The Nature of Relationship Construction and Maintenance for New College Presidents: An Exploratory Study

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THE NATURE OF RELATIONSHIP CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE
FOR NEW COLLEGE PRESIDENTS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

MARK ALLEN

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Doctor of Philosophy

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This is to certify that the dissertation entitled:

THE NATURE OF RELATIONSHIP CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE
FOR NEW COLLEGE PRESIDENTS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

prepared by

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is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Leadership & Change.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the nature of relationships within the context of a new college presidency. The college presidency is unique given the societal importance of higher education and the organizational complexity of academia. To remain relevant in addressing society’s needs a president must successfully create an environment receptive to self-examination and change. Central to a president’s success is the ability to construct and maintain effective relationships. This exploratory research employed a phenomenological approach, interviewing eleven new college presidents as the primary method for gathering data. Through data analysis the researcher captured a deeper understanding of the complex dimensions of relationships. Several themes emerged from the data. Professional relationship challenges included: turbulent relationships with provosts; a propensity to restructure presidents’ cabinets; challenges with faculty relationships; and the importance of board chair relationships. Personal relationships were more challenged by presidents with children. Themes relative to interpersonal constructs found most participants in this study feeling it important to maintain social distance from work colleagues. Several participants lacked trust, or had limited trust, in others (beyond spouses) to discuss sensitive work-related matters. There was a strong sense from the participants that they had not sacrificed authenticity as a result of being president. A majority of the participants experienced sporadic periods of loneliness attributed to leader decision making and lack of non-work related social opportunities. An analysis of the themes related to interpersonal constructs found contradictory views relative to trust, authenticity, social distancing, and loneliness to the degree that many of the presidents were functioning more in a command and control style of leadership rather than a relational approach. All of the presidents
felt that relationship construction and maintenance was foundational to their effectiveness. The
electronic version of this dissertation is at Ohiolink ETD Center, www.ohiolink.edu/etd
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Chapter I: Introduction

Background of the Study

The president must be a shrewd politician and a nimble conflict manager. The rest of the time is spent working with opinionated, often eloquent stakeholders who feel they have the right, even the responsibility, to tell you what to do. (Bennis, 1993, p. 109)

The college presidency is one of the most important positions of leadership in our modern era. The answers to our increasingly complex world are predominantly sought through higher education. This need for advanced knowledge is not limited to research labs and think tanks; it permeates every level of society making access and quality critical issues. Recent statistics demonstrate that higher education in the United States has lost ground among nations with advanced economies, as U.S. college completion rates among young adult workers dropped from number two to number 11 (College Board, 2008). To close this educational gap President Obama challenged higher education to take the lead in college degree attainment among young people by the year 2020 (Broad, 2009). This challenge comes at a time of shrinking financial resources, skyrocketing tuition costs, and debate over the best delivery methods of higher education requiring critical decisions on college campuses nationwide. Those most empowered to meet higher education’s daunting needs, the gate keepers, are college and university presidents. Studies contributing to the understanding of presidential effectiveness will be important to those in leadership positions as well as those selecting new leaders for their institutions.

The face of the college president is changing. The average age of presidents increased to 60 years which suggests a significant turnover in leadership in the upcoming years (American Council on Education, 2007). Those new presidents are coming from increasingly diverse ranks in terms of demographics and past experiences. The number of female presidents more than
doubled over the past twenty years while racial and ethnic minority representation increased by six percent (American Council on Education, 2007).

The nature of the college presidency continues to be highly relational. The leader is not expected to make decisions in solitude, behind closed doors. The position does not provide absolute decision making power. In an organizational climate of shared governance the presidency requires skillful negotiating to navigate among and between the various internal and external stakeholders. Communicating regularly and effectively with individuals and constituency groups is critical to the success of a president's tenure. In his book, *Out in Front*, Lawrence Weill (2009), discussed the importance of presidential relationships as he states, “It is clear that a major component of the learning in assuming a presidency, as well as many of the joys of office, involves relationships within and without the academy” (p. 151). A recent survey of college presidents found their greatest challenge to be maintaining relations with faculty and governing boards (American Council on Education, 2007).

When assuming a presidency, relationships must be constructed in such a manner as to meet the expectations of the campus community which often calls for an agenda of growth and change. Those early days of relationship development are critical to the success of a presidency as echoed by former Moravian college president Roger Martin, “Of all these challenges (of a new president) the building of relationships with staff members, with the faculty, and with the board of trustees is the new president’s most important responsibility during the first several weeks” (as cited in McLaughlin, 1996, p. 24). As the presidency matures there is a different focus on the maintenance of relationships as less time is spent with internal constituents and more focus is on external stakeholders (American Council on Education, 2007).
The college presidency can be distinguished from most positions of organizational leadership in that the culture of academia expects a constant presence, and in many cases, requires that the person live on campus. Relational challenges, thus, extend beyond the world of work, and into the family life of the leader. In her first-hand account of being the spouse of an academic leader, Theresa Johnston Oden (2007) described the challenges, “When my husband switched from teaching at one institution to leading another, our lives changed abruptly and dramatically, and to my mind the only previous experience that was even worthy of comparison was that of becoming parents” (p. 1). Cultural expectations, although varied from campus to campus, envision roles (formal or informal) for family members of presidents within the community. This relational dynamic creates added complexity to the challenges of the leader.

All new leaders face challenges in constructing and maintaining relationships; however, the culture and context of higher education distinguishes presidential relationships from other CEO positions. The demands of the job, the system of shared governance, the diverse representation of stakeholders, the connectedness of family to job, and the societal importance of higher education all contribute to the necessity of understanding the complex nature of relationships and college presidents. This study examined the phenomenon from the perspective of those living the experience.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine the nature of relationship construction and maintenance during the early years of a college presidency. The assumptions were that the nature of relationship development is unique to college presidents as compared to other leaders, and that relationship construction and maintenance is an important factor in determining their effectiveness. The context of higher education is unique in that it has a broad public purpose and
operates in a complex and unclear organizational climate. The culture of the academy does not lend itself easily to obedience to formal leaders as one of its strongest stakeholders, the faculty, historically value autonomy and are often openly skeptical of administrative decision making and change (Bergquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1992; Wergin, 2007). According to a commission created by the Association of Governing Boards to assess leadership in higher education, the president is described as a, “juggler in chief, expected to meet an endless stream of individual needs and special demands within and outside the institution” (as cited in Bornstein, 2003, p. 3). The ability to lead such eclectic and fluid stakeholders, who hold different and competing agendas, in an organization with unclear goals and a blurred governance system places the relational ability of the president central to his or her success. Cohen and March (1974) distinguished higher education from most other organizations in describing it as “organized anarchy” (p. 3).

The effectiveness of a college presidency has often been debated given the nature of organizational life in higher education. Cohen and March’s (1974) and Birnbaum’s (1989) early work argued that the position had little impact on organizational decision making. This belief has been refuted through later research on presidential effectiveness particularly among new presidents (Bensimon, 1991; Birnbaum, 1992). According to Robert Birnbaum (1992):

Leadership (a college president) is defined not only by what leaders do but also and more importantly by the ways in which potential followers think about leadership, interpret a leader’s behavior, and come over time to develop shared explanations for the causes and outcomes of ambiguous events. (p. 3)

Birnbaum’s 1992 study on presidential effectiveness determined that new presidents are found to be more effective than those during the latter years of their tenure (beyond three years).

Countless books and scholarly articles have been written about leadership with little agreement on the definition of the term. In Joseph Rost’s (1991) study of leadership he determined that at the heart of the definition was the relationship, “Leadership is an influence
relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes” (p. 102). The importance of this relational, social process is magnified in the context of the college presidency given the nature of higher education’s complex organizational culture. The relationships are not developed based on disparate power positions or simple transactional processes. They are unique and complex, requiring a great deal of care and understanding to be effective.

This study contributes to the understanding of the nature of college presidential relationships as perceived by those leaders experiencing the phenomenon. There is a considerable body of research on the effectiveness of the college presidency; however, none focus exclusively on the nature of relationship construction and maintenance from the perspective of the president. There is also a large number of biographic works of former presidents that pay little attention to relational understanding; spending a disproportionate amount of time on successes during individual tenures. This study was guided by the following researchable questions:

- How do new college presidents construct and maintain the complex relationships brought about by the unique nature of the leadership position?
- How are their personal and professional lives affected by the relational process?
- How do new presidents interpret, filter, and respond to relationships when considering trust and authenticity in performing the responsibilities of the office?
- How do new presidents feel their relationship development impacted their leadership effectiveness?
Methodology

This study was intended to be exploratory in nature to better understand the phenomenon of relationship construction and maintenance for new college presidents. The underlying approach of the study operated from a phenomenological perspective in that the participants shared different meanings about relationships relative to their presidencies and I, as the researcher, tried to capture the essence of those meanings by thematically analyzing the data. Eleven college presidents, who have been in office for a period of one to four years, were interviewed. The participants were selected from campuses where residency is a required part of the position because this aspect of the job represents an increased level of complexity as it relates to relationships. Beyond the residential requirement, attempts were made to include participants from a variety of different types of institutions as well as broad personal and professional demographic characteristics.

The methodological perspective followed the works of Max Van Manen (1990) who identified a six step approach to researching the lived experience; however, he cautioned that the steps need not be strictly and sequentially followed. They are:

1. turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us as we conceptualize it;
2. investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;
3. reflect on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon;
4. describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;
5. maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;
6. balancing the research context by considering parts of the whole. (pp. 30-31)

The primary method of data acquisition was semi-structured interviews of eleven direct participants of the phenomenon. The interviews were of an in-depth, constructivist nature that allowed the participants to venture into areas where they felt the most important aspects of relationships were meaningful to them (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001). To make the most of each interview a thorough review of available documentation relative to the interviewee was
completed which provided me an opportunity to establish rapport and individualize the experience in an effort to gain deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Kvale, 1996).

To insure that I brought clarity of purpose and an appropriate focus to the interview I reviewed the questions with current presidents not involved in the study. Immediately following the interviews I took ample time to summarize the findings and note interviewee behaviors not capable of capture on tape or through transcription (Kvale, 1996; Stake, 1995). To insure accuracy of participant meaning I provided each with transcripts and summations of the data to review.

The ethical issues involved in this study center around the care and treatment of the participants. The scope and nature of the study was clearly explained to each participant with the understanding that he/she could terminate the relationship at any time. Each participant was told to expect the research process to be completely confidential and in the reporting of any identifiable information fictitious names were used. A statement was provided with respect to available professional support should any aspect of participation result in emotional discomfort (see Appendix B).

An analysis of the data took place through structured methods of analysis as developed by Hycner (1985).

**Position of the Researcher**

I have been in higher education administration for the past thirty years. My lengthy career as an educational administrator was useful in establishing a rapport with the research participants. This type of connectedness may have been less likely if I were new to the profession with little experience. I have also conducted several presidential interviews during my graduate studies giving me an opportunity to refine my skills and techniques.
Being a first generation college student I have always been grateful for the opportunities I was afforded through access to higher education. As I devoted my career to higher education administration I became increasingly fascinated with the leadership in this area, specifically the college president. In different professional settings I was able to subjectively assess the president’s effectiveness based on my emic positioning. My desire to learn more brought me to a Ph.D. in Leadership and Change where I placed a great deal of emphasis on studying this issue.

