Accountability is another goal area that appears as a high-priority goal across many of the groups on both the *is* and *should be* scales. However, there are some differences among groups. Accountability is in the top five goals according to perceived current (*is*) importance for all four groups. Accountability is ranked in the top five according to preferred (*should be*) levels of

importance for the ACCS Office Staff and College Staff, and it is ranked sixth by College Administrators. However, College Faculty ranked Accountability as ninth in terms of preferred goal priorities. All of the items related to the Accountability goal area on the survey are related to achieving the mission of the institution as well as accountability to funding sources and cost/benefit analyses of different college programs (ETS, 1991). The funding concepts within the Accountability goal may be outside the scope of influence for non-administrative faculty, and this could explain the lower preferred priority of the goal for College Faculty.

In 2019 the Chancellor of the Alabama Community College System reported a renewed focus for the System on improving the student experience, both from an academic perspective and a student services perspective (Alabama Community College System Board of Trustees, 2019, January 19). It is no surprise, then, that the goal areas most closely related to student services, Counseling and Advising and Student Services, are ranked fifth and sixth, respectively, by the ACCS Office in terms of current importance. However, the current priority for these goals is not shared by all groups. The College Administrators ranked Counseling and Advising as 12<sup>th</sup> and Student Services as ninth. The College Faculty ranked Counseling and Advising as seventh and Student Services as 13<sup>th</sup>. College Staff ranked Counseling and Advising as ninth and Student Services as 11<sup>th</sup>. There is not a substantial difference in the ranks based on preferred importance. For the ACCS Office Staff, Counseling and Advising is tied for fourth in terms of preferred importance, but Student Services fell to 11<sup>th</sup> in terms of preferred importance. Like the prioritization based on current importance, the different groups at the colleges do not prioritize the two goals in terms of preferred importance. These findings suggest that the vision of the Chancellor to vastly improve the student experience in the Alabama Community College System has not yet gained traction in the ACCS Colleges.

#### **Research Question 4 (a & b)**

*In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, by college size based on the perceived importance of current (is) community college goals?*

*In what ways do the priorities of community college goals differ, if at all, by college size based on the perceived importance of preferred (should be) community college goals?*

Research Question 4 addresses how colleges of different sizes view goal priorities. Researchers have indicated that college size may play a part in the functions of the community college mission that the colleges choose to emphasize (Ayers, 2011; Eddy, 2007; Hardy & Katsinas, 2007). Before addressing the differences in priorities of the three groups (Large Colleges, Medium Colleges, and Small Colleges), it is important to understand the overall perceptions of the groups. The Small Colleges ranked General Education as the most prioritized goal based on perceived current importance but ranked it second based on preferred importance. The opposite was true for Vocational/Technical Preparation. The Small Colleges ranked Vocational/Technical Preparation second in terms of current importance but first in terms of preferred importance. Three goals had substantial changes in the rankings between perceived current importance and preferred importance. Community Services fell from a rank of ninth (current importance) to 14<sup>th</sup> (preferred importance), and Accessibility fell from sixth (current importance) to 11<sup>th</sup> (preferred importance). College Community was ranked 15<sup>th</sup> based on perceived current importance, but the goal area rose to sixth based on preferred importance.

The top two most prioritized goals for Medium Colleges, both on the current importance scale and the preferred importance scale, were identical to the Small Colleges. General Education was perceived to be the most important goal while it was preferred to be second, and the reverse was true for Vocational/Technical Preparation. For the Medium College respondents,

the rankings changed substantially for two goal areas. Lifelong Learning was dropped from sixth based on current importance to 11<sup>th</sup> based on preferred importance. College Community rose from a ranking of 15<sup>th</sup> (current importance) to a ranking of tied for fourth (preferred importance).

Large College respondents indicated that General Education was perceived to be the most important goal area, and Vocational/Technical Preparation was perceived to be the second most important goal. However, Vocational/Technical Preparation became the number one ranked goal in terms of preferred importance while General Education fell to fifth in terms of preferred importance. There were two goal areas that had substantial changes in the rankings between current importance and preferred importance. Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness was ranked 13<sup>th</sup> by the Large Colleges based on current importance, but the goal area fell to 20<sup>th</sup> based on preferred importance. The goal area of College Community rose in rank from tied for 16<sup>th</sup> (current importance) to third (preferred importance).

The results for Research Question 4 were found by calculating grand means for each of the goals areas, both for the perceived current (*is*) importance and the preferred (*should be*) importance, and ranking the goal areas by the calculated grand mean. Then, Kendall's *W* was used to determine the extent to which the three groups (Small Colleges, Medium Colleges, and Large Colleges) agree on those rankings. There was a strong level of concordance among the rankings by the three groups both by perceived current (*is*) importance and by preferred (*should be*) importance ( $W = .91$  and  $W = .95$ , respectively). In his study of the goals of community colleges in Wyoming using the Community College Goals Inventory, Fitch (1989) found a relationship between the grand means and the size of the colleges. In that study, the small colleges had much lower scores based on the perceived current importance of the goals than the large colleges, and the small colleges had much higher *should be* scores than the large colleges.

However, in this study, there was no evidence of a pattern of one size of colleges having higher or lower scores than the other colleges.

The same three high-priority goals that have been common to all groups in the previous research questions were in the top five goals for all three groups based on college size. General Education and Vocational/Technical Preparation were ranked first and second, respectively, for all three groups in terms of priority based on current importance. Developmental/Remedial Preparation was also a top five priority based on current importance for all three groups. In the rankings based on preferred importance, Vocational/Technical Preparation replaced General Education as the top-ranked goal area, with General Education ranked second for Small Colleges and Medium Colleges and fifth for Large Colleges. Developmental/Remedial Preparation remained in the top five goals based on preferred importance for all three groups. In addition, Effective Management was ranked within the top five goals for Small Colleges and Medium Colleges based on both current importance and preferred importance. For Large Colleges, Effective Management was tied for seventh in terms of current importance and ranked fourth in terms of preferred importance.

The Small Colleges and the Medium Colleges reported the same five lowest-priority goals based on current importance—Intellectual Environment, Innovation, Humanism/Altruism, Social Criticism, and Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness. In addition to Intellectual Environment, Innovation, and Social Criticism, the Large Colleges ranked College Community and Freedom in the bottom five based on current priority. All college sizes reported three common goal areas in terms of lowest priority based on preferred importance. These goal areas were Freedom, Cultural/Aesthetic Awareness, and Social Criticism. Innovation was included in the least important goals for Small and Medium Colleges, and Innovation was just out of the bottom five

goals based preferred importance. Another interesting finding was that Student Services was in the bottom five goals based on preferred importance for the Large Colleges, indicating that Student Services is not a major priority for the Large Colleges. A factor that should be considered when interpreting the prioritization of goals for the different sizes of colleges is the geographical setting of the college, and this is certainly an area that should be explored in future research.

The finding that was discussed in the results for Research Question 1 concerning College Community is especially evident when the data are disaggregated by college size. College Community is ranked relatively low by all three groups in the rankings based on current importance (15<sup>th</sup> for Small Colleges, 15<sup>th</sup> for Medium Colleges, and tied for 16<sup>th</sup> for Large Colleges). However, College Community is ranked relatively high for all college sizes based on preferred importance. The goal area moves to sixth for Small Colleges, tied for fourth for Medium Colleges, and third for Large Colleges. This finding demonstrates that colleges would prefer a higher level of communication and amicability within their colleges, regardless of size.

### **Research Question 5**

*In what ways do the discrepancies between the perceptions of current (is) college goals and preferred (should be) college goals differ, if at all, for the comprehensive colleges of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and the ACCS Office?*

Cross (1981), Cross and Fideler (1989), and Peterson and Uhl (1977) suggested that discrepancy scores can be used to identify those goal areas in which colleges can work to close the gaps between preferred and current levels of importance. It is important to note that discrepancy scores are not necessarily related to the priority rankings by current and preferred importance that were discussed in the section on findings related to Research Questions 1-4. The

discrepancy scores are measures of the differences in the levels of preferred importance and current importance for each goal. It is the case for this study, as is common for most studies of this type, that the preferred importance is always higher than the perceived current importance. Therefore, all the discrepancy scores in this study are positive. Another point that is worth mentioning is that it is possible to have relatively high discrepancy scores but low priority in terms of importance rankings. The reverse is also true; it is possible to have relatively low discrepancy scores while having high priority rankings for the same goal areas.

In order to answer this research question, the discrepancy scores were calculated for each goal area for both groups (ACCS Office and ACCS Colleges). Then, the goal areas were ranked in descending order by discrepancy score. Kendall's tau-b was used to determine the extent to which the two groups agreed on the ranking of goals based on discrepancy scores. There was a low to moderate correlation between the two rankings with  $\tau_b = .48, p = .00$ , indicating a low level of agreement in the rankings.

Despite the lack of concordance between the rankings, both groups gave the highest discrepancy score to the goal area of College Community. This is an area in which both groups believed that there was room for improvement. In this case, College Community is a goal area that was prioritized by both groups related to preferred importance (sixth for ACCS Office and fifth for ACCS Colleges). Innovation also had high discrepancy scores for both the ACCS Office and the ACCS Colleges, 1.43 and 1.08, respectively. Even though the discrepancy scores indicate that there is space to increase the perceived current importance to match the preferred importance in this area, it is also important to note that Innovation was ranked relatively low for both groups in terms of priority of current *and* preferred importance. Three of the goal areas fell in the bottom five of the rankings of both groups, indicating that respondents did not prefer the

goals to be much more important than the level of importance that was already assigned to those goals. These goals were General Education, Vocational/Technical Preparation, and Freedom. Freedom is a goal that the ACCS Office and the ACCS Colleges assigned low discrepancy scores, and both groups also ranked Freedom next-to-last in terms of priority according to preferred importance,

### **Research Question 6**

*In what ways do the discrepancies between the perceptions of current (is) college goals and preferred (should be) college goals differ, if at all, for each participant role?*

In order to answer this research question, the discrepancy scores were calculated for each goal area for all four groups (ACCS Office, College Administrators, College Faculty, and College Staff). Then, the goal areas were ranked in descending order by discrepancy score. Kendall's coefficient of concordance was used to determine the extent to which the four groups agreed on the ranking of goals based on discrepancy scores. There was agreement among the four rankings with  $W = .79, p = .00$ , indicating a moderate level of agreement in the rankings.

The ACCS Office had the fewest number of goal areas with discrepancy scores less than 1.00; fourteen of the 20 goals had discrepancy scores higher than 1.00. In contrast, College Administrators only had six goal areas of the 20 with a discrepancy score higher than 1.00. College Faculty had eight goals with a discrepancy score higher than 1.00, and College Staff only had five goal areas with discrepancy scores higher than 1.00. This suggests that the ACCS Office respondents are more dissatisfied with the current level of importance that is assigned to these goal areas. Overall, the ACCS would prefer higher levels of importance for the goals measured in the survey. In fact, the only goal for which the ACCS did not have the highest discrepancy score among the four groups was Freedom. Similar to the results for Research

Question 5, General Education and Vocational/Technical Preparation are among the lowest ranked goals by discrepancy score for all groups. This finding demonstrates that all groups, regardless of role, are fairly satisfied with the current level of importance assigned to these two goal areas.

### **Research Question 7**

*In what ways do the discrepancies between the perceptions of current (is) college goals and preferred (should be) college goals differ, if at all, for each size category of college?*

In order to answer this research question, the discrepancy scores were calculated for each goal area for the three groups (Large Colleges, Medium Colleges, and Small Colleges). Then, the goal areas were ranked in descending order by discrepancy score. Kendall's coefficient of concordance was used to determine the extent to which the four groups agreed on the ranking of goals based on discrepancy scores. There was a moderate to strong concordance among the four rankings with  $W = .80, p = .00$ , indicating a high level of agreement in the rankings. As has been the case for every group studied, College Community was the goal area with the highest discrepancy score for all three groups in this category. Innovation was a goal area that was in the top five goals based on discrepancy score for all three groups, and the discrepancy score for Innovation was higher than 1.00 for all groups, indicating an entire level of importance difference between what is preferred and what is perceived as the current level of importance. The Medium Colleges and the Large Colleges included Effective Management in the top five goals based on discrepancy score with scores of 1.10 and 1.00, respectively, but Effective Management was ranked 14<sup>th</sup> by Small Colleges based on discrepancy score, with a score of 0.69. For all three groups, the goal area of General Education had the lowest or next to lowest discrepancy score, indicating a general level of satisfaction with the current level of importance.

The Small Colleges and the Medium Colleges ranked Vocational/Technical Preparation in the bottom five goal areas based on discrepancy score. However, the Large Colleges ranked Vocational/Technical Preparation 11<sup>th</sup>, and this suggests that the Large Colleges have a greater sense of dissatisfaction with the current level of importance of Vocational/Technical Preparation than the Small Colleges and Medium Colleges.

### **Research Question 8**

*To what extent does the Community College Goals Inventory continue to be a reliable and valid instrument for evaluating the goal priorities of community colleges?*

This research question was answered in two ways. Each goal area construct was analyzed for internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha. Then, the answers to the open-ended question in the survey were analyzed. The question asked respondents to suggest any goals or functions of the modern community college that they believed were not covered in the items on the survey.

In general, the four items in the survey that made up each goal area construct demonstrated an acceptable to high level of internal reliability. For the perceived current (*is*) goals, Cronbach's alpha ranged from .67 to .90. The alpha coefficient could be improved for five goal area constructs by removing one item, but these goal areas were already within the acceptable to good range of reliability. Table 32 lists these goal areas with the items that make up the construct. The items that would improve internal consistency by being removed are italicized.

The item that could be removed to improve Cronbach's alpha for the goal construct of Counseling and Advising is related to providing personal counseling services for students. It could be the case that many of the community colleges in the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) do not employ certified or licensed counselors at the colleges. Therefore, this

item could have appeared to be unrelated to the other three items in the scale. A similar situation exists with the item that could be removed to improve the internal consistency of the Student Services construct. This item concerns operating a student health service that provides health maintenance, preventive medicine, and referral services. None of the college in the ACCS operate a formal health center that provides medical care. It is feasible, then, that respondents scored this item very differently from the other items making up the scale. Likewise, the item that decreased the internal consistency for the Faculty/Staff Development is related to providing sabbatical opportunities for faculty and staff. There is no formal policy in the ACCS that allows sabbatical opportunities. So, again, this item was most likely scored very differently than the other items in the scale.

Table 32

*Items that could be removed from the scale of perceived current (is) importance in order to improve Cronbach's alpha for the goal area constructs*

Goal Area Construct	Items	Resulting Improvement in Cronbach's alpha
Vocational/Technical Preparation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To provide opportunities for students to prepare for specific vocational/technical careers, such as accounting, air conditioning and refrigeration, and nursing</li> <li>2. <i>To offer educational programs geared to new and emerging career fields</i></li> <li>3. To provide opportunities for individuals to update or upgrade present job skills</li> <li>4. To provide retraining opportunities for individuals who wish to qualify for new careers or acquire new job skills</li> </ol>	From $\alpha = .796$ to $\alpha = .803$
Counseling and Advising	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To provide career counseling services for students</li> <li>2. <i>To provide personal counseling services for students</i></li> <li>3. To provide academic advising services for students</li> <li>4. To operate a student job-placement service</li> </ol>	From $\alpha = .775$ to $\alpha = .809$
Student Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To maintain support services for students with special needs, such as disadvantaged or handicapped</li> <li>2. To conduct a comprehensive student activities program consisting of social, cultural, and athletic activities</li> <li>3. To provide comprehensive advice for students about financial aid sources</li> <li>4. <i>To operate a student health service that includes health maintenance, preventive medicine, and referral services</i></li> </ol>	From $\alpha = .683$ to $\alpha = .730$
Faculty/Staff Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To commit college resources to faculty and staff development activities</li> <li>2. To provide opportunities for professional development of faculty and staff through special seminars, workshops, or training programs</li> <li>3. To evaluate faculty in an appropriate and reasonable manner in order to promote effective teaching</li> <li>4. <i>To provide flexible leave and sabbatical opportunities for faculty and staff for purposes of professional development</i></li> </ol>	From $\alpha = .779$ to $\alpha = .819$
Accountability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>To consider benefits in relation to costs in deciding among alternative college programs</i></li> <li>2. To provide regular evidence that the institution is actually achieving its stated goals</li> <li>3. To monitor the efficiency with which college operations are conducted</li> <li>4. To be accountable to funding sources for the effectiveness of college programs</li> </ol>	From $\alpha = .903$ to $\alpha = .914$

For the goal areas on the scale of preferred (*should be*) importance, Cronbach's alpha ranged from .59 to .90. An analysis of the items that could be removed to improve the internal consistency of each goal construct found that the internal reliability of seven goal constructs could be improved by removing one item. These goal constructs and items are listed in Table 33. The items that would improve internal consistency by being removed are italicized.

Two of the goal area constructs that could be improved by removing an item, Faculty/Staff Development and Student Services, are two of the same goals from the current (*is*) importance scale. Unlike the perceived current importance where the respondents may have had no experience with or conception of the items on the survey, the preferred importance scale asks the respondents to *imagine* their preferred level of importance for the items listed. Therefore, the lack of internal consistency with goal constructs cannot be explained without further qualitative analysis.