I understand that my own lived experiences in higher education provided opportunity to form opinions relative to the research and I state my position in an attempt to provide clarity to the reader in my interpretations of the data (Creswell, 2007; Van Manen, 1990). I was also mindful of the primary challenge of interpreting multiple meanings around the phenomenon and did not let my opinions overshadow the search for deeper, objective understanding (Van Manen, 1990). Through phenomenological reduction I sought the essence of the phenomenon without prejudgment; however, according to Kvale (1996), “phenomenological reduction does not involve an absolute absence of presuppositions, but rather a critical analysis of one’s own presuppositions” (p. 54).

**Significance of the Study**

This study was intended to provide a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of new college presidents’ relationships. There was no attempt to generalize the findings. Rather, the reader may interpret their own meaning and, perhaps, be further informed when constructing and maintaining their own relationships. No known studies have examined this phenomenon (relationships) within the context of college presidencies. This study will contribute knowledge to the field of leadership in higher education and provide opportunity for further research.
Organization of the Study

Chapter Two includes a review of the relevant literature specific to relationships and leadership. In order to provide a holistic approach to the lived experience it was necessary to venture broadly into the relational aspects of leadership before discussing higher education. Peter Northouse (2007) describes leadership as, “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 3). Psychologist Howard Gardner (1995) states, “What needs emphasis is that the relationship between leader and followers is typically ongoing, active, and dynamic. Each takes cues from one another; each is affected by the other” (p. 36). James MacGregor Burns’s (1978) tenants of transformational leadership call upon the leader to actively engage and connect with those being led to better understand needs and raise their motivation and morality in the interest of mutually agreed upon goal achievement. All of these leadership experts implicitly and explicitly place a great deal of importance on relationships. These are some of the voices at the top of the funnel as I worked my way down.

There is not a wealth of empirical studies on leadership relationship construction and maintenance; however, it was important to cover areas related to power, trust, authenticity, and their effects on leadership. It was necessary to provide background information relative to the college presidency and effectiveness using such notable experts as Birnbaum, Cohen and March, Fisher, Bornstein, Block-McLaughlin, and Guskin. Towards the narrow end of the funnel those studies found to be most closely related to presidents and relationships were examined.

Chapter Three discusses the methodological approach to the research. The chapter begins with an explanation as to why a qualitative, exploratory study using a phenomenological approach was most appropriate. Immediately following, the specific methods employed in conducting the study are stated.
Chapter Four includes an analysis of the data. In a process sense, this was done following recommended guidelines of analysis developed by Richard Hycner (1985). The steps included: transcription; bracketing and phenomenological reduction; capturing a sense of the whole of each interview; delineating units of general meaning; relating units of meaning to the research questions; verifying units of relevant meaning; clustering units of meaning; identifying themes; writing a summary of each interview; reviewing summaries and themes with each interviewee; modifying themes and summaries (if necessary); identifying general and unique themes for all interviews; contextualizing the themes; and writing a composite summary.

Chapter Five relates the findings to the larger context of relationships and leadership and discusses the conclusions and implications derived from the study. I reiterate limitations outlined in Chapter Three and discuss future opportunities for relate research.

Throughout the study, for the purposes of clarity the term “college president” or “college presidency” also includes those presidents from universities.
Chapter II: Literature Review

Organization of the Literature

The review of the literature will examine, broadly, the nature of leadership relationships and their importance to the leadership process, and then narrow the focus to include literature specific to leadership relationships in the context of the college presidency. Using the research questions as a broad guide, the review will conclude by focusing on literature pertaining to the construction and maintenance of presidential relationships; the affect relationships have on the person (president); issues of trust and authenticity; and how relationships influence the effectiveness of the position. As previously stated, there are no known empirical studies that focus exclusively on presidential relationships and this review will draw from other closely related works.

Presentation of the Literature

Leadership as a relational process. — Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” (Burns, 1978, p. 2).

To begin any study on leadership it is important to briefly discuss the relationship of the term to the focus of the study. How is leadership connected to relationship construction and maintenance? How important is that development to the leadership process? When grappling with these questions it is important to understand that there continues to be no one agreed upon definition for leadership. Reinforced by the Burns (1978) quote at the beginning of this chapter, there continues to be books written and theories posited with little agreement on a simple definition for leadership. It is commonly understood and agreed upon that leadership is a process that involves leaders and followers (Northouse, 2007). This implies that the relationship, whether active or passive, plays a role in the outcome of the leadership dynamic.
In Joseph Rost’s (1991) work, *Leadership for the Twenty-First Century*, he made an argument for the importance of understanding the relational aspects of leadership:

My own view is that it should be no surprise that scholars and practitioners have not been able to clarify what leadership is, because most of what is written about leadership has to do with its peripheral elements and content rather than the essential nature of leadership as a relationship. If scholars and practitioners have not focused on the nature of leadership, it should not surprise any of us who are interested in leadership that we do not know what it is. (p. 5)

Rost went on in his work to discuss the general disagreement over a definition for the term leadership before offering his own. He stated that leadership, “is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real change that reflect their mutual purposes” (p. 102). For leadership to exist, according to Rost, four elements need to be present: the influence relationship must be multidirectional and non-coercive; followers must be actively engaged; real change should be the intent; and mutual purposes must arise from both the leaders and the followers. The central theme in his work focuses on the relationship.

**Transformational leadership.** One of the most respected leadership voices of modern times, James Burns, also found the relationship to be at the heart of leadership. Burns (1978) defined leadership as, “inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations – the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations, of both leaders and followers” (p. 18). According to Burns, “The essence of the leader-follower relationship is the interaction of persons with different levels of motivations and of power potential, including skill, in pursuit of a common or at least joint purpose” (p. 18). This relationship can take different forms. Burns distinguished between transactional and transforming leadership. In transactional circumstances there is a power differential where the relationship is maintained by the leader providing an understood condition that satisfies both the leader and the followers. On the other end of the continuum, transforming leadership is leadership where interaction between the leader
and followers is essential as the expectation is to raise the motivation and morality of both parties towards a higher purpose. Transforming leadership resonates more closely with higher education than transactional leadership because of its societal importance and purpose. Because of the power differential in the leadership process, the leader has the responsibility to interpret and define common goals.

Bernard Bass (1998) advanced Burns’s theory and identified four key components of transformational leadership. Among them is the concept of individualized consideration, which furthers the notion of the relationship as being central to a successful leadership experience. Individualized consideration encourages the leader to interact with the follower in an effort to better understand needs and strengthen the relationship. Bass would contend that transactional and transformational leadership can be exhibited in the same leader depending on the situation; however, transformational leadership is more apt to produce commitment and change to an organization whereas transactional leadership focuses on an organization’s basic needs (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Individualized consideration implies an active engagement between leader and follower; however, Bass’s (1998) remaining transformational components also reinforce the importance of the relationship. Idealized influence occurs when a leader demonstrates strength built on ethical and moral behavior thereby gaining trust and respect among followers (Northouse, 2007). This behavior can be considered foundational to effective relationship development as it creates an emotional tie between leader and followers. Inspirational motivation finds the leader inspiring followers to exceed expectations through effective motivational practices. Although this can be more symbolic than directly relational, it is a dynamic way of endearing the leader to the followers. Finally, intellectual stimulation encourages followers to use their own intellectual
resources to address organizational issues (Northouse, 2007). When fostering relational
development between president and faculty in a system of shared governance, intellectual
stimulation seems to be an essential ingredient to create growth and change in higher education.

Building on the tenants of Burns’s (1978) transforming leadership, Bennis and Nanus
(1985) studied 90 CEOs from a variety of professional contexts resulting in a new leadership
model. This model is built on the concepts of vision, social construction, trust, and deployment
of positive self-regard. A leader needs to articulate an easily understood vision to followers that
holds true meaning to them. In order for the vision to resonate through the organization the
leader must be a social architect to effectively communicate the message. The leader also must
have the relational ability to establish trust among followers. Finally, leaders must understand
who they are, know their strengths and weaknesses, and deploy them effectively to garner
organizational support.

In referencing his model, Bennis (1993) felt that strong leadership requires several
positive attributes. People must feel significant in contributing to the organization. Learning
must be valued in a climate where mistakes provide opportunities to grow and work must be
exciting. Finally, people need to feel a part of the community. Bennis pointed out, “Where there
is leadership there is a team, a family, a unity” (p. 84). The concepts of team and family move
away from the individualized purposes of transactional leadership and align more closely with an
emotional and relational collective purpose.

In his book, *On Becoming a Leader*, Bennis (1989a) discussed the importance of the
leader to get people on her side through relational competence:

They (leaders) have mastered their vocation or profession, do whatever they do well as it
can be done, but they are also masters of the more fundamental, human skills. They’re
able to establish and maintain positive relationships with their subordinates inside the
organization and their peers outside the organization (p. 162).
James Kouzes and Barry Posner (2002a) also drew from the transformational leadership theory as a foundation to advance their research. Focusing on the main themes of over 1,300 leaders from both the public and private sectors, they developed their leadership model. It identifies five practices important for effective leadership including: modeling the way; inspiring a shared vision; challenging the process; enabling others; and encouraging the heart. — Modeling the way” is similar to Bass’s (1998) transformational concept of idealized influence where the leader, through values driven behavior, is effective in leading by example. — Inspiring a shared vision” is closely associated with the transformational concept of inspirational motivation as well as Bennis and Nanus’s (1985) emphasis on establishing a clear vision. — Challenging the process” is closely linked to the intellectual stimulation component of Bass’s work where independent and innovative thinking is encouraged. Bennis (1993) also spoke to the importance of an environment of risk taking and the associated positive aspects of learning from it. — Enabling others to act” is similar to Bass’s individualized consideration whereby the leader demonstrates the value of the individual and supports collaboration. — Encourage the heart,” the final practice of Kouzes and Posner, provides opportunities for celebrated successes in an effort to bring the community closer together.

In their research based book, *The Leadership Challenge*, Kouzes and Posner (2002a) emphasized the value of the relationship in the leadership equation. They stated, — In talking to leaders and reading their cases, there was a very clear message that wove itself through every situation and every action: leadership is a relationship” (p. 21). They went on to cite other studies that connected successful leadership with strong relational abilities. Kouzes and Posner (2002b) believed that the success of their five practices centered on the leader’s willingness and ability to establish meaningful relationships:
Personal involvement is a genuine expression of caring. It helps foster trust and partnership. Leadership cannot be exercised from a distance. Leadership is a relationship, and relationships are formed only when people come into contact with each other. (p. 29)

**Servant leadership.** Another approach to leadership that focuses on the relationship comes from Robert Greenleaf (1977) and his theory of servant leadership. This theory was developed in the 1970’s and gained much support in a variety of leadership settings during the past ten years. Greenleaf, a former AT&T executive, developed his theory based on the concept that leaders serve first, and then lead. His source of inspiration came from the Herman Hesse novel, *Journey to the East* (1932), where, on a mythical journey, a group of adventurers lose their way when their servant, Leo, abandons the expedition. In the end it was determined that the servant was, in fact, the leader. According to Greenleaf (1977), among the qualities of a servant leader, one must possess the ability to listen, demonstrate empathy, and persuade, all in the interest of serving the followers and helping them to grow. These qualities, again, emphasize the relational importance of leadership as the interests of individual growth and development are central to the concept. According to Laub:

> Servant leadership promotes the valuing and development of people, the building of community, the practice of authenticity, the providing of leadership for the good of those led, and the sharing of power and status for the common good of each individual, the total organization and those served by the organization. (as cited in Smith, Montagno, & Kuzmenko, 2004, p. 82)

Several of the characteristics of Greenleaf’s (1977) servant leadership are consistent with the ideals of a successful college presidency. Greenleaf’s belief in the ability to persuade rather than rule is central in forming consensus. Given the nature of shared governance, accountability to trustees, and concern for external stakeholders, the college president must be a master of persuasion. Those who retreat to non-consultative, autocratic decision making will be less likely to succeed (McLaughlin, 1996; Sanaghan, Goldstein, & Gavel, 2008). Greenleaf’s concept of
stewardship also resonates with the college presidency as his belief is that the leader is holding the institution in trust for a greater public purpose (Spears, 1998). Clearly, higher education serves as the institutional bastion for public purpose as its existence is foundational for societal growth and development. Finally, the servant leader's responsibility to the growth of the individual is a fundamental responsibility for all of higher education. The expectation for most campus communities is that their president will embody the characteristics reflected in this model.