Finally, Research Question 8 was addressed by analyzing the responses to the open-ended survey item, "Please list any missions, goals, or functions of the modern community college that you believe may not have been represented on this survey." The results were categorized by the researcher in terms of a goal or function. A complete list of viable question responses with their goal categorizations can be found in Appendix G. Most of the responses fell into goal areas that were already covered by items in the survey. However, five new goal areas were mentioned by the participants. These new goal areas include Training for Business and Industry, Diversity, Transfer Preparation, Distance Education, and Correctional/Post-Correctional Education.

Table 33

*Items that could be removed from the scale of preferred (should be) importance in order to improve Cronbach's alpha for the goal area constructs*

Goal Area Construct	Items	Resulting Improvement in Cronbach's alpha
General Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To ensure that students acquire a basic knowledge of communications, the humanities, social sciences, mathematics, and natural sciences</li> <li>2. To ensure that students who graduate have achieved some level of reading, writing, and math competency</li> <li>3. To provide a general academic background as preparation for further, more advanced or specialized work</li> <li>4. <i>To ensure that students acquire knowledge and skills that will enable them to live effectively in society</i></li> </ol>	From $\alpha = .711$ to $\alpha = .784$
Vocational/Technical Preparation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To provide opportunities for students to prepare for specific vocational/technical careers, such as accounting, air conditioning and refrigeration, and nursing</li> <li>2. <i>To offer educational programs geared to new and emerging career fields</i></li> <li>3. To provide opportunities for individuals to update or upgrade present job skills</li> <li>4. To provide retraining opportunities for individuals who wish to qualify for new careers or acquire new job skills</li> </ol>	From $\alpha = .723$ to $\alpha = .736$
Personal Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To help students identify their personal goals and develop means of achieving them</li> <li>2. To help students develop a sense of self-worth, self-confidence, and self-direction</li> <li>3. To help students achieve deeper levels of self-understanding</li> <li>4. <i>To help students to be open, honest, and trusting in their relationships with others</i></li> </ol>	From $\alpha = .785$ to $\alpha = .814$
Student Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To maintain support services for students with special needs, such as disadvantaged or handicapped</li> <li>2. To conduct a comprehensive student activities program consisting of social, cultural, and athletic activities</li> <li>3. To provide comprehensive advice for students about financial aid sources</li> <li>4. <i>To operate a student health service that includes health maintenance, preventive medicine, and referral services</i></li> </ol>	From $\alpha = .600$ to $\alpha = .613$
Faculty/Staff Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To commit college resources to faculty and staff development activities</li> <li>2. To provide opportunities for professional development of faculty and staff through special seminars, workshops, or training programs</li> <li>3. To evaluate faculty in an appropriate and reasonable manner in order to promote effective teaching</li> <li>4. <i>To provide flexible leave and sabbatical opportunities for faculty and staff for purposes of professional development</i></li> </ol>	From $\alpha = .590$ to $\alpha = .674$

Goal Area Construct	Items	Resulting Improvement in Cronbach's alpha
College Community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>To maintain a climate in which faculty commitment to the goals and well-being of the institution is as strong as commitment to professional careers</i></li> <li>2. To maintain a climate in which communication throughout the organizational structure is open and candid</li> <li>3. To maintain a climate at the college in which differences of opinion can be aired openly and amicably</li> <li>4. To maintain a climate of mutual trust and respect among students, faculty, and administrators</li> </ol>	From $\alpha = .817$ to $\alpha = .833$
Accountability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>To consider benefits in relation to costs in deciding among alternative college programs</i></li> <li>2. To provide regular evidence that the institution is actually achieving its stated goals</li> <li>3. To monitor the efficiency with which college operations are conducted</li> <li>4. To be accountable to funding sources for the effectiveness of college programs</li> </ol>	From $\alpha = .836$ to $\alpha = .847$

The goal of Training for Business and Industry is a part of workforce development or workforce education (D'Amico, 2017; Garza Mitchell, 2017). Even though Vocational/Technical Preparation can be considered a part of workforce education, none of the four items on the survey that make up the Vocational/Technical Preparation goal area construct refer to skills training outside of typical educational programs. The researcher agrees that Training for Business and Industry, as a part of workforce education, is not a part of the Community College Goals Inventory (CCGI). The Inventory was developed prior to the decades of the 1980s and 1990s, which Phelan (1994) described as the period when community colleges began to turn toward businesses and industries in their local communities to provide these types of services. Therefore, the CCGI did not capture this goal.

Transfer Preparation is certainly considered one of the major (and historical) goals of the community college. There is only one item in the CCGI that indirectly mentions transfer preparation. The item falls within the scale for the goal area of General Education: "To provide a

general academic background as preparation for further, more advanced or specialized work” (ETS, 1991). This item alludes to transfer with the phrase “more advanced or specialize work.” However, the researcher agrees with the respondent that this one small phrase does not adequately capture the scope of transfer education. It is possible that the developers of the CCGI conflated the goal of General Education with transfer preparation, However, as Cohen et al. (2014) pointed out, general education is a function, or goal, that bridges transfer education and vocational education; it is not necessarily a synonym for transfer education.

Another goal that a participant indicated was not covered by the survey instrument was Diversity. Specifically, the goal mentioned by the respondent was to increase the number of diverse faculty members. Eddy (2010) noted that nurturing diversity in the faculty and staff of community colleges is a goal of the American Association of Community Colleges. Magloire (2019) discussed the importance of recruiting, hiring, and retaining more women and more underrepresented minorities on college faculties, and he pointed out that a more diverse faculty and staff contribute to the overall student development.

Two other topics that were mentioned as goals of the modern community college that were not included in the survey were Distance Education and Correctional/Post-Correctional Education. Both of these concepts refer to methods or types of course delivery where students still pursue the traditional goals of General Education and Vocational/Technical Education. Cohen et al. (2014) addressed Distance Education as an important and growing mode of instruction, but the authors did not include Distance Education as a goal of the community college. This researcher agrees with that characterization. Similarly, Cohen et al. (2014) included prison education, whether for credit or not-for-credit, as a part of community service. Again, although Correctional/Post-Correctional education is of high importance to those individuals

served, it can be subsumed under the goals of General Education, Vocational/Technical Education, and/or Community Services.

Although it was not mentioned by a respondent, the goal of adult basic education has become central to the mission of community colleges, especially in the Alabama Community College System. There is no mention of this goal in the CCGI. It is possible that the developers of the CCGI intended for this goal to fall under the goal area of Lifelong Learning. One of the items in the scale corresponding to Lifelong Learning refers to offering educational opportunities to adults of all ages. Also, adult education has often fallen under the category of community services (Cohen et al., 2014; Grubb et al., 1997). This maybe another reason why adult basic education was not a separate goal area in the CCGI.

### **Conclusions**

The following conclusions can be drawn from the data analysis and findings of this study.

#### **Conclusion One**

*There appears to be a high level of agreement concerning the priorities of community college goals among all selected groups of respondents.* Fenske (1980) suggested that most higher education stakeholders do not find the common goals of higher education institutions disagreeable. He noted that the conflict arises in the prioritization of those goals. This appears to be true in the Alabama Community College System in which the grand mean for all goals on the preferred importance scale was at the level of medium importance or higher. Furthermore, the comparison of rankings in priority based on current and preferred levels of importance indicated strong concordance among all the groups. The lowest correlation coefficient when comparing rankings was .755. This was an unexpected result of the study; the researcher expected to find more conflict in the ranking of goal priorities.

## **Conclusion Two**

*Community services does not appear to rise to the level of a major function of community colleges in the Alabama Community College System in terms of goal priorities.*

Beginning with the report of the Truman Commission (1947), two-year institutions were called to serve their local communities. Numerous scholars have described community services or community education as a major function of the community college (Bailey & Averianova, 1998; Cohen et al., 2014; Perez-Vegara et al., 2018; Phelan, 2014). However, in the present study, Community Services and Social Criticism, the two goal areas most directly related to the function of community services, are ranked relatively low in terms of priority. In the priority rankings for all participants, Community Services is ranked 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> based on current and preferred importance, respectively. Social Criticism is ranked 19<sup>th</sup> based on both current and preferred importance. The relatively low rankings are similar across all groups.

## **Conclusion Three**

*Creating a sense of community is a major concern for strategic planners and policy makers in the Alabama Community College System.* ETS (1991) defines College Community “as fostering a climate in which there is faculty and staff commitment to the goals of the college, open and candid communication, open and amicable airing of differences, and mutual trust and respect among faculty, students, and administrators” (p. 50). The goal of College Community had the highest discrepancy score when the grand means for all participants were calculated. In addition, the priority ranking for College Community based on current importance was 15<sup>th</sup>, but the ranking based on preferred importance was fifth. In fact, College Community has the largest difference in priority rankings between the current importance and preferred importance of all the goal areas. This pattern plays out for all the groups when the data are disaggregated. The

notion that all groups of respondents prefer that College Community has much more importance than it is currently given, indicates that establishing a better sense of community is important to the individuals in the Alabama Community College System.