**Relational leadership.** The focus on relationships and leadership, from a theoretical perspective is relatively new (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Relational leadership theory has taken two distinct approaches in its early development. The first is from an entity perspective where the focus is on individual attributes and behaviors recognizing that individuals bring a conscious perspective as to who they are when developing a relationship and make choices based on that knowledge. The second is called a relational perspective and approaches relationships and leadership as a socially constructed process with less emphasis on the individuals. This relational perspective recognizes multiple meanings being created by the subjects in the process which gives way for change and re-interpretation of leadership among the participants.

Among the entity perspectives, research has demonstrated that through the formation and awareness of an individual social self-concept one is able to exercise influence (both positively and negatively) in a leadership relationship (Uhl-Bien, 2006). According to Anderson and Chen (as cited in Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 658), a relational self is developed based on learned behaviors through interpersonal relationships with significant others that are brought into and influence leadership relationships through a process of transference. There is also a school of thought that a socially constructed concept of self is established which depersonalizes the self-concept in
order to conform to group behavior, therefore, a leader is potentially more effective when demonstrating prototypical group behavior (Uhl-Bien, 2006).

**Hollander and Julian’s work.** One of the earliest works focusing on the entity perspective comes from Hollander and Julian (Uhl-Bien, 2006). In their writing, they described leadership as a process involving an influence relationship where transactions occur with the expectation that benefit will be derived as being part of the leadership relationship (Hollander & Julian, 1969). Hollander and Julian’s work departed from past focuses on leadership actions relative to effectiveness and more on the group's success as an interdependent system. They emphasized, “The key to an understanding of leadership rests in seeing it as an influence process, involving an implicit exchange relationship over time” (p. 395). They called for more research, particularly with respect to the acquisition and granting of leader legitimacy as part of the relational process of leadership.

**Charismatic leadership.** Another entity approach to relational leadership focuses on the concept of a leader gaining influence by virtue of the charismatic relationship established with followers (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Early studies of charismatic leadership examined the behaviors and characteristics of the leader and afforded little attention to the follower's role in the relationship (Howell & Shamir, 2005). Recent approaches took into consideration the role of followers and their self-concepts that, individually and collectively, determine the nature of a charismatic leadership relationship.

Charismatic relationships find the follower placing high levels of trust in the leader and relinquishing self-interest, moving towards the collective interest of the group (Howell & Shamir, 2005). Followers, in a charismatic relationship, form an emotional attachment to the leader, adopting the leader’s values and goals. Howell and Shamir expanded the traditional
thinking of the nature of followers who identify with charismatic leadership. Past studies had found followers low in self-concept clarity, or who, when in precarious situations, tended to be vulnerable to a charismatic leader. These relationships are built on personalized self-concepts and are susceptible to blind faith from the followers. The followers' attraction to the leader is more dependent on a romanticized notion of qualities and characteristics of a prototypical leader. Howell and Shamir asserted that those with high self-concept clarity may also gravitate to a charismatic leader if there are shared, socialized goals and values. The leader may not possess classic charismatic characteristics (e.g., good looking). The strength of the charismatic relationship is derived in large part based on the leader's ability to satisfy shared goals.

In the context of higher education, charismatic leadership carries potential for adverse organizational effectiveness and growth (Birnbaum, 1992). Drawing on data from a five year study of presidential leadership, Robert Birnbaum identified as many charismatic presidents who lost support and were perceived as unsuccessful as there were those who were seen as effective leaders. According to Birnbaum:

Reliance on personal charisma can diminish the authority of others in the hierarchy, weaken the formal administrative structure of an institution, and leave the college in shambles if the leader suddenly fails or leaves. Charisma can reduce interaction, and lead to acceptance of leader’s acts of faith rather than understanding. (p. 32)

Birnbaum (1992, 2004) emphasized that the strength of higher education institutions comes from a process of shared governance and any concentrated power could threaten the way colleges and universities do business. He also recognized the characteristics of the follower and the context of the situation in enabling a charismatic leader. Given the nature of the academy and the faculty’s natural resistance to administrative leadership, it is less likely for presidential charismatic leadership to dominate the organization (Birnbaum, 2004).
Howell and Shamir’s (2005) belief that charismatic leadership is possible in situations where followers have high self-concepts is more likely to apply to higher education situations. In a model of shared leadership where high education and accomplishment levels breed high self-concepts, commonality of socialized goals and values could provide the context for effective presidents to acquire an aura of charisma based on their successes. As Bennis and Nanus expressed, good leaders “are granted a certain degree of respect and even awe by their followers, which increases the bond of attraction between them” (as cited in Birnbaum, 1992, p. 33). Additionally, conditions for charismatic leadership are more likely when there is organizational vulnerability and uncertainty (Howell & Shamir, 2005). Often, new college presidents are entering climates of uncertainty with followers anticipating and hoping for considerable change.

Social identity theory. Michael Hogg (2001) put forth an entity perspective based leadership theory supported by empirical data that is focused on the above-mentioned prototypical group behavior. Hogg’s social identity theory posits that a leader increases influence and effectiveness through compromising established self-concept behaviors and conforming to group values and behavior. The stronger the identification to prototypical behavior, the more followers will be attracted to the leader. The leader, in turn, is viewing followers less as individuals and more as a collective group within the organization.

Hogg’s (2001) work was inspired by a perceived lack of study of leadership within the context of social psychology. According to Hogg:

Although most perspectives now recognize that leadership is a relational property within groups (i.e., leaders exist because of followers and followers exist because of leaders), there is no analysis of leadership that describes how leadership may emerge through the operation of ordinary social cognitive processes associated with psychologically belonging to a group. (p. 185)
Drawing on the social identity and self-categorization theory and research, Hogg (2001) built his social identity theory. Although leaders come into a leadership situation with a clear identity of self, Hogg argued that the socialization process and perceiving oneself as part of the in-group is as important to leadership effectiveness as are other leader skills and actions. The leader will derive power through depersonalization and conforming to group values and attributes. The more prototypical the leader, the more popular she becomes, increasing social attractiveness and power to exercise influence. Social identity theory is more applicable to situations where there is cohesiveness and commitment to the organization among group members. Hogg was clear to point out that other variables such as leader competence influences effectiveness; however, he felt that the social identity aspects of leadership cannot be discounted when examining leadership situations.

Leader-member exchange (LMX). One of the most widely studied relational theories based on the entity perspective is the leader-member exchange theory. This theory, first developed in the 1970’s as vertical dyad linkage, examined the dyadic exchange (relationship) between the leader and individual followers (Northouse, 2007). The theory purports that there are two groups within an organization. The “in group” consists of those who have established special relationships with the leader and tends to contribute beyond their primary job responsibilities to advance the organization. The “out-group‘ consists of those who stay within the range of their primary responsibilities and establish no close relationship with the leader. Empirical studies support the notion that those with high quality leader-member exchanges (the in-group) are more satisfied and committed to the organization (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Leader-member exchange theory examines the nature of the interactions between the leader and follower (Uhl-Bien, 2006). These interactions are influenced by: individual
characteristics brought to the relationship including physical and psychological factors; expectations of the relationship which are developed by past experiences and knowledge of the current leadership situation; and an assessment of the actual interaction between the entities that have occurred.

Leader-member exchange theory shares a close association with the attributes of transformational leadership (Gerstner, 1998). In a 1992 study conducted by DeLuga a positive correlation was found between individualized consideration and charisma (transformational qualities) and high leadership-member exchange scores (as cited in Gerstner, 1998, p. 20). A 1991 study by Basu also found positive correlations between the two theories (as cited in Gerstner, 1998, p. 20).

Leadership-member exchange can also be closely associated with several of the tenants of servant leadership. The development of mature and successful relationships in the leader member exchange model is built upon the relational characteristics of trust, respect, and mutual learning that take into consideration the individual needs of the follower (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). When addressing the concept of community Greenleaf wrote, “Where community doesn’t exist, trust, respect, and ethical behavior are difficult for the young to learn and the old to maintain” (1977, p. 53).

**A frames approach.** Bolman and Deal (2003) offered a frames approach to understanding leadership where each frame places varying degrees of significance on a leader's ability to construct and maintain relationships. As defined by Bolman and Deal, “A frame is a coherent set of ideas that enable you to see and understand more clearly what goes on day to day” (p. 41). The four frames are: the structural frame; the human resource frame; the political frame; and the symbolic frame. The concept is that if a leader purposefully uses these frames as
lenses to examine an organization from multiple perspectives he will be in a better position to assess needs and take appropriate actions.

The structural frame encompasses an organization’s formal composition including power structure, rules, regulations, and other bureaucratic functions that provide clarity of roles and responsibilities (Bolman & Deal, 2003). The leader is challenged to assess the effectiveness of an organization’s structure in order to meet the intended purpose of the organization. Many factors, both internal and external, can necessitate the need to restructure. Bolman and Deal felt that top down leadership models were more effective for stable situations; however, were less important as complexity and ambiguity increased. Given the complex nature of higher education it would stand to reason that the structural frame would encourage a leadership approach that assesses structural effectiveness cautiously, taking into account organizational politics when considering restructuring (Berquist, 1992). The relational challenge of a college president would increase with the introduction of restructuring plans particularly as they relate to changes in personnel and role responsibilities.

The human resource frame examines the relationship between the organization and the people who make it up (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Those who are well satisfied and identify strongly with the organization will yield higher productivity. At the heart of the human resource frame is the relationship. As Bolman and Deal expressed:

Interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence are vital because, as mentioned earlier, personal relationships are a central theme of daily life in organizations. Many change efforts fail not because managers’ intentions are incorrect or insincere but because they are unable to handle the social challenges of implementation. (p. 168)

The human resource frame is closely associated with Birnbaum’s (1988) interpretation of the collegial institution which spoke to the degree that the organization functions in egalitarian terms. There is an emphasis on the construction of informal relationships between the president
and constituents to influence institutional change. Birnbaum believed that the collegial institution is more likely to exist at smaller institutions.

Bolman and Deal's (2003) political frame looked at organizational decision making with respect to power, resource allocation, and competing interests. They asserted that politics was part of all organizations and takes on different forms depending upon organizational purpose and circumstance. Politics need not be a detriment to the organization if it is responsibly managed. The leader, in the political equation, must be masterful at understanding the political terrain and successfully navigating through it to achieve the goals desired. Within the context of relationships, the leader, in the political frame must negotiate with all stakeholders who are competing for limited resources. Each political encounter has the potential to alter the strength of future relations with those individuals and groups involved in the process.