#### **Conclusion Four**

*The Community College Goals Inventory (CCGI) continues to be a generally reliable instrument based on coefficients of internal consistency, but it may not measure all of the goals of the modern community college.* The CCGI is a survey instrument that demonstrated varying levels of reliability in the internal consistency of the items that form the goal area constructs. Cronbach's alpha for the goal areas ranged from .59 to .90. Only six of the goal areas of the 40 goal constructs (20 for current importance and 20 for preferred importance) had alpha coefficients lower than .70, and only one had a coefficient lower than .60. However, as discussed in the findings for Research Question 8, the CCGI does not include several goals that are now identified as major functions of the modern community college including Workforce Development, Diversity, Transfer Preparation, Distance Education, and Correctional/Post-Correctional Education, and Adult Basic Education.

#### **Recommendations for Policy and Practice**

This section provides recommendations for both policy and practice related to goal prioritization in the community college. The recommendations are based on the findings and conclusions that were presented earlier in this chapter, and the recommendations are categorized with respect to their origins in the scholarly literature or in the study results.

#### **Recommendations Related to the Literature**

*The analysis of the missions and goals of the community college should be an ongoing effort at the institutional and system levels.* Amey (2017) as well as Peterson and Uhl (1977)

have written about the time-bound nature of goal preferences. The preferences of goal priorities that were indicated in this study are only valid for this moment in time. In addition to the changing opinions and preferences of individuals, the foci of institutions can change without warning, especially based on the whims of external stakeholders (Grubb et al., 1997). In addition, Connor (1980) pointed out that the goal mix of an institution, or the relative priority balance among multiple goals, is constantly in flux. Therefore, it is important for policymakers and practitioners to recognize the need for constant oversight of the goal priorities of an institution in order that the institution is effective in achieving its mission. This oversight can be facilitated by the institutional research and/or institutional effectiveness units of both the ACCS Office and the ACCS Colleges.

***Institution and system leaders should understand that effective institutional planning requires more than passive input from stakeholders about institutional beliefs.*** Using the results for instruments such as the Community College Goals Inventory only provides passive input from institutional stakeholders (Doucette et al., 1985). In order to effectively set a direction for an institution, simply reading the results of the survey is not enough. It is just as important to engage the stakeholders, whose preferences have been analyzed, in the nuts and bolts planning for the institution. Conrad (1974) also highlighted the fact that goal studies in the vein of the CCGI only measure institutional beliefs, and institutional beliefs are not the only constraint on institutional goals. Goal studies assist in developing goal priorities for the institution, but other factors may influence those priorities. Also, goal studies do not provide leaders with active strategies for reaching desired goals. Developing those strategies requires active input from the institution's stakeholders. Engaging stakeholders in institutional planning should be a chief priority of the ACCS Office and then mirrored by the ACCS Colleges. The ACCS Office leaders

charged with developing any strategic plans for the System should allow a representative sample of ACCS Office employees and ACCS College employees to assist in the development of the plan. Similarly, any institutional planning that occurs at the individual ACCS Colleges should be led by a representative sample of all college employees.

### **Recommendations Related to the Study Results**

*The Alabama Community College System (ACCS) should attempt to close the discrepancy between the preferred importance and the current importance of the College Community goal.* One finding of the study was that the goal area of College Community had the highest discrepancy score and the highest difference in priority rankings between the perceived current importance and the preferred importance. This goal area deals with open communication and trust between administrators, faculty, staff, and students. Without appropriate communication and trust, goal initiatives are likely to fail. Increasing the sense of community on college campuses should begin with the leadership in the ACCS Office. Being transparent in policymaking as well as fostering a sense of shared governance among the ACCS Colleges and the ACCS Office would help create a climate of collegiality. Furthermore, college administrators should consider using a down-up or an up-down-up-down goal setting mechanism as described by Lenning and Micek (1976). These mechanisms allow for individuals who are lower in the decision-making hierarchy to contribute to institutional goal setting in a meaningful way.

*Using the discrepancy score as a means of determining priorities for change may not be the most productive use of strategic planning resources.* Researchers such as Cross (1981) and Fenske (1980) have suggested that discrepancy scores that indicate the difference between current and preferred importance of the goals should be used as an entry point into creating strategies for achieving goals. They have recommended that institutions should tackle the goals

with the highest discrepancy scores first. After reviewing the results of this study, the researcher does not believe using discrepancy scores as a means of determining first steps in strategic planning is appropriate.

Discrepancy scores and differences in goal priorities based on current and preferred importance are two different constructs. For example, a goal area can have a high priority ranking based on both current importance and preferred importance but have a very low discrepancy score. This was the case for the goal of General Education in this study. Alternatively, a goal area can have a low priority ranking based on both current importance and preferred importance but have a high discrepancy score. This was the case for the goal of Innovation in this study. Another option can be seen with the goal of College Community in this study. College Community had a high discrepancy score with a low priority ranking based on current importance and a high priority ranking based on preferred importance. Simply using the discrepancy scores as means of determining which goals to improve has the potential to cause the institution to work on goals that are not a priority for anybody. Therefore, instead of discrepancy scores, using the differences in priority rankings based on current and preferred importance as a guide to the goals on which an institution should focus is a better option.

***The Community College Goals Inventory (CCGI) should be updated to reflect the goals of the modern, comprehensive community college.*** As noted in Conclusion Four in this chapter, the CCGI does not include items to measure the level of importance for several goals of today's community colleges. Specifically, the CCGI should be revised to include the goals of Diversity, Transfer Preparation, Adult Basic Education, and Workforce Development. Since Distance Education and Correctional/Post-Correctional Education can be included in other goal areas, they should not be included as separate goals with a scale of items like the other goal areas. However,

a revision of the CCGI should include items that reflect the use of Distance Education as an instructional mode and the offering of Correctional/Post-Correctional Education as a Community Services. This undertaking could be accomplished by community college scholars in collaboration with practitioners in the nation's community colleges.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This section provides recommendations for future research related to goal prioritization in the community college. The recommendations are based on the findings and conclusions that were presented earlier in this chapter.

*A future study with a similar research design, with an updated Community College Goals Inventory (CCGI), should include more community college stakeholders in the Alabama Community College System, the region, and the nation.* This study was delimited to the strategic planners in the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) as well as the policymakers in the ACCS Office. A more robust study could be undertaken concerning goal priorities in the System by including all employees and students, State legislators, the Board of Trustees, members of the workforce, and community members. A larger population in the study would give voice to all the stakeholder groups that inform policy and practice in the system. Likewise, a regional or national study would give policymakers and practitioners around the country a better understanding of the goals of the modern community college.

A future study should allow the participant to self-report his or her role in relation to the institution. For example, the current study defined the role of College Administrator as the chief executive officer, the chief academic officer, the chief student affairs officer, and the chief financial officer at the institution. In many institutions, depending on the governance structure, an administrator such as a dean of workforce education may be at the same level within the

decision-making hierarchy as the chief academic officer, but the current research design did not include such individuals as administrators. The results could have been much different if more role types were counted as administrators. Similarly, the results would be more meaningful if the faculty participants were allowed to identify as general education instructors or instructors in career and technical disciplines. Therefore, participants should be allowed to choose his or her role from a predetermined list of options instead of being confined to the roles listed by the researcher.

A future regional or national study should also account for the vertical expansion of the community college mission. In some states, the traditional, comprehensive community college has expanded to offer the baccalaureate degree in some fields. The results of a survey patterned after the CCGI would most likely vary widely when comparing states with traditional two-year institutions and those with two-year institutions that offer a bachelor's degree.

*A future study patterned after this study should include geographic setting as one of the independent variables.* This study included college size as an independent variable but did not include geographic setting of the colleges. The functions of the community college can be highly dependent on the location of the college (rural, suburban, urban) (Ayers, 2011; Frost, 2011; Hardy & Katsinas, 2007). For example, it has been suggested that rural colleges could offer more community services and cultural events than urban colleges, simply because they may be the only institution in a locale that is capable of offering those services.

*The present study was a quantitative descriptive study. A future study should seek to determine qualitatively, or through mixed methods, why respondents believe the goals of the community college used in the study have the level of importance that they do.* As this study was completed and the results were described, the researcher questioned why the participants

believe the goals have the importance that they were assigned. A qualitative study, for example, could answer questions about why the respondents believe General Education and Vocational/Technical Preparation are the most important goals at their institutions or why Innovation is not ranked as high in terms of priority of importance.