The political frame carries with it a very strong relational quality, particularly within higher education. Given the nature of shared governance and individual departments competing for limited resources, there are significant limits on the ability of a president to exercise formal authority. According to Bergquist (1992), the political frame, or as he called it, the negotiating culture, is constantly building and shaping coalitions based on mutual interests. Coalitions change membership not based on ideology, but on changing needs. Within this negotiating culture a president must be able to interact effectively with diverse coalitions by being politically astute and nuance relationships in such a way as to not lose too much political capital following each decision. As presidents go about implementing change they must have significant social capital among coalitions to have an impact (Bornstein, 2003).

Bolman and Deal's (2003) final frame, the symbolic frame, is the representation of a culture's values and beliefs. Within the context of an organization it can take many forms and is
derived out of a need to find meaning amongst uncertainty and confusion. According to Bolman and Deal:

In the face of widespread uncertainty and ambiguity, people create symbols to resolve confusion, increase predictability, find direction, and anchor hope and faith. Many events and processes are more important for what is expressed that what is produced. They form a cultural tapestry of secular myths, heroes and heroines, rituals, ceremonies, and stories that help people find purpose and passion in their personal and work lives. (pp. 242-243)

Within the context of higher education there is a heavy emphasis on the president assuming a symbolic role as the face of the institution (Birnbaum, 1992; Bornstein, 2003; Cohen & March, 1974). Key constituents largely evaluate a president through the consistency of her public actions in reflecting the values of the institution (Cohen & March, 1974). This symbolic role, in a relational sense, distances the president from being authentic in interacting with others. According to Bornstein (2004), presidents tend to lose their individualism and become less authentic in the interest of being the embodiment of the institution. This distancing of the self has to impact the nature of relationship development and maintenance.

Bolman and Deal’s (2003) work has been used, in varying degrees, among higher education researchers to better understand the effectiveness of presidents (Bergquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1992). Their work has provided opportunities to observe the significance of relationships relative to political, structural, human resource, and symbolic frames.

**Emotional intelligence.** Daniel Goleman’s (2001) work in the area of emotional intelligence and leadership provides another approach to consider relative to relationship construction and maintenance. He defined emotional intelligence as, “the abilities to recognize and regulate emotions in ourselves and others” (p. 14). Four major domains are associated with Goleman’s emotional intelligence theory including: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Self-awareness relates to knowing what someone
feels. Self-management is the ability to regulate emotions. Social awareness relates to a person’s ability to be empathetic. Finally, relationship management, which is the most complex domain, involves the ability to influence the emotions of others.

Several emotional competencies contribute to the effectiveness of relationship management (Goleman, 2001). The influence competence is strong when a leader is able to understand the reactions of others to an issue and respond with the most appropriate strategy to achieve the desired outcome. Being able to effectively communicate, including the ability to listen and control emotions when hearing bad news, also contributes to effective relationship management. Conflict management competencies, too, contribute to strengthening relationships. In conflict management, the leader must be able to draw upon influence and communication competencies in creating situations where everyone benefits.

Visionary competence is the ability for a leader to draw followers into the articulated vision mostly through the positive energy outwardly exhibited by the leader (Goleman, 2001). Related to the visionary competence is the change catalyst competence where a leader needs to recognize the necessity for change and articulate a vision that will inspire others to challenge the status quo. The building bonds competency demonstrates a leader's ability to choose the right network of people and developing trust and social capital to effectively achieve goals. Finally, the collaboration and teamwork bond is the ability for a leader to develop a team that will have an effective combined emotional intelligence creating a positive work climate. Goleman supported his theory with several psychological studies particularly in the area of neurological research.

Goleman’s (2001) work is interesting in the context of college presidential leadership in that the roles and responsibilities of the president are varied and involve such diverse
stakeholders that strong emotional competencies appear necessary for effectiveness. High intelligence, evidenced through strong academic achievement, is a common characteristic among presidents; however, the distinguishing factors seem to rest with differing levels of emotional intelligence. In Goleman's words:

IQ washes out when it comes to predicting who, among a talented pool of candidates within an intellectually demanding profession will become the strongest leader. In part this is because of the floor effect: everyone at the top echelons of a given profession, or at the top levels of a large organization, has already been sifted for intellect and expertise. At those lofty levels a high IQ becomes a threshold ability, one needed just to get into and stay in the game. (as cited in Cherniss, Extein, Goleman, & Weissberg, 2006, p. 242)

For example, among leaders with high IQs those resonant leaders who display such attributes as empathy and support are more effective than those who demonstrate a more dissident style (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). Research in the area of educational leadership identified those who cultivate positive relationships within their community, including such characteristics as collaboration and building consensus, as being more effective in creating positive change (Cherniss, 1998).

Goleman’s (2006) recent work, Social Intelligence, focused, specifically, on the importance of relationships and their effect on the leader's well-being. As with his earlier works, Goleman drew from a host of disparate research, mostly centered around social neuroscience, to put forth a general theory, albeit unsupported by scientific research. Goleman felt that humans operate on two different emotional levels when interacting with others. Low road emotional interactions are more simplistic, intuitive emotional signals between people that, over time, can have significant impact on general health and well-being. High road emotional signals are processed through self-understanding and enables people to articulate and control feelings. The concept of social intelligence has been under discussion since first identified by Thorndike in the 1920’s; however, through lack of clearly defined constructs, little progress has been made on an
empirically tested theory (Heggestad, 2008). Despite some intellectual leaps, Goleman’s work makes a case for the importance of social interactions, particularly among leaders as it relates to their effectiveness and well-being.

**Leadership and change.** A review of the importance of relationships to leadership, in a practical and theoretical sense, would not be complete without considering change management. The expectation of most new college presidencies is for change to occur (Bornstein, 2003; McLaughlin, 1996; Sanaghan et al., 2008). The concept of change with a new presidency has different meaning constructs depending on stakeholders’ interests. Whether change is anticipated with enthusiasm or fear, it is accepted or rejected based on situational and relational variables. The next several paragraphs will continue to focus at the top of the funnel by examining relevant change management strategies as they relate to leadership relationships.

The greatest challenge to an organizational change effort is resistance (Guskin, 1996a; Kotter, 1996; O’Toole, 1995). Resistance to change takes many forms depending on circumstance. Change expert James O’Toole (1995) identified 33 different causes for resistance in his book, *Leading Change*; several directly relate to human nature’s desire to maintain the status quo in spite of its shortcomings and fear of uncertainty as a result of the change. O’Toole also wrote of the investment people made in creating the current situation. Change would reflect an admission of having been wrong for following previously established practices. Warren Bennis (1989b) targeted resistance to change in a similar manner, “Constant as change has been in this century, vital as it is now, it is still hard to effect, because the sociology of institutions (any group of two or more members) is fundamentally antichange” (p. 147).
Many leadership and change management experts offer prescriptive formulas to leaders for implementing successful change efforts (Bennis, 1989b; Bolman & Deal, 2003; Bridges, 2003; Kotter, 1996). The relational ability of the leader is central to these plans.

Warren Bennis (1989b) offered ten steps to avoiding disaster when initiating change. First, and foremost, is the need to recruit others who will support the proposed efforts. This coalition needs to be able to inspire others, organizationally, to accept the forthcoming change. This requires the leader to adequately distinguish between those who will gain mainstream support from those on the organizational fringes. Relationship construction is central as Bennis pointed out:

Any organization has two structures: one on paper and another that consists of a complex set of intramural relationships. A good administrator understands the relationships and creates a good fit between them and any planned alterations. An administrator who gets caught up in his own rhetoric almost inevitably neglects the demanding task of established constituencies and building new ones. (p. 149)

Bennis ended his prescriptive steps by cautioning that stakeholders need to be actively engaged in the process rather than having change imposed upon them.

John Kotter's (1996) eight stage process for organizational change places the relational importance of forming a guiding coalition second only after establishing a sense of urgency. For most new presidencies there is an expectation for change from the stakeholders which diminishes the need for establishing that sense of urgency. The type of change proposed is the greatest challenge and the guiding coalition becomes central to convincing others of the appropriateness of the vision being put forth. The leader cannot create the change alone, nor can she select the wrong people within the organization to get the job done. According to Kotter:

A strong guiding coalition is always needed – one with the right composition, level of trust, and shared objective. Building such a team is always an essential part of the early stages of any effort to restructure, reengineer, or retool a set of strategies. (p. 52)
Kotter (1996) emphasized throughout his book, *Leading Change*, the need for leaders to have a team of trusted people working with them to transform an organization. Because of the rapid and complex pace of today’s world a single leader cannot succeed on his own.

Fisher and Koch’s (2004) research on the entrepreneurial college president found that, among other characteristics, the effective (entrepreneurial) president has the ability to find those on campus who are creative and talented enough (the guiding coalition) to assist in seeing the vision to fruition. The president also has to be able to develop those individuals through relationship construction. According to Fisher and Koch, “they (entrepreneurial presidents) are individuals who generate synergy in their institutions and seem almost mysteriously to possess the ability to draw the best from their colleagues” (p. 143).

Kotter’s (1996) process also stressed the importance of effective communication specifically when introducing a new vision. The leader not only needs to articulate and embody the vision, but be at the receiving end to process feedback and make necessary modifications. Again, relational ability is instrumental to ensuring accurate feedback. Effective communication, particularly listening, from leadership continues to be an integral part of each stage of the change process. Birnbaum (1992) pointed out in his research that it is more important for a college president to listen to faculty perspectives than it is to actually agree with them. According to Birnbaum:

Listening respectfully did not compromise presidents’ ability to act but strengthened it. When presidents provided clear explanations that exposed their intellectual processes to faculty scrutiny, they reinforced the collegial values of their institutions and in doing so, enhanced their own stature. (p. 177)

Change in higher education is complicated by loosely structured systems with divergent and ambiguous goals under a model of shared governance (Bergquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1992; Boyce, 2003; Cohen & March, 1974). Leadership, whether formal or informal, is shared and
fluid depending on the matter at hand. A leader (president) is most effective at implementing change through the power of persuasion and building trust among other leaders on campus (Eckel, Greene, Hill, & Mallon, 1999). An inclusive and transparent change process is helpful in yielding positive results and at the heart of that process is the need for conversation:

A crucial step in implementing institution-wide change is expanding the group of supporters from the few (the president or administrative and faculty leaders) to the many (a critical mass of faculty, administrators, staff, students, and other interested groups). Through the process of informed and energetic conversation, a change permeates a campus by getting others excited about and moving toward change. (Eckel et al., 1999, p. 45)

James O’Toole (1995) pointed to the importance of values-based leadership to bring about responsible change. The strength of leadership is not power based and paternalistic, rather, it is about stakeholder inclusion in the change process. From a relational standpoint, the leader must not distance oneself from affected constituents. According to O’Toole, “Leaders fail when they have an inappropriate attitude and philosophy about the relationship between themselves and their followers” (p. 37). That relationship must be fueled by respect and trust.

The responsibility of presidential relationship development as it relates to significant institutional change on a college campus is not one-sided. As Guskin (1996a) pointed out:

If institutions are to be successful in facing the future, then governing boards and faculty leaders will have to form healthier and more productive relationships with institutional leaders, and to focus on enabling the president to be an effective institutional leader rather than viewing her or him as a hired hand or public figure to be attacked when mistakes are made. (Importance of Leadership section, para. 7)

Guskin also stressed the importance for those surrounding a leader (president) to help manage her through the process of change. This requires a sophisticated understanding of shared vision and willingness for high level collaboration among key stakeholders making the quality of those relationships indispensible.
College presidential leadership and relationships. Having surveyed literature with respect to general leadership and change theory, the focus of the literature review will narrow the funnel to cover studies related to college presidential leadership and relationships. The college presidency has been well researched with respect to the effectiveness of the position; however, I have found no empirical study that focused exclusively on the development and maintenance of relationships. Where relationships are mentioned, the focus tends to be constituent specific and directly related to job performance with little attention paid to the human dimension. There is a significant body of literature that is biographical, or autobiographical, offering some perspective on the personal nature of relationships to the position; however, much of the focus of these works is on the accomplishments that validated the president’s tenure.