*A future study should attempt to determine why community services is not one of the highest priority goals of community colleges.* Despite almost always being included in a list of the most important functions of community colleges, this study indicated that community services is not a top priority. The reasons for this relatively low priority could be numerous. A future study could help to determine why the goal area has low priority as well as which activities stakeholders believe should be included within the function of community services.

*A future study should determine if a relationship exists between the monies spent on particular community college goals and the relative importance of those goals.* This study was based on the problem of the necessity of goal prioritization in the face of resource scarcity. If, indeed, goals are prioritized based on resource scarcity, it would be important to understand if a correlation exists between the two variables.

### **Summary of the Study**

Throughout the last century and into this one, community colleges have become comprehensive institutions with multiple missions. However, because of resource scarcity, it is not possible to give equal priority to every functional goal that makes up the comprehensive mission. The purpose of this study, then, was to understand the goal priorities of strategic planners and system administrators in the Alabama Community College System and the extent to which these different stakeholders agree on those priorities for the community college.

In this quantitative, descriptive study, the researcher sought to understand how stakeholders perceived the importance of different goals of the community college and how the same stakeholders would prefer those goals be prioritized. The researcher also examined how these goal priorities might differ by participant role, namely whether the participant was an ACCS Office employee, a college administrator, a faculty member, or a college staff member. In addition, differences in goal priorities with regard to the participant's location (in a college or in the ACCS office) and college size were analyzed. Data were collected using the Community College Goals Inventory (CCGI) developed by ETS. The CCGI asks respondents to identify the extent to which specific goals *are* being pursued at their institutions and the extent to which specific goals *should be* pursued at their institutions. Finally, the researcher attempted to understand if the CCGI has remained a valid and reliable instrument for measuring the goal priorities of modern community colleges.

An analysis of the results of the study led the researcher to make four major conclusions. First, there is strong agreement concerning the priorities of community college goals among the groups that were surveyed. Second, although it is often listed as one of the major functions of community colleges, the goal of Community Services does not appear to rise to a level of high priority in the Alabama Community College System. Third, creating a sense of community in which there are open lines of communication and trust between administrators, faculty, staff, and students appears to be a major concern for study respondents. Finally, the Community College Goals Inventory appears to be a reliable instrument based on internal consistency, but it does not take into account all the goals of the modern community college.

This study is significant because it adds to the scholarly literature by answering the calls for analysis of the community college mission in light of the increased scrutiny and financial

constraints faced by the institution (Abelman & Dalessandro, 2008; Bailey & Averianova, 1998; Nevarez & Wood, 2010). The study provides researchers and practitioners with information about the current goals of comprehensive community colleges. The study questions the validity of claims that community service is a major function of the modern community college, at least as “community service” is nebulously defined in the current literature.

The study is also significant to the scope of scholarly literature by adding an example of how practitioners can use the study of goal priorities to inform practice. The results of the study provide practitioners with opportunities to see where gaps exist between the perception of current importance of a goal and the preferred importance of a goal. In addition, the study challenges the notion that merely calculating differences in the level of current importance of a goal and the preferred importance of that goal should be a jumping-off point for strategic planning. Also, the study points out ways in which the Community College Goals Inventory can be updated for future use.

Finally, the study is valuable to the scholarly literature because it benefits the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) as it attempts to create a true system of institutions that operate in a unified manner. The study gives ideas to the leaders in the system about where communication gaps may exist, and it points out areas that can be starting points for collegewide and systemwide strategic planning. In order to have an integrated system of colleges, strategic planners at the ACCS Colleges should be able to look for guidance from the ACCS Office for the establishment of systemwide goals. Likewise, the goals established by the ACCS Office should reflect the needs and priorities of the colleges and their communities. This study points out those goal areas that may not have been communicated from the ACCS Office to the colleges

and vice versa and those goal areas that may not share the same level of priority among the groups.

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APPENDIX A:

PERMISSION AGREEMENT TO USE SURVEY INSTRUMENT



PERMISSIONS AGREEMENT

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Address: [Redacted]	
Phone: [Redacted]	Email: frick006@crimson.ua.edu

APPENDIX B:

IRB APPROVAL FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA



December 6, 2019

Bradley Fricks  
Department of ELPTS  
The University of Alabama  
Box 870231

Re: IRB # EX-19-CM-321: "An Analysis of the Perceptions of Strategic Planners and System Administrators in the Alabama Community College System Regarding Community College Goals"

Dear Mr. Fricks,

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your proposed research. Your application has been given exempt approval according to 45 CFR part 46. Approval has been given under exempt review category 2 as outlined below:

*(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:*

*(i) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects*

The approval for your application will lapse on December 5, 2020. If your research will continue beyond this date, please submit the annual report to the IRB as required by University policy before the lapse. Please note, any modifications made in research design, methodology, or procedures must be submitted to and approved by the IRB before implementation. Please submit a final report form when the study is complete.

Please use reproductions of the IRB approved informed consent form to obtain consent from your participants.

Sincerely,



Carpantato T. Myles, MSM, CIM, CIP  
Director & Research Compliance Officer

APPENDIX C:  
SURVEY USED IN THE STUDY

**Informed Consent**

**Please read this informed consent carefully before you decide to participate in the study.**

**Consent Form Key Information:**

- Participate in a study lasting 20-30 minutes about the goals of community colleges
- Take one web-based survey about the importance of the goals of community colleges
- No information collected will connect identity with responses
- No foreseeable risks to you personally or to your institution
- No payment for participating in this study

**Purpose of the research study:** The purpose of this study is to understand how community college stakeholders perceive the importance of the different goals of community colleges as well as the extent to which the different stakeholders agree on the prioritization of those goals. In an era of increasing responsibility for community colleges as well as increasing resource scarcity, institutions are faced with the reality of setting priorities among the goals that they want to achieve. Understanding the priorities of different stakeholder groups is critical for building consensus for the direction of both an institution and a system of institutions.

**What you will do in the study:**

If you agree to participate, taking part in this study involves completing an online, web-based survey that will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. The first two questions ask you for general information about your role and institution. The body of the survey includes goal statements and asks you to indicate how important you believe the goal is at your institution and how important you would prefer the goal to be at your institution. The final question of the survey asks you to suggest any missions, functions, or goals of community colleges that may not have been included in the previous goal statements to which you responded. You will not be asked to disclose your name, your email address, your specific position, or the department in which you work. You may skip any questions you do not want to answer or stop completing the survey at any time.

**Time required:** The study will require about 20-30 minutes of your time.

**Risks:** Essentially, there are no foreseeable risks to you personally or to your institution if you choose to participate in this study. The chief risk is that one or more of the questions might make you feel temporarily uncomfortable while completing the survey, as they ask you to reflect upon aspects of your work environment. However, you may skip any questions you do not want to answer or discontinue your participation at any time. Again, your individual responses will not be reported but, rather, will be used in calculating group statistics by such categories as your institution type (college or ACCS System Office), your role (ACCS System Office staff, college administrator, college faculty member, or college staff member), and the size of your institution (small, medium, or large).

**Benefits:** There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research study. The study may help us understand the importance of different community college goals and how stakeholders prioritize those goals.

**Confidentiality:** In order to protect your privacy and confidentiality, no personally identifiable information will be collected as part of this study. The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your name and other information that could be used to identify you will not be collected or linked to the data. Specifically, the survey will not ask for your name, email address, job title, or specific department, nor will the IP address from which you submit the survey be collected when you respond. All responses will be aggregated and analyzed in categories: institution type, participant role, and college size. Data will initially be stored on a secure website at Qualtrics (<http://www.qualtrics.com>), the survey system provider utilized by the College of Education at The University of Alabama, until the researcher downloads the data for analysis. Once data are downloaded, they will be stored on UA Box. UA Box provides a secure cloud-based system for file and data storage. All data are encrypted both in transit and storage and are maintained on domestic servers. Data will only be available to the researcher and will be deleted and destroyed upon completion of the study. Only aggregated, summarized data will be presented at meetings or in publications. Likewise, no individual responses will be published or provided to any institution.

**Voluntary participation:** Your participation in the study is completely voluntary.

**Right to withdraw from the study:** You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Participation in the survey is completely voluntary. Neither choosing or not choosing to participate in the study, nor deciding to discontinue participation or skipping questions in the survey once you have begun will have any effect on your job or your relations with your employer/institution or with the researchers. There are no alternatives for the study; the only alternative is to not to participate.

**How to withdraw from the study:** If you choose not to participate in the study, please do not continue with the survey. However, since the data is collected anonymously, there will be no way to withdraw your individual data from the study if you complete the survey.