One of the earliest and most cited studies relative to the presidency comes from Cohen and March (1974). The study examined 42 college presidents, and key leadership figures around them, to determine the organizational leadership role the position held on college campuses. The study was limited to baccalaureate degree granting institutions and higher.

In general, the study (Cohen & March, 1974) found the college presidency to be a reactive job, high on ceremonial tasks and low on authoritative power. As colleges and universities grew in the 1960’s and 70’s and responded to the larger social and political world around them, the college presidency lost power, becoming more dependent on mediating among constituencies to facilitate change. The environment that presidents worked in was described by Cohen and March as —organized anarchy— (p. 2). In this setting goals are often ill defined and in conflict with one another; processes are not clearly understood; and participants in the organization are constantly changing and moving in and out of power positions depending on their interest.
Cohen and March (1974) found that those who occupied the office took their job very seriously and those around the president often overestimated the amount of actual power associated with the position. The presidents saw this as the pinnacle of their careers, being rewarded for years of hard work, often within academe. They, too, misunderstood the actual power of the position when entering office despite their high degree of personal energy invested in the role. The presidents felt that their self-esteem was very much related to the position. Additionally, they felt that their image and the image of the institution were very strongly connected.

With one notable exception there is little explicit discussion on relationship development and maintenance in the Cohen and March (1974) study. When analyzing the data related to presidents’ time allocations there were references to the large amount of time spent with constituents with an inference that much of this socialization is self-serving and disingenuous. For example, they state:

Both in terms of the status that contact with the president provides and in terms of the minor favors that a president can grant, the president’s attention is a scarce resource of value to those around him. Anyone in the system who claims a position of importance, or who aspires to one, supports his claim by his association with the president. Legislators, local businessmen, alumni, student politicians, faculty, politicians, social and community leaders, newspaper reporters, subordinates, secretaries, bankers, and neighbors enjoy their contact with the president. (p. 150)

In as much as others spend time with president in hopes of some sort of transactional gain, the president appears to enjoy the executive nature of these relationships. The development and maintenance of these relationships also serve the president as a means of establishing social capital that may be necessary in future dealings.

The study (Cohen & March, 1974) does illustrate the changing role of the presidency over the years moving from an autocratic style of leadership to a more participatory style in order
to survive. The inference is that a stronger emphasis on relationship development will yield organizational success as well as personal and professional job satisfaction. The study stopped short of further exploration in terms of relationships and retreated to a consistent pattern of evaluating organizational effectiveness.

Some studies whose focus has been on collegiate culture identified relational characteristics of the presidency. For example, both Bergquist’s (1992), *The Four Cultures of the Academy*, and Birnbaum’s (1988), *How Colleges Works*, explored the importance of interpreting the culture through different frames, similar to the Bolman and Deal’s (2003) work using a larger organizational context. Bergquist wrote more in terms of general leadership but did single out the president’s role and how relationships were influence based on the perceived strength and focus of the leader. For instance, presidents whose strength and identity are in the development culture have more opportunity to approach leadership in a paternalistic sense because they are delivering much needed financial resources to the institution. A president more closely identified in the collegiate culture will depend more on internal, informal relationship development and a collaborative style of leadership.

In a later study by Birnbaum (1992), *How Academic Leadership Works*, the focus is less on institutional culture and more on the presidential effectiveness. This is a qualitative study drawing primarily from interview data of college presidents and senior level leaders collected as part of the Institutional Leadership Project (p. xii), a five year study looking at effectiveness. Thirty-two institutions were involved with the study and an equal number of presidents were chosen and designated as new (under three years in office), and those more senior in tenure.

One of the more interesting relational finding in Birnbaum’s (1992) work involved the issue of distancing and leadership. Although largely dependent on institutional cultural
expectations, the study appeared to support the concept of reducing distance through establishing closer personal relationships among constituents. This would be inconsistent with other studies that found distancing positively related to effectiveness (Fisher, 1984; Fisher, Tack, & Wheeler, 1988). Birnbaum (1992) also referred to a 1990 study by Fujita that analyzed Institutional Leadership Project data to address the issue. According to Birnbaum, the study found that, presidents seen as reaching out to faculty – soliciting opinions, dropping by their offices, eating lunch with them – were more highly supported than those seen as insular, unapproachable, or authoritarian” (p. 35).

Another contribution to relational understanding comes from Birnbaum’s (1992) findings on the changing nature of relationships as presidents moved through their tenure. He concentrated on the relationship between the president and faculty and observed the pattern that develops as a new president receives a warm reception because of faculty disenchantment with the predecessor. Blame is placed on the old leader and hope for change is associated with the newcomer. During the early tenure of a new president there are expectations for action and opportunities for open communication. According to Birnbaum, the new president spends considerable time on campus focused on faculty relationships. As the president matures in office the focus changes to external constituents and access is reduced for faculty. As access becomes limited and faculty expectations are not met then the nature of the relationship could rapidly deteriorate.

Birnbaum’s (1992) work examined relationships in a narrow and aggregate nature with an emphasis on measuring presidential effectiveness. Among the 38 sample interview questions provided in the study, only one directly asks the presidents about their working relationships. None of the questions address relationships beyond major constituency groups.
The work of Estela Bensimon (1991) also contributed, peripherally, to the understanding of presidential relationships by using a multi-frame approach. Bensimon determined that more effective presidents approach the position with a cognitive complexity looking at situations through multiple frames (i.e. – bureaucratic, political, human resource, cultural) (Bensimon, 1989; Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989). Because few presidents possess the cognitive complexity to maximize effectiveness, shared leadership through teamwork can bridge the gap (Bensimon, 1992). For this to work a president must be willing to cede power and forge relationships among team members that will instill a high degree of trust.

Bensimon (1991) also conducted a study on the image shaping of a new president as perceived by faculty. In it, faculty-presidential relationships were discussed to the extent that presidential actions dictated the perceptions of the faculty relative to image. Bensimon’s study used small, economically challenged colleges as she felt the cultures of institutions were significantly different relative to presidential access which would influence the nature and importance of faculty-presidential relationships. For example, a large research institution would have faculty who, culturally, are less connected with the school and afforded little direct access to the president. Smaller colleges with a teaching centered culture have faculty who have a strong identity to the institution, and by virtue of size, more access to its leadership. This qualitative study used four different schools, interviewing 16 faculty members at each institution.

The 1991 Bensimon study found faculty to have a more positive image of the president if the actions taken by the leader were perceived to be aligned with traditional faculty views. Even those presidents whose decisions were contrary to faculty opinions but stayed within the norms of the academic culture were viewed positively as compared to those who took a non-normative
or indifferent position. This study helps contribute to the importance of relationship development and maintenance specific to a given constituency in higher education. According to Bensimon:

> Recognition of the president’s leadership and attributions of success, then, depends greatly on the image of the president. This image, needless to say, is not intrinsic to the office; it does not arise from prescriptive definitions of normative treaties on the presidency. Between and within institutions presidents acquire highly individualized images. (p. 638)

Bensimon recognized that there was not a generic, prescriptive approach to forging successful relationships among and between constituents and much depends on the individual president’s making sense of the position relative to her perspective on leadership and assessment of institutional needs upon taking office (Bensimon & Neumann, 1990).

As evidenced in this section of the literature review, most presidential studies that can be linked to relationships tend to focus on the position and its effectiveness. The relational challenges faced by the uniqueness of the position and how it affects the person is overlooked despite the possibility that this, too, could be a factor in how the president performs his or her tasks. The next section of the review will examine literature relative to the president’s emotional experiences as a leader.

**Personal and professional affects of relationships on the college president.** Most positions of leadership today are not filled by virtue of birth-right. Particularly in higher education, leadership emerges through purposeful actions of those seeking the position combined with the desired need fulfillment of stakeholders within the institution. Through career ascension and other life experiences a sense is made as to what the role of the college president is and how those collective experiences will interact when assuming the position. As the person occupies the office how much of those preconceived perceptions match the reality? How do past
relational experiences differ from those of a president and what impact might this have on performance? This part of the literature review will examine these issues.

The position of a college president represents the pinnacle of one’s success. Whether working through the academic ranks or coming in as an outsider, an assumption to the position is significant past accomplishment. Once there, this long history of success is called into question given the unique nature of the position. As Judith Block McLaughlin (1996) pointed out, “New presidents enjoy the veneration that greets them on arrival, and they are stunned by the vilification that also inevitably comes” (p. 8). Many of the challenges faced by these new leaders were expressed by Kerr and Gade’s (1987):

These presidents will have operated in a multiple series of environments, most marked by confusion about their goals, inconsistent pressures for actions and no actions, substantial constraints, and opportunities small and great, but occasionally nonexistent. Each of those appointed (and often their wives or husbands) will have had their skills intensely tested and their personalities and characters placed under substantial pressures. (p. 29)

In assuming a presidency, a line is crossed, relationally, regardless of past patterns of relationships. Presidents promoted through the most frequent and traditional means, the academic ranks (American Council on Education, 2007) find themselves as outsiders to former colleagues. Presidents hired from outside of academia have less legitimacy among stakeholders within the academy (Birnbaum, 2001; Bornstein, 2004). Those, by virtue of organizational structure, who should be most closely associated with the president, the senior level administrators, begin the relationships wrought with issues (Bensimon, Gade, & Kauffman, 1989). According to former Rhode Island college president, Joseph Kauffman, a new president inherits a staff that could include unsuccessful candidates for the presidency, well connected members to the board of trustees, or simply incompetent members (Bensimon et al., 1989).
Divergent interests and agendas among stakeholders coupled with a self-expectation of invulnerability can create a lonely environment for a president. According to Guskin and Marcy (2002):

Presidents labor under expectations from governing boards, faculty, and administrative colleagues that they be fully ready to embrace their leadership responsibilities and to project confidence at all times. Presidents are not seen as needing much help. For presidents to admit that they want (need?) to seek out external support to share their thoughts, anxieties, and fears can raise questions about their competence and strength – or so they are lead to believe. (p. 12)

David Riesman’s (1987) work, The Lonely President, spoke to the unique relational challenges of the position. Riesman addressed the challenge of a new president who was hired for strong leadership skills, therefore being uncomfortable to confide in trustees on a personal or professional level. There was an expectation of being strong and all-knowing. Presidents were also unable to get too close to faculty as concerns of favoritism could compromise the image. Additionally, the high time demands of the job left little time to establish or maintain friendships outside of the academic culture.

Riesman's (1987) article spent considerable time reviewing the role of the spouse. This is a significant area that is markedly different from most other senior leadership positions outside of higher education. Spousal roles and expectations relative to the president's position are often discussed in the selection process. Although Riesman addressed changing campus community expectations for the spouse, regardless of sex, due to professional career pursuits, there continues to be a desire for most spouses of presidents to have some sort of presence related to the campus.

Riesman’s (1987) work was based on years of interviews of presidents and those surrounding the position. He offered no explanation of methodology; instead he provided specific examples from personal interactions to support his position. He also cautioned that many of his generalizations were exactly that; generalizations, and individual campus cultures
and circumstances will vary. Riesman made a clear and convincing argument that the position of college president does differ from other leadership positions given the unique characteristics of the culture of higher education. The result of these differences makes the person in the position susceptible to superficial relationships and loneliness.