**Compensation/Reimbursement:** You will receive no payment for participating in the study.

**If you have questions about the study or need to report a study-related issue please contact:**

Name of Principal Investigator: Brad Fricks  
Department Name: Educational Leadership, Policy, and Technology Studies in the College of Education  
Telephone: 334-293-4536  
Email address: [frick006@crimson.ua.edu](mailto:frick006@crimson.ua.edu)

Faculty Advisor's Name: Dr. David Hardy  
Department Name: Educational Leadership, Policy, and Technology Studies in the College of Education  
Telephone: 205-348-6874  
Email address: [dhardy@ua.edu](mailto:dhardy@ua.edu)

**If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research study, would like to make suggestions or file complaints and concerns about the research study please contact:**

Ms. Tanta Myles, the University of Alabama Research Compliance Officer at (205)-348-8461 or toll-free at 1-877-820-3066. You may also ask questions, make suggestions, or file complaints and concerns through the IRB Outreach Website at <http://ovpred.ua.edu/research-compliance/prco/>. You may email the Office for Research Compliance at [rscompliance@research.ua.edu](mailto:rscompliance@research.ua.edu).

If you understand the statements above, are at least 19 years old, and freely choose to take part in this study, please indicate this by choosing Yes below, and you will be taken to the first page of the survey questionnaire. Thank you, in advance, for participating in this study.

YES—I agree to participate and continue to the survey.

NO—I do not agree to participate.

## Demographic Information

This survey measures the beliefs people have about the goals of a community college. The first two questions are demographic questions. The next questions ask you to respond to statements of goals for a community college. The survey ends with an open-ended question that asks you to suggest any missions, functions, or goals that may not have been included in the goal statements to which you have responded.

Please choose your current role.

### ACCS Office Staff

(Regardless of your title, choose "ACCS Office Staff" if you work at the ACCS Office.)

### Administrator

(Regardless of your title and for the purposes of this survey, please choose "Administrator" if you are the president, chief academic officer, chief student affairs officer, or chief financial officer at your institution.)

### Faculty

(Regardless of your title and for the purposes of this survey, please choose "Faculty" if your primary responsibility is teaching.)

### Staff

(Regardless of your title and for the purposes of this survey, please choose "Staff" if your role is not included in one of the previous categories.)

Please choose the size of your institution based on the chart below.

College	Size according to Carnegie Classification
Bevill State Community College	medium
Bishop State Community College	medium
Central Alabama Community College	small

Chattahoochee Valley Community College	small
Coastal Alabama Community College	large
Drake State Technical and Community College	small
Enterprise State Community College	small
Gadsden State Community College	medium
Jefferson State Community College	medium
John C. Calhoun Community College	large
Lawson State Community College	medium
Lurleen B. Wallace Community College	small
Northeast Alabama Community College	small
Northwest-Shoals Community College	medium
Shelton State Community College	medium
Snead State Community College	small
Southern Union State Community College	medium
Trenholm State Community College	small
Wallace Community College-Dothan	medium
Wallace State Community College-Hanceville	medium
Wallace Community College-Selma	small

### Goals Statements

Following are 80 statements of possible institutional goals. After reading the statement, you will first answer the question, "How important IS the goal at this institution at the present time?" Then, you will answer the question, "How important SHOULD the goal BE at this institution?"

Consider the institution as a whole in making your judgments. In giving SHOULD BE responses, do not be restrained by your beliefs about whether the goal, realistically, can ever be attained on the campus.

(1= of no importance; 2= of low importance; 3= of medium importance; 4= of high importance; 5= of extremely high importance)

	IS					SHOULD BE				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1. To ensure that students acquire a basic knowledge of communications, the humanities, social sciences, mathematics, and natural sciences	<input type="radio"/>									
2. To teach students methods of inquiry, research, and problem definition and solution	<input type="radio"/>									
3. To offer courses that enable adults in the community to pursue vocational, cultural, and social interests	<input type="radio"/>									
4. To ensure that students who graduate have achieved some level of reading, writing, and math competency	<input type="radio"/>									
5. To increase the desire and ability of students to undertake self-directed learning	<input type="radio"/>									
6. To provide a general academic background as preparation for further, more advanced or specialized work	<input type="radio"/>									
7. To develop students' ability to synthesize knowledge from a variety of sources	<input type="radio"/>									
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
8. To seek to instill in students a commitment to a lifetime of learning	<input type="radio"/>									
9. To ensure that students acquire knowledge and skills that will enable them to live effectively in society	<input type="radio"/>									
10. To instill in students a capacity for openness to new ideas and ways of thinking	<input type="radio"/>									
11. To be committed as a college to providing learning opportunities to adults of all ages	<input type="radio"/>									
12. To award degree credit for knowledge and skills acquired in non-school settings	<input type="radio"/>									
13. To increase students' sensitivity to an appreciation of various forms of art and artistic expression	<input type="radio"/>									
14. To help students identify their personal goals and develop means of achieving them	<input type="radio"/>									
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
15. To help students understand and assess the important moral issues of our time	<input type="radio"/>									
16. To encourage students to elect courses in the humanities or arts beyond required course work	<input type="radio"/>									
17. To help students develop a sense of self-worth, self-confidence, and self-direction	<input type="radio"/>									

	IS					SHOULD BE				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
18. To help students understand and respect people from diverse backgrounds and cultures	<input type="radio"/>									
19. To encourage students to express themselves artistically, such as in music, painting, and film-making	<input type="radio"/>									
20. To help students achieve deeper levels of self-understanding	<input type="radio"/>									
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

After reading the statement, you will first answer the question, "How important IS the goal at this institution at the present time?" Then, you will answer the question, "How important SHOULD the goal BE at this institution?"

Consider the institution as a whole in making your judgments. In giving SHOULD BE responses, do not be restrained by your beliefs about whether the goal, realistically, can ever be attained on the campus.

(1= of no importance; 2= of low importance; 3= of medium importance; 4= of high importance; 5= of extremely high importance)

	IS					SHOULD BE				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
21. To encourage students to become committed to working for peace in the world	<input type="radio"/>									
22. To acquaint students with forms of artistic or literary expression from non-Western cultures, such as African or Asian	<input type="radio"/>									
23. To help students to be open, honest, and trusting in their relationships with others	<input type="radio"/>									
24. To encourage students to have an active concern for the general welfare of their communities	<input type="radio"/>									
25. To provide opportunities for students to prepare for specific vocational/technical careers, such as accounting, air conditioning and refrigeration, and nursing	<input type="radio"/>									
26. To identify and assess basic skills levels and then counsel students relative to their needs	<input type="radio"/>									
27. To make available to community groups college resources such as meeting rooms, computer facilities, and faculty problem-solving skills	<input type="radio"/>									
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

	IS					SHOULD BE				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
28. To provide critical evaluations of current values and practices in our society	<input type="radio"/>									
29. To offer educational programs geared to new and emerging career fields	<input type="radio"/>									
30. To ensure that students who complete developmental programs have achieved appropriate reading, writing, and mathematics competencies	<input type="radio"/>									
31. To offer alternative developmental (basic skills) programs that recognize different learning styles and rates	<input type="radio"/>									
32. To serve as a source of ideas and recommendations for changing social institutions	<input type="radio"/>									
33. To convene or conduct community forums on topical issues such as conservation of energy, crime prevention, and community renewal	<input type="radio"/>									
34. To cooperate with diverse community organizations to improve the availability of educational services to area residents	<input type="radio"/>									
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
35. To provide opportunities for individuals to update or upgrade present job skills	<input type="radio"/>									
36. To work with local government agencies, industries, unions, and other community groups on community problems	<input type="radio"/>									
37. To provide retraining opportunities for individuals who wish to qualify for new careers or acquire new job skills	<input type="radio"/>									
38. To help students learn how to bring about changes in our social, economic, or political institutions	<input type="radio"/>									
39. To be engaged, as an institution, in working for basic changes in our society	<input type="radio"/>									
40. To evaluate continuously the effectiveness of basic skills instruction	<input type="radio"/>									
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

After reading the statement, you will first answer the question, "How important IS the goal at this institution at the present time?" Then, you will answer the question, "How important SHOULD the goal BE at this institution?"

Consider the institution as a whole in making your judgments. In giving SHOULD BE responses, do not be restrained by your beliefs about whether the goal, realistically, can ever be attained on the campus.

(1= of no importance; 2= of low importance; 3= of medium importance; 4= of high importance; 5= of extremely high importance)

	IS					SHOULD BE				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
41. To maintain support services for students with special needs, such as disadvantaged or handicapped	<input type="radio"/>									
42. To commit college resources to faculty and staff development activities	<input type="radio"/>									
43. To provide career counseling services for students	<input type="radio"/>									
44. To conduct a comprehensive student activities program consisting of social, cultural, and athletic activities	<input type="radio"/>									
45. To provide opportunities for professional development of faculty and staff through special seminars, workshops, or training programs	<input type="radio"/>									
46. To provide personal counseling services for students	<input type="radio"/>									
47. To provide comprehensive advice for students about financial aid sources	<input type="radio"/>									
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
48. To evaluate faculty in an appropriate and reasonable manner in order to promote effective teaching	<input type="radio"/>									
49. To provide academic advising services for students	<input type="radio"/>									
50. To operate a student job-placement service	<input type="radio"/>									
51. To operate a student health service that includes health maintenance, preventive medicine, and referral services	<input type="radio"/>									
52. To provide flexible leave and sabbatical opportunities for faculty and staff for purposes of professional development	<input type="radio"/>									
53. To create a campus climate in which students spend much of their free time in intellectual and cultural activities	<input type="radio"/>									
54. To build a climate on the campus in which continuous educational innovation is accepted as an institutional way of life	<input type="radio"/>									
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
55. To maintain a climate in which faculty commitment to the goals and well-being of the institution is as strong as commitment to professional careers	<input type="radio"/>									
56. To create a climate in which students and faculty may easily come together for informal discussion of ideas and mutual interests	<input type="radio"/>									
57. To experiment with different methods of evaluating and grading student performance	<input type="radio"/>									

	IS					SHOULD BE				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
58. To maintain a climate in which communication throughout the organizational structure is open and candid	<input type="radio"/>									
59. To sponsor each year a rich program of cultural events, such as lectures, concerts, and art exhibits	<input type="radio"/>									
60. To experiment with new approaches to individualized instruction such as tutorials, flexible scheduling, and students planning their own programs	<input type="radio"/>									
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

After reading the statement, you will first answer the question, "How important IS the goal at this institution at the present time?" Then, you will answer the question, "How important SHOULD the goal BE at this institution?"

Consider the institution as a whole in making your judgments. In giving SHOULD BE responses, do not be restrained by your beliefs about whether the goal, realistically, can ever be attained on the campus.

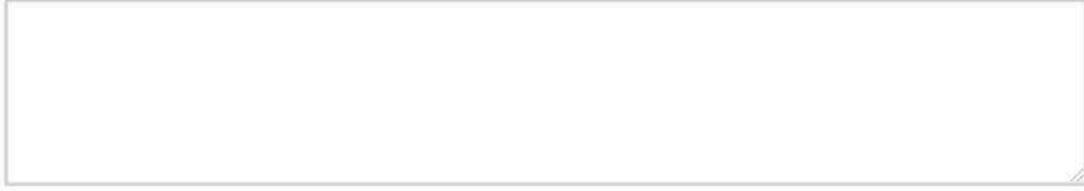
(1= of no importance; 2= of low importance; 3= of medium importance; 4= of high importance; 5= of extremely high importance)

	IS					SHOULD BE				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
61. To maintain a climate at the college in which differences of opinion can be aired openly and amicably	<input type="radio"/>									
62. To create an institution known in the community as an intellectually exciting and stimulating place	<input type="radio"/>									
63. To create procedures by which curricular and instructional innovations may be readily initiated	<input type="radio"/>									
64. To maintain a climate of mutual trust and respect among students, faculty, and administrators	<input type="radio"/>									
65. To ensure that students are not prevented from hearing speakers presenting controversial points of view	<input type="radio"/>									
66. To set student tuition and fees at a level such that no one will be denied attendance because of financial need	<input type="radio"/>									
67. To involve those with appropriate expertise in making important campus decisions	<input type="radio"/>									
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

	IS					SHOULD BE				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
68. To ensure the freedom of students and faculty to choose their own life styles, such as living arrangements and personal appearance	<input type="radio"/>									
69. To offer programs at off-campus locations and at times that accommodate adults in the community	<input type="radio"/>									
70. To achieve general consensus on the campus regarding fundamental college goals	<input type="radio"/>									
71. To place no restrictions on off-campus political activities by faculty or students	<input type="radio"/>									
72. To recruit students who in the past have been denied, have not valued, or have not been successful in formal education	<input type="radio"/>									
73. To be organized for systematic short- and long-range planning for the whole institution	<input type="radio"/>									
74. To protect the right of faculty members to present unpopular or controversial ideas in the classroom	<input type="radio"/>									
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
75. To maintain or move to a policy of essentially open admissions, and then develop worthwhile educational experiences for all who are admitted	<input type="radio"/>									
76. To engage in systematic evaluation of all college programs	<input type="radio"/>									
77. To consider benefits in relation to costs in deciding among alternative college programs	<input type="radio"/>									
78. To provide regular evidence that the institution is actually achieving its stated goals	<input type="radio"/>									
79. To monitor the efficiency with which college operations are conducted	<input type="radio"/>									
80. To be accountable to funding sources for the effectiveness of college programs	<input type="radio"/>									
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

**Open-Ended Question**

Please list any missions, goals, or functions of the modern community college that you believe may not have been included in the previous goal statements that you evaluated.



## **Thank you**

Thank you for participating in this study. Your participation has been extremely helpful. If you are interested in receiving a copy of the results of this study when they are available, please email Brad Fricks at [frick006@crimson.ua.edu](mailto:frick006@crimson.ua.edu).

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APPENDIX D:

TEXT OF RECRUITMENT INVITATION EMAIL SENT TO POTENTIAL STUDY  
PARTICIPANTS

Dear [NAME]:

My name is Brad Fricks, and I am a doctoral student in the Higher Education Administration program at The University of Alabama. I would like to invite you to participate in an on-line survey that I am conducting as part of my dissertation. The purpose of this study is to understand how community college stakeholders perceive the importance of the different goals of community colleges and how they prioritize those goals.

Your participation in this survey is extremely important and will remain confidential. You will not be asked to provide your name or any personally identifiable information, nor will the IP address from which you send your survey response be collected. Submissions are completely anonymous.

I am attaching a file containing more detailed information concerning the study, its purposes, and study participants' rights for you to review as you consider taking part. The information in this file is also provided at the beginning of the on-line survey, and you will be asked to indicate your understanding of the study and your role in it as well as your informed willingness to participate. This is a brief survey that will take approximately 20-30 minutes to read and complete.

In order to participate, please follow the hyperlink: **hyperlink**

If you have any difficulty in accessing the survey directly through clicking on the link, it can be copied and pasted into your web browser instead.

Thank you in advance for taking time to participate in this study. If you are interested in receiving a copy of the results of this study when they are available, please email Brad Fricks at [frick006@crimson.ua.edu](mailto:frick006@crimson.ua.edu).

Sincerely,  
Brad Fricks

APPENDIX E:  
TEXT OF INFORMED CONSENT

Please read this informed consent carefully before you decide to participate in the study.

Consent Form Key Information:

- Participate in a study lasting 20-30 minutes about the goals of community colleges
- Take one web-based survey about the importance of the goals of community colleges
- No information collected will connect identity with responses
- No foreseeable risks to you personally or to your institution
- No payment for participating in this study

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of this study is to understand how community college stakeholders perceive the importance of the different goals of community colleges as well as the extent to which the different stakeholders agree on the prioritization of those goals. In an era of increasing responsibility for community colleges as well as increasing resource scarcity, institutions are faced with the reality of setting priorities among the goals that they want to achieve. Understanding the priorities of different stakeholder groups is critical for building consensus for the direction of both an institution and a system of institutions.

What you will do in the study:

If you agree to participate, taking part in this study involves completing an online, web-based survey that will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. The first two questions ask you for general information about your role and institution. The body of the survey includes goal statements and asks you to indicate how important you believe the goal is at your institution and how important you would prefer the goal to be at your institution. The final question of the survey asks you to suggest any missions, functions, or goals of community colleges that may not have been included in the previous goal statements to which you responded. You will not be asked to disclose your name, your email address, your specific position, or the department in which you work. You may skip any questions you do not want to answer or stop completing the survey at any time.

Time required: The study will require about 20-30 minutes of your time.

Risks: Essentially, there are no foreseeable risks to you personally or to your institution if you choose to participate in this study. The chief risk is that one or more of the questions might make you feel temporarily uncomfortable while completing the survey, as they ask you to reflect upon

aspects of your work environment. However, you may skip any questions you do not want to answer or discontinue your participation at any time. Again, your individual responses will not be reported but, rather, will be used in calculating group statistics by such categories as your institution type (college or ACCS System Office), your role (ACCS System Office staff, college administrator, college faculty member, or college staff member), and the size of your institution (small, medium, or large).

**Benefits:** There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research study. The study may help us understand the importance of different community college goals and how stakeholders prioritize those goals.