Brodie and Banner (2005) recently completed a qualitative study of research university presidents using a life cycle/case study approach. Modeled after Erikson’s psychological life cycle approach, Brodie and Banner developed their methodology based on the premise that presidents need to achieve certain milestones to move on to the next phase of a presidency. The four phases included the prelude, honeymoon, plateau, and exit periods. Eight presidents were purposefully selected and interviewed over a ninety-minute period using a semi-structured format.

The Brodie and Banner (2005) study offered a first-hand look into the expectations and realities of the university presidency at prestigious institutions. Its use of individual narratives provided rich examples to support the findings, particularly as they related to the emotional wear and tear of the position specific to relationship development and maintenance. For example, during the description of the honeymoon period, much of former president of Stanford, Donald Kennedy’s quotes captured his feelings towards relationships among different constituents.

Kennedy spoke of strains in trustee relationships as follows:

“One (such event) was my divorce and remarriage. That’s an unusual thing for a president to do in office, and I think some board members said, ‘What’s the matter? Presidents don’t do that. They’re not supposed to be like other people and have disruptions in their personal lives.’ (as cited in Brodie & Banner, 2005, p. 32)"

Benno Schmidt, former president of Yale was also candid about his challenges of balancing personal and professional relationships in trying to honor the demands of his wife’s profession which took her away from campus and constituents expectations:
Helen and I talked about the way we were going to do this with a pride and openness that celebrated and protected her career as much as mine. I mean, I said with great pride I thought her career was every bit as important and worthy of respect in terms of family arrangements as mine was. Yet there were significant elements of both the faculty and the student community that really didn’t like that. (as cited in Brodie & Banner, 2005, pp. 253-254)

The Brodie and Banner (2005) study peripherally covered relationships, but did not venture into the deeper meaning of those relationships from the perspective of the study’s participants. Instead, it stayed on course in support of the life cycle approach and paid considerable attention to defining moments (success and failures) in moving through each phase. What the book clearly does demonstrate is the toll taken on those who occupy the office, particularly at larger, research oriented institutions. Of the eight interviewed, only one left office happily.

Rita Bornstein’s (2003) work, *Legitimacy in the Academic Presidency*, studied the presidency from the perspective of changing times demanding new college presidents to earn their legitimacy, both internally and externally, in order to promote growth and change. She addressed the increasingly diverse backgrounds of incoming presidents coupled with the changing role of the position, which demands more expertise in managing and fundraising, all increasing the need for those leaders to be viewed as legitimate. Bornstein identified five factors related to presidential legitimacy: individual, institutional, environmental, technical, and moral (p. 25). These factors do not stand independently as one may influence the others. In her survey of college presidents, Bornstein found the most responsive factors to earning legitimacy were technical (fulfilling basic leadership functions such as managing, budgeting, etc.) and moral factors.

Bornstein (2003) went on to discuss threats to presidential legitimacy which move closer to the importance of relationship construction and maintenance and its profound impact on the
person and the position. For example, she discussed the importance of a good cultural fit which is based on the ability to understand the values of the collective institution and relate to those values through interactions with its constituents. She cited several examples of failed presidencies due to cultural clashes. For instance, she wrote, “The president of a denominational university resigned after repeated clashes with constituents over the school’s religious identity, and a perceived top-down, non-collaborative, corporate management style” (p. 47).

The most direct threat to legitimacy, according to Bornstein (2003), was the erosion of social capital which had a direct connection to presidential relationships. She made the point that it is inevitable for a president to make unpopular decisions which erodes social capital. Yet, if a president has taken the time to foster and develop relationships, the social capital he built up could reduce the damage created by difficult decisions. According to Bornstein:

My own view is that although social capital may erode with time, presidents should act as though it is not finite, but replenishable. Capital resources, social as well as financial, can be deposited as well as withdrawn. Relationships should not be neglected and trust not taken for granted, for when a president’s credit with constituents is gone, so is legitimacy. (p. 51)

Her comments are supported by survey findings where an overwhelmingly large number of presidents felt that lost support from faculty or the board resulted in a failed presidency.

Grandiosity is also another threat to legitimacy as presidents, particularly those with early successes, lose perspective and make decisions in the absence of appropriate consultation and support from constituents (Bornstein, 2003). The terms used by respondents to Bornstein’s survey were, “arrogance, ego, hubris, imperial, failure to listen, aloof and distant, out of touch with constituents” (p. 55). This concept of grandiosity often occurs later in a presidency and is very much related to a weakening of collegial relationships.
Bornstein (2003) went on to discuss organizational change in the context of legitimacy suggesting a combination of transformational and transactional leadership styles depending on the circumstance. She stressed the importance of relationships in the change process, “The president’s ability to initiate and implement change depends on the development of relationships of mutual influence and trust with internal and external constituents – the bedrock of social capital” (p. 106). Bornstein spent considerable time highlighting the importance of each key constituency group on campus relative to fostering good relations and building legitimacy in the interests of creating change.

Bornstein (2003) used both a semi-structured interview format and a written survey to acquire the data for the study. Among the 15 interview questions only one made direct reference to relationships. The survey had none. Her work did touch upon the importance of relationships and consequences of inattentiveness to this area; citing several examples of job loss. However, this was a small piece with the larger focus of her study being related to earning and maintaining legitimacy.

Anna Neumann’s (1995) case study of a new college president’s immersion into a well established, fiscally conservative, campus culture focused directly on relationship development and its role in facilitating behavioral change among both the stakeholders and the leader. Neumann mentioned the dearth of educational studies that concentrate on process and structures and the absence of those that focused on experiences, feelings, and learning. She explained, “(there is) no consideration of how persons existing around leaders learn with and from leaders or how leaders in turn learn with and from them” (p. 254). Neumann’s constructivist approach to this study brought out some of the effects relationship development has on both the president’s performance and his personal approach to the position.
Neumann’s study (1995) was an extension of an earlier research study, the Institutional Leadership Project, which studied the goals and values of 32 presidents. She chose the subject for this study, Dr. Alden (fictitious name), because of his effectiveness on the job as determined from the previous study. Neumann interviewed the president and several key leadership figures on the campus focusing on “how” and “why” questions in the context of the developing relationships between the community and the “outsider” president. She distinguished her study from other presidential studies:

This study differs from other studies of college presidents because, rather than using individuals’ views to derive a general, summative picture of the social whole, (e.g., of a social group or organization) that is itself the object of study, it takes as its point of departure the complex and evolving particularities of a relationship between a new president and a campus culture, including the effects of these particularities on selected individuals existing within the culture (even the new president). (p. 256)

Neumann (1995) concluded that the president, as an outsider, was able to create cultural change through a constructivist approach to leadership. It was through his relationship development that Alden was able to engage other campus leaders which enabled him to learn the culture and reflect that learning back onto the campus community along with changes that he felt necessary to move the institution forward. Neumann concluded her report with a call for more studies that examine the relational aspects of leadership as a means to understanding institutional cultural change. She stated:

Further studies examining institutional life as a form of extended conversation – for example, between people with official status and power and those without – could provide valuable insights on the nature of college and university life and on the co-construction of academic cultures. (p. 275)

In an earlier study, Neumann (1988) researched the nature of presidential mistakes as reported by those presidents participating in the study. Among the most common mistakes were mistakes of omission with a president failing to take action when dealing with a relationship
issue. According to Neumann, “in virtually every case, the president, in speaking of his mistake, focused on his one-to-one relationship or interaction with another key college leader” (1988, p. 4). In many of the cases the presidents admitted that they did not act because of a lack of understanding of the situation. These relational mistakes often take valuable time and attention away from other pressing presidential issues.

The 1988 Neumann study found that learning from relational difficulties was a recurring theme, particularly in the early years of a presidency. The study stated, “the majority of presidents referred to errors that fall in the human and relational domain, rather than in a more inanimate policy, structural, or task domain” (p. 16). This realization from the presidents provided valuable insights for presidents as they move forward in office.

Moving beyond the effects of professional relationships on the person, the presidency is wrought with unique challenges balancing the personal side of life. According to David Riesman (1987), “A good president is a person of sensitivity and feeling who must often make tough decisions. He is not accustomed – and his family is certainly not accustomed – to a life of little privacy and no free time” (p. 144). The president’s role is also very different from that of a CEO in business or public office leaders due to the unique nature of the culture of higher education.

When searching for studies on president’s personal relationships I did not discover a rich body of empirical research. Spouses have been the subject of surveys from professional organizations such as the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, the National Association of State and University Land Grant Colleges, and American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. Most of the interest in presidential studies occurred during the 1980s (Vaughan, 1987).
The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) was the first to conduct an empirical study under the direction of a presidential spouse, Marquerite Corbally (1977). The study assessed the varied roles and responsibilities of spouses where many respondents expressed “excessive demands” placed on them as a result of their circumstances. Several respondents also cited the need to be mindful of their public behavior as it was judged against former spouses and reflected on the current president.

Another presidential spouse, Roberta Ostar, conducted research using a version of the AASCU questionnaire used by Corbally (Ostar, 1983; Ostar & Ryan, 1981). The work was intended to inform an AASCU sponsored spouse program established in 1974 and to create greater awareness among the higher education community regarding the challenges of being a presidential partner. The survey findings identified a personal cost to being the spouse of a president as issues of self-confidence, identity confusion, and lack of gratitude for their contributions were cited. These findings emphasize the relational challenges the president faces in maintaining a positive personal life.

The abovementioned studies of spouses did not include community college participants. In 1986, George Vaughan examined the role of female spouses of community college presidents, followed by Smith (2001) who compared Vaughan’s findings to a similar study of male spouses. Both identified the intrusive nature of the presidential position on the spouses as the majority was expected to be actively engaged in the campus community. Given the context of the participants (community colleges) one can infer that expectations only increase for those at traditionally residential institutions. Approximately 16 percent of community college presidents surveyed by Vaughan (1986, p. 8) lived in campus housing as opposed to 72 percent of
American Association of State Colleges and Universities presidents surveyed during the same time period (Ostar, 1986, p. 103)

Both community college studies had similar findings regarding the supportive nature of the spouse towards the president (Smith, 2001). The nature of that support differed between sexes as the male spouses were asked for advice specific to the president’s role whereas the female spouses were used primarily as a sounding board without expectation for advice giving. Both studies had similar findings relative to the frustrations of being a presidential spouse. Long hours (president) and a lack of privacy were high on the list of frustrations (Smith, 2001; Vaughan, 1986). Pride in their spouses accomplishments and travel opportunities were among the positive aspects in both studies. Smith’s (2001) study found that male spouses also enjoyed the financial rewards of their wives work along with the satisfaction that the women derived by being presidents.

George Vaughan (1987) went on to write (with contributing authors) *The Presidential Team: Perspectives on the Role of the Spouse of a Community College President*, where he reiterated some of his previous research findings and added observations based on additional interviews with spouses. Vaughan was very clear, based on his research, to articulate that “the spouse determines, in part, the effectiveness of the president” (p. 15). He went on to share the frustrations spouses had in finding their identity on campus due to uncertainty regarding community expectations and being limited by their own needs and values. Vaughan also cited lack of time and concerns over the health of the president while dealing with campus crises as key sources of spousal stress; a finding also identified in an Ostar (1986) study.

In 2007 Theresa Johnston Oden wrote of her own experiences as a spouse of an academic leader in a work called *Sousework; Partners Supporting Academic Leaders*. She also made use
of interviews of male spouses of college presidents to provide thoughts on commonalities and differences among the sexes. Oden was candid in discussing the challenges she encountered in her role as spouse which brought considerable strain on family dynamics and made her ineffective as a source of support to her husband. She wrote this book in hopes of enlightening those who will experience the role of presidential spouse so that they might have a better understanding of expectations. Oden wrote:

Knowing that your life is going to be transformed, however, is not the same as knowing how you will react to that transformation. The first month after a new leader takes up his or her post can be a particularly challenging time for both leader and spouse. They step into a way of life that is fully formed, molded by forces outside the family circle. Odds are that it won’t be a perfect fit for everyone. There is room for change, of course, but family needs must be measured against institutional needs. The couple who doesn’t come to grips with this fact is likely to be headed for trouble. (pp. ix-x)

Oden (2007) cited the many challenges identified in previous studies such as identity issues (Ostar, 1983; Vaughan, 1987), lack of privacy (Corbally, 1977), and being supportive of the president (Smith, 2001). Oden also ventured into an area where little is written about, the effect that a presidency has on the leader’s children. Perhaps little is written because of demographics; in 2006, of the 85.5 percent of presidents who had children, only 16.7 percent were under the age of 18 (American Council on Education, 2007). Oden wrote of the challenges children faced by being uprooted from an existing community and placed into a new strange environment. There were also problems with respect to lack of time spent with both parents and community members treating them differently than others because they were the children of the president.

Oden’s observations are consistent with the work of M. Frances Lucas (as cited in Ostar, 1986) who interviewed several children of presidents as part of an American Association of State Colleges and Universities gathering in 1985. The respondents were most troubled by lack of
privacy issues, lack of time spent with their parent (the president), and always being identified as
cchildren of the president thereby calling into question the sincerity of their social interactions.

Judging from the available research on presidential spouses it appears that there are
considerable changes in the nature of these previously established family relationships based on
the unique circumstances brought about by the leadership position. Higher education expert
David Riesman (1980) reported:

Wives may find comfort in realizing they are not alone in being confronted with mistrust
when they have sought to be helpful, or when they were regarded as not helpful enough. The sheer capacity
of the tasks they face may wear them down, not the least of which is
sharing the loneliness that is a characteristic phenomenon among college and university
presidents. (p. 6)

Riesman went on to share that in his observations of presidents and spouses, despite the strains
placed on a marriage, divorce was fairly infrequent but on the rise. This anecdotal, and dated
observation, may be supported by the American Council on Education (2007) survey of
presidents which cited a 2.7 percent increase in divorced presidents between the periods of 1986
and 2006.

Without question, there are aspects of the presidency that appear to positively impact the
spouse-family/president relationship. Whether it be more financial resources for the family
(Smith, 2001) or added educational and travel opportunities (Oden, 2007), there are perks that
contribute to the well-being of the relationships. On the other hand, the literature focuses far
more on the many negative changes and challenges faced by the family as they enter into this
new leadership experience. These changes add to the already challenging relational aspects of
the job. One questions how the president is affected by this disequilibrium and whether or not it
impacts the way the institution is led.
**Trust and authenticity in presidential relationships.** According to Warren Bennis (1989a), “Leaders who trust their co-workers are, in turn, trusted by them. Trust, of course, cannot be acquired, but can only be given. Leadership without mutual trust is a contradiction in terms” (p. 140).

The Bennis quote highlights a critical aspect of leadership that is so dependent on the relational abilities of the leader, that being, the development of trust through actions and interactions. The new college president squarely faces issues of trust in a culture that, by virtue of conflicting and competing stakeholders, is guarded and skeptical of leadership intentions. The acquisition of social capital is dependent on the establishment of trust to foster relationships between the new president and campus constituents (Bornstein, 2003).

**Trust.** In a review of models on interpersonal trust, Lewicki, Tomlinson, and Gillespie (2006) view trust as a “psychological state” being composed of “two interrelated cognitive processes” (p. 6). Further:

The first entails a willingness to accept vulnerability to the actions of another party. The second is that, despite uncertainty about how others will act, there are positive expectations regarding the other party’s intentions, motivations, and behaviors. (p. 6)

When entering into relationships trust levels vary based on a variety of factors (Lewicki et al., 2006). Some researchers posited that initially there is no trust when entering into a relationship and it must be earned over time (Blau, 1964; Luhmann, 1979); others found high levels of trust at the onset of newly formed relationships (Kramer, 1994). Distrust may also be a part of initial relationship development based on many factors including strong organizational cultures being wary of a new comer (Kramer, 1999). The higher education example would be the faculty culture’s skepticism towards the administration, including the president.
In a review of empirical literature on trust in the workplace, Dirks and Ferrin (2001), found conflicting evidence among the studies with respect to trust and performance. For example, 10 studies focused on a correlation between trust levels and communication among supervisors and employees. The authors thought that higher degrees of trust would yield better communication of information from the employees to the supervisor. Six of the studies found a positive correlation where four did not. There appeared to be stronger support for trust affecting attitudes and other cognitive constructs. Dirks and Ferrin found 12 studies that supported the concept of high levels of trust being associated with greater job satisfaction. Finally, Dirks and Ferrin found evidence in the research that trust plays a more important role based on situations. For example, in an environment where decision making and outcomes are ambiguous, trust plays a more significant role in producing desirable effects as people are more open and willing to take risk in a trusting relationship. This finding appears to have direct relevance to the ambiguous nature of the higher education community.

There is general agreement across the different disciplines that there are two conditions necessary for trust to exist: risk and interdependence (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). In the absence of risk, certainty in decision making eliminates the need for trust. The interdependent nature of trust, as described by Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies (1998) is multifaceted and complex. In a relationship there can be varying levels of trust and distrust based on a person’s interpreted understanding of the other person’s whole self. For instance, within a working relationship one might have a high degree of trust in someone because of past performance specific to that discipline yet distrust that same person in matters where past deficiencies were evident (Lewicki et al., 1998).
When developing a new relationship several different factors enter into the equation in establishing initial trust (McKnight, Cummings, & Chervany, 1998). Everyone enters a new relationship with a certain disposition to trust based on past experiences. For instance, some people are generally more trusting than others. According to Wrightsman’s research (as cited in McKnight et al., 1998, p. 478), in the absence of other known factors in a relationship, faith in humanity will increase initial trust levels. Another factor that comes into play is institutionally based trust which emanates from situations and safeguards within the institution that instill a level of confidence in developing a new relationship (McKnight et al., 1998). For example, if a new college president was perceived to be selected in a fair process and there were enough governance rules in place to insure against deleterious decisions by the new person, then there is more reason to trust in the relationship.

As the new trust relationship is forming people begin to fall into specific categories that affect the level of trust (McKnight et al., 1998). For example, those perceived to be part of an “in-group” will garner higher levels of trust than those considered outsiders. This was confirmed in studies by Zucker, Darby, Brewer, and Peng, and Brewer and Silver (as cited by McKnight et al., 1998, p. 480). Reputation is another category used to define people; for example, someone who is seen as successful due to a high level of competence or having a track record of integrity and honesty will instill higher levels of trust with those in the organization. Stereotyping is also a form of categorization and this can be general in nature (e.g., gender) or specific to a position such as a presidency.

Despite the level of trust that is afforded in an initial relationship, experience will quickly impact the strength of the trust bond. According to Fazio and Zanna (as cited in McKnight et al., 1998, p. 483) experiences are more reliable than indirect information in reducing uncertainty.
Therefore, initial actions and interactions of a leader are more powerful than predisposed impressions in establishing trust in relationships.

Trust has been identified as an important construct in several leadership theories, such as transformational leadership (Burns, 1978), servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1979), and leader-member exchange (LMX) theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Brower, Schoorman, and Tan (2000) developed a model that integrates the understanding of LMX, based on 25 years of empirical research, with existing research on interpersonal trust and leadership. Their model of relational leadership asserts that, “The LMX relationship is built through interpersonal exchanges in which parties to the relationship evaluate the ability, benevolence, and integrity of each other” (p. 227). The LMX model focuses exclusively on the context of work whereas the trust construct takes into account other contexts across several domains. Even when examining the work setting, a supervisor-subordinate relationship functioning at a high LMX level may not have the trust of the supervisor to place that person in charge of all tasks. Levels of trust will vary based on a variety of sub-constructs. Therefore, integrating what is known about trust with LMX theory provides opportunity for deeper understanding of leadership effectiveness.

In an empirical study on trust and leadership in educational contexts, Daly and Crispeels (2008) broaden the construct of trust as follows:

The extent to which one engages a relationship and is willing to be vulnerable (willingness to risk) to another is based on communication and the confidence that the latter party will possess: (a) benevolence, (b) reliability, (c) competence, (d) integrity, (e) openness, and (f) respect. (p. 33)

Although little research has been done on trust within an educational context, some studies have made the connection between the positive aspects of trust, as well as the absences of trust, and leadership effectiveness (Daly & Crispeels, 2008). For instance, several studies found that the presence of trust increased academic productivity and collaboration; one study found anxiety and
isolation in an educational environment absent of trust. In their own study, Daly and Crispeels surveyed 292 administrators and teachers in four school districts and used multiple linear regression models to determine that trust, particularly the sub-constructs of respect, risk, and competence, are predictors of leadership.

Adrianna Kezar (2004) wrote an article based on several case studies that argued for the importance of relationships, trust, and leadership over structures and formal processes in determining the effectiveness of college governance. She cited a lack of studies in the areas of relationships and trust related to the collegiate culture. According to Kezar, “Effective governance depends on people being willing to share their insights and ideas. Unless there are relationships of respect and trust, people do not share ideas” (p. 43). Kezar referenced a 1991 case study analysis by Lee finding that, “interpersonal dynamics between the president and the senate chair are instrumental to the success or failure of governance” (p. 40). Kezar also highlighted the importance of trust and relationship development between the president and board in order for there to be effective governance.

In Rita Bornstein’s (2003) research on legitimacy and the college president, trust was one of the required elements for a president’s acceptance and ability to facilitate change. Bornstein’s research, which included interviews of 13 presidents and survey data from 182, illustrated the importance of a president acquiring social capital at the onset of his or her tenure in order to facilitate a collaborative environment conducive to effective leadership. Bornstein referenced Mark Suchman’s work in supporting the argument that presidents need to be perceived as part of the “in group” (as cited in Bornstein, 2003, p. 57). This is consistent with trust research as it relates to categorizing in the initial phases of establishing relationships (McKnight et al., 1998). The president’s mastery of legitimacy among constituents comes from the development of trust.
It is interesting to note that in Bornstein’s interview questions, as well as her survey, there were no direct references to the establishment of trust. Additionally, there were no direct questions related to a president’s strategy in developing relationships among constituents.

Throughout much of literature written by presidents there appears to be agreement that establishing trust among constituents is important; however, as in Bornstein’s (2003) study, little mention is given to a strategy for developing trust. Additionally, there is a gap in the literature particularly in the area of relationship construction and authenticity in higher education. It may be necessary for trust to be established in order for leadership to be effective, but is that trust built solely out of necessity and therefore may lack interpersonal authenticity? For instance, a president has to put a certain level of trust in a key member of the cabinet to perform important tasks; however, is that trust purely based on positionality with the pretense of caring about the individual? What about the reciprocal relationship? Does this environment establish a sense of loneliness for the president and does that impact how he or she approaches the position?