**Confidentiality:** In order to protect your privacy and confidentiality, no personally identifiable information will be collected as part of this study. The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your name and other information that could be used to identify you will not be collected or linked to the data. Specifically, the survey will not ask for your name, email address, job title, or specific department, nor will the IP address from which you submit the survey be collected when you respond. All responses will be aggregated and analyzed in categories: institution type, participant role, and college size. Data will initially be stored on a secure website at Qualtrics (<http://www.qualtrics.com>), the survey system provider utilized by the College of Education at The University of Alabama, until the researcher downloads the data for analysis. Once data are downloaded, they will be stored on UA Box. UA Box provides a secure cloud-based system for file and data storage. All data are encrypted both in transit and storage and are maintained on domestic servers. Data will only be available to the researcher and will be deleted and destroyed upon completion of the study. Only aggregated, summarized data will be presented at meetings or in publications. Likewise, no individual responses will be published or provided to any institution.

**Voluntary participation:** Your participation in the study is completely voluntary.

**Right to withdraw from the study:** You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Participation in the survey is completely voluntary. Neither choosing or not choosing to participate in the study, nor deciding to discontinue participation or skipping questions in the survey once you have begun will have any effect on your job or your relations with your employer/institution or with the researchers. There are no alternatives for the study; the only alternative is to not to participate.

**How to withdraw from the study:** If you choose not to participate in the study, please do not continue with the survey. However, since the data are collected anonymously, there will be no way to withdraw your individual data from the study if you complete the survey.

**Compensation/Reimbursement:** You will receive no payment for participating in the study.

If you have questions about the study or need to report a study-related issue please contact:

Name of Principal Investigator: Brad Fricks

Department Name: Educational Leadership, Policy, and Technology Studies in the College of Education

Telephone: 334-293-4536

Email address: frick006@crimson.ua.edu

Faculty Advisor's Name: Dr. David Hardy

Department Name: Educational Leadership, Policy, and Technology Studies in the College of Education

Telephone: 205-348-6874

Email address: dhardy@ua.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research study, would like to make suggestions or file complaints and concerns about the research study, please contact:

Ms. Tanta Myles, the University of Alabama Research Compliance Officer at (205)-348-8461 or toll-free at 1-877-820-3066. You may also ask questions, make suggestions, or file complaints and concerns through the IRB Outreach Website at [http://ovpred.ua.edu/research-](http://ovpred.ua.edu/research-compliance/prco/)

[compliance/prco/](http://ovpred.ua.edu/research-compliance/prco/). You may email the Office for Research Compliance at [rscompliance@research.ua.edu](mailto:rscompliance@research.ua.edu).

## APPENDIX F:

### TEXT OF FOLLOW-UP SURVEY INVITATION EMAIL SENT TO POTENTIAL STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Dear [NAME]:

I am contacting you again regarding a request from me to participate in a brief online survey about the goals of community colleges. If you have already completed the survey, I thank you very much for your participation. If you have not yet completed the survey, I still hope you will take a few minutes to participate in the study.

Again, my name is Brad Fricks, and I am a doctoral student in the Higher Education Administration program at The University of Alabama. I would like to invite you to participate in an on-line survey that I am conducting as part of my dissertation. The purpose of this study is to understand how community college stakeholders perceive the importance of the different goals of community colleges and how they prioritize those goals.

Your participation in this survey is extremely important and will remain confidential. You will not be asked to provide your name or any personally identifiable information, nor will the IP address from which you send your survey response be collected. Submissions are completely anonymous.

I am attaching a file containing more detailed information concerning the study, its purposes, and study participants' rights for you to review as you consider taking part. The information in this file is also provided at the beginning of the on-line survey and you will be asked to indicate your understanding of the study and your role in it and your informed willingness to participate. This is a short survey that will take approximately 20 to 30 minutes to read and complete.

In order to participate, please click on the following hyperlink: [HYPERLINK] If you have any difficulty in accessing the survey directly through clicking on the link, it can be copied and pasted into your web browser instead.

Thank you in advance for taking time to participate in this study. Again, if you are interested in receiving a copy of the results of this study when they are available, please email Brad Fricks at [frick006@crimson.ua.edu](mailto:frick006@crimson.ua.edu).

Sincerely,

Brad Fricks

APPENDIX G:

ANSWERS TO AND CATEGORIZATION OF THE OPEN-ENDED SURVEY QUESTION  
REGARDING ADDITIONAL GOALS OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Response	Goal Area
The college has an effective method by which grievances are handled, including student, faculty, and staff grievances.	COLLEGE COMMUNITY
While the survey included statements related to workforce development, there were no specific references to it. I think the modern community college has become very much focused on preparing students for the workforce. Even though a significant number of our students are planning to transfer to a four-year institution, we still treat most students as if they are pursuing a two-year terminal degree.	VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL PREPARATION TRANSFER PREPARATION
Faculty and staff opportunities for research, which are present at many, but not all, community colleges—	FACULTY/STAFF DEVELOPMENT
Although the need for workforce development and the recruitment of those students in those programs should be evident, community colleges, in particular this one, should not neglect the traditional academic transfer student. For us to continue to grow and evolve here, we need to re-focus on this group and make the recruitment and retention of them a priority again	VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL PREPARATION TRANSFER PREPARATION
To actively seek out and recruit industry partners to participate in programmatic decision making. To focus and align curricular competencies with the current and future occupational skill sets. To use empirical evidence and intelligent data as a resource for decision making To create a community reputation for being the default authority on education, workforce, career, and economic training and development.	VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL PREPARATION EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMUNITY SERVICES
To inspire and facilitate learning, and with a system which holds faculty (& staff) accountable for this learning.	FACULTY/STAFF DEVELOPMENT
Institutions should strive to be Student Ready for all students so that none are left behind. Ours does.	STUDENT SERVICES

<p>Colleges provide opportunities for the student(s) to experience work-based learning through apprenticeships, internships, co-ops as well as opportunities for students to obtain two years at the community college level and transfer into a university. Look at more information as to why many universities don't want to recognize community college instruction, transfer pathways, collaboration efforts that focus on the student and not the institutions, be it the community college or university. Serving people is the goal and all avenues have to be leading to a promising drive so a person can achieve adequate education and training in order to pursue employment through a job or career and become a viable, responsible person in their community, state and society.</p>	<p>VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL PREPARATION TRANSFER PREPARATION</p>
<p>To support work experience programs or internships for all students to better assist with career choices.</p>	<p>VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL PREPARATION</p>
<p>The college administration should truly communicate and listen to the faculty and staff at the ground level. Faculty and Staff should not be punished for bringing up issues and problems that are not popular or what the administration wants voiced. The college administration should not hold grudges and bully employees who have voiced different opinions on how the college and the classes should be handled. The college should foster open communications with all parties involved.</p>	<p>COLLEGE COMMUNITY</p>
<p>We need to ensure that all programs are relevant, provide opportunities for students to grow personally and professionally, and that advisory boards are utilized to guide decisions regarding the program.</p>	<p>PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL PREPARATION EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT</p>
<p>Make available and increase the opportunity to participate in work based learning such as a cooperative work experiences, internships, and/or apprenticeships. Provide access and train on equipment that matches what industry is currently utilizing and new and emerging technologies. Marketing programs associated with high wage/high demand careers. Providing students with a career pathway plan with clear exit and onramps. Recruit and provide financial and support solutions to disadvantaged populations that need education and training to obtain a meaningful career.</p>	<p>VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL PREPARATION COUNSELING AND ADVISING STUDENT SERVICES</p>
<p>An effort to increase the number of diverse faculty members.</p>	<p>DIVERSITY</p>
<p>To provide students with courses that they enjoy so that they are retained and graduated. To provide an education that goes beyond training for the first post-graduation job and helps them as they attain higher levels of jobs.</p>	<p>TRAINING FOR BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL PREPARATION</p>

<p>To provide, or work with community stakeholders to provide, adequate means of transportation for students without reliable transportation to attend classes.</p>	<p>STUDENT SERVICES</p>
<p>The community college system continues its tradition of being part of the Alabama Department of Education. So, the administrators treat faculty more like secondary school teachers than college professors. Perhaps this is an area that should be considered. Perhaps community colleges need to align themselves more with the local colleges. Not only do the community colleges need to provide additional vocational (career tech) opportunities, but there also needs to be continued development for our students to transition to four-year schools. Also, the current trend from ACCS seems to be to make community colleges more like proprietary schools. It is all about the revenue, isn't it? I see very poor counseling for admitting students to see what their aptitudes and opportunities for success really are.</p>	<p>VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL PREPARATION TRANSFER PREPARATION</p>
<p>Increase enrollment Increase job placement efforts for CTE Increase teacher skills</p>	<p>VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL PREPARATION COUNSELING AND ADVISING FACULTY/STAFF DEVELOPMENT</p>
<p>Customer service should be a priority for all modern community colleges. This includes service to students, visitors, and among faculty and staff.</p>	<p>COLLEGE COMMUNITY</p>
<p>Distance Education Correctional and Post-Correctional Education</p>	<p>DISTANCE EDUCATION CORRECTIONAL/POST-CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION</p>