**Authenticity.** According to Kernis and Goldman, authenticity, as a construct, can be divided into four components: awareness, unbiased processing, behavior, and relational orientation (as cited in Toor & Ofori, 2009, p. 301). Awareness refers to an understanding of the self; including strengths, weaknesses, and emotions. Unbiased processing refers to the ability to self-evaluate without distortion. Behavior focuses on acting as the authentic self and not conforming to social pressures. Finally, relational orientation is the genuineness in relationship development and maintenance. In an extensive review of the research literature on self-esteem, Kernis (2003) surmised that authenticity enhances ones self-esteem and enables individuals to form closer relationships.

Authentic leadership can be described as:
A pattern of behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers. (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008, p. 94)

Authentic leaders are self-assured in that they know who they are, particularly with respect to ethics and values and are able to clearly convey those values to followers (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004). Avolio et al. (2004) advanced a theoretical perspective to describe how a leader’s authenticity impacts the attitudes and behaviors of the followers. They propose that the constructs of trust, hope, and positive emotions play a role in strengthening relationships and creating organizational change.

According to research done by Robins and Boldero (as cited in Avioio et al., 2004), leaders are able to develop close relationships with followers through their authenticity:

As they (leaders) convey their attributes, values, aspirations, and weaknesses to followers, and encourage them to do likewise, the foundations for trust and intimacy are established. Followers come to know what the leader values and stands for, and that the leader understands who they are as well. Furthermore, if such insights reveal high levels of congruence between the attributes, values, and aspirations of both parties, the level of trust will deepen and a very close relationship will evolve. Notice, however, that such an intimate, trusting and cooperative relationship is not possible without authenticity and the self-awareness, self-acceptance, and transparent conveyance of one’s actual, ought and ideal selves that accompany it. (pp. 810-811)

In a study by Toor and Ofori (2009) authenticity was shown to be positively correlated with psychological well-being. Additionally, contingent self-esteem (self-esteem derived from meeting expectations of others) was negatively correlated with authenticity and psychological well-being. Using a questionnaire among 32 leaders, regression analysis was performed to develop the findings. Those findings supported earlier conceptualizations and theoretical perspectives made by Kernis and Goldman, and Ilies (as cited in Toor & Ofori, 2009). It should be noted that Toor and Ofori were studying the construction sector outside of the United States.
and the researchers encouraged further studies to address several limitations including sample size. Their findings, however, are consistent with several theoretical perspectives (Kernis & Goldman, 2005; Ilies, 2005; Goldman & Kernis, 2002, all as cited in Toor & Ofori, 2009).

In a relational sense, authentic leaders seek openness and truthfulness in their relationships which positively impacts the psychological well-being of both leader and follower (Kernis, 2003; Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahrgang, 2005). Research indicates that leaders, whether through past relational behavior patterns or current contextual circumstances, who develop less than authentic relationships are adversely affected from the standpoint of psychological well-being and satisfaction (Kernis, 2003). The level of trust and genuineness plays an important role in the leader-follower relationship with the absence of trust reducing one's authenticity.

The challenge for leaders to be authentic in their relationships may rest with how they are measured in terms of effectiveness. In most cases leaders are assessed based on the achievement of organizational interests which leaves them vulnerable to exploitative behavior in the interest of goal achievement (Michie & Gooty, 2005). Therefore, despite the psychological well-being associated with authentic, relational leadership, a driving force is organizational effectiveness, perhaps at the expense of the leader and the followers.

Within the sphere of the college presidency there are conflicting views relative to authenticity and effectiveness. Empirical studies have suggested that social distance and creating an air of “mystique” around the presidency contributes to the position's effectiveness (Fisher, 1984; Fisher & Koch, 2004; Fisher et al., 1988). According to James Fisher:

When a president’s constituents become too familiar with her, they too easily recognize her deficiencies, and her ability to benefit from various charismatic aspects of the presidency is diminished. The result is less effective leadership. (Fisher & Koch, 2004, p. 60)
Bornstein (2003) argued that legitimacy was derived through presidents establishing close working relationships, particularly among trustees, senior administrators, and faculty. Fujita (1990) also found that presidents who invested in relationship development to the degree where there was reciprocal influence in decision making were seen as more effective. According to Fujita, "The president and other campus leaders, particularly among faculty, are in an ongoing dependency relationship where each is constantly defining the other’s reality” (p. 192). Birnbaum (1992) places authenticity, as measured by social distancing, on a continuum feeling that the preferred measure is somewhere in between familiar and distant. He cautions that specific campus cultures should influence the level of closeness a president assumes in developing relationships.

Much of the literature on trust and authenticity relative to presidential relationship development focuses on leadership and organizational effectiveness (Bensimon, 1991; Birnbaum, 1992, 2001; Bornstein, 2003; Cohen & March, 1974; Fisher & Koch, 2004; Fisher et al., 1988). This study looks to go beyond the direct impact of trust and authenticity in organizational decision making by exploring the deeper meaning to the leader involved in these relational processes. For example, if a president experiences a lack of trust among key constituents, or feels she is forced to be less than authentic in the role, how might that alter her leadership perspective? Or, if a president has established quick and trusting relationship and feels that he is bringing his authentic self to the position, how has he been able to do this and does he feel that it makes him a better leader?

**Relationship development and effectiveness.** Relationship development is a key factor in leadership effectiveness; given the unique cultural context of higher education, presidents must be particularly astute at establishing positive relationships early in their tenure in order to
advance their leadership agendas. In his research of university presidents, Arthur Padilla (2005) wrote:

Two of the university’s defining qualities as an organization are the vast variety of stakeholders or publics that depend upon it and the employment relationships with its main employees, the faculty. There are other features contributing to the intricacies of the university, but these two present singular challenges to their leaders and managers. (p. 247)

Padilla found in his study of six seasoned and effective presidents who, as they matured, became more open to discuss their own limitations; were more self-aware which enabled them to form closer relationships with key constituents; and surrounded themselves with like-minded institutional leaders. New leaders have the struggle of striving for effectiveness while, concurrently, gaining solid relational footing among key stakeholders.

In an American Council on Education (2007) study of experienced presidents, they recognized the time that it takes to develop trust and relationships among faculty and observed shorter tenures as an obstacle to effectiveness. These long serving presidents felt in order to win over faculty, a president needed to offer reason and friendship along with the ability to recognize faculty members’ self-interest.

Former president of Connecticut College, Claire Gaudiani, identified important strategies for new presidents to employ in order to advance their vision and emphasized that relationship development was paramount (as cited in McLaughlin, 1996). She recognized that despite the hierarchical structure, presidents really have little power to move a vision forward without the ability to influence through relationships. She stated, “The president’s personal engagement with people sets an important example for everyone who supervises others about how to listen, how to care, how to evolve vision, eventually set goals, evaluate achievements and value people” (as cited in McLaughlin, 1996, p. 63). According to Gaudiani, the president’s ability to establish a
vision in the first two years of office can significantly impact both the health of the institution and the president.

A recent mixed method study, found the effectiveness of new leaders to be contingent upon the transparency of their relationships with followers and the leaders' positivity (Norman, Avolio, & Luthans, 2010). The researchers sampled 304 working adults using various hypothetical situations involving degrees of positivity and transparency among leaders and asked the respondents to evaluate each situation based on the perception of the most effective leader. Those exhibiting high level of positivity; which included such components as hope, resiliency, optimism, and efficacy, along with a communication pattern of transparency, scored significantly higher in terms of perceived effectiveness and trust than those not exhibiting these characteristics. The positive and open leaders also garnered higher levels of trust among the study's participants. Further support for these findings was demonstrated by analyzing qualitative data from participants in a blog.

The hypothetical situation described to participants in this study was based on an organization faced with downsizing which represents a particularly challenging change process (Norman et al., 2010). In the current climate of shrinking fiscal resources in higher education, similarities can be drawn to new college presidents who, early in their tenures, face significant change situations. The Norman et al. study was based on the perceptions of the follower relative to leader effectiveness. It will be interesting to see if there are consistent findings among new presidents' perceptions in this study.

Leader effectiveness has been linked to emotional expressions during observations or interactions with leaders (Conger & Kanungo, 1987; Goleman, 2006; Lewis, 2000). According to the theoretic perspective of Conger and Kunungo (1987), expressions of positive emotions
such as self-confidence and unconventionality by leaders will motivate followers to challenge the
status quo and support the leader’s vision. Goleman (2006) makes a case for leader effectiveness
through emotions by delving into social neuroscience. According to Goleman, “A leader’s
habitual style of interacting can either energize or demotivate people” (p. 78).

Unlike the works of Conger and Kunungo (1987), and Goleman (2006), who built their
theoretic approaches on previous research, Lewis (2000) used an experimental design to
demonstrate that negative emotions exhibited by a leader reduced her perceived effectiveness in
the eyes of the followers. Using survey data collected from 368 participants who viewed leader
behaviors on video tapes, it was determined that behaviors such as anger and sadness diminished
the perceived effectiveness of the leader. Additionally, these negative interactions had a
deleterious effect on the followers in terms of enthusiasm and nervousness.

The link between a leader’s emotions and organizational health, in a relational sense,
creates unique challenges for the new college president’s effectiveness. As earlier demonstrated
in this review, the position carries added challenges including strains on personal relationships
(Corbally, 1977; Oden, 2007; Ostar, 1986), excessive demands of the job (American Council on
Education 2007; McLaughlin, 1996), and the perceived expectation to create change (Bornstein,
2003). How does a college president cope with these challenges? Do expressions of negative
emotions impact effectiveness? Or, does the newness of the position and the self-importance
that comes with being a president help the leader rise above the personal challenges to motivate
others as relationships are being forged?

Many of the presidential studies on effectiveness measured organizational success
through a variety of methods; however, through a review of the literature, I found none that
focused on relationship construction and maintenance from the perspective of the leader. Cohen
and March (1974) utilized presidential interviews as part of their methodology to determine presidential effectiveness but did not focus attention on relational aspects of the job. Fisher et al. (1988) measured effectiveness through a quantitative approach using an "Effective Leadership Inventory" on two different groups of college presidents (pre-selected, perceived effective leaders and a representative group). Despite having a human relations section and other relationally oriented questions on their inventory, the study lacked depth of meaning regarding the development and maintenance of relationships as perceived by the participants. In a follow up study, Fisher and Koch (2004) used an entrepreneurial lens to measure effectiveness. In that study there were qualitative interviews of effective leaders which served as examples in support of the quantitative findings. The depth of those interviews, as reported in the study, did not discuss relational aspects of the presidency in detail. Both studies also used presidents who were identified as effective by colleagues at other institutions, which meant that they had been in office long enough to be viewed externally as successful.

Risacher (2004) used the 1988 survey instrument developed by Fisher et al. (1988) to determine if presidents with backgrounds as chief student affairs officers perceived themselves as effective. In the findings, Risacher’s participants shared the characteristics of effective presidents as determined by past research. Additionally, this group of presidents responded more favorably to a question related to their being warm and affable than did the respondents in the Fisher et al. study. This finding demonstrates that these relational qualities are perceived as important contributors to effectiveness.

When examining qualitative approaches to effectiveness, Robert Birnbaum’s (1992) study made a significant contribution to the research; however, the interview questions to college presidents were primarily strategic and organizational in nature. There were no direct questions
regarding the significance of relationship construction and maintenance as a key factor in contributing to effectiveness. One interesting finding in the study identified newer presidents as being more effective in creating climates of change versus those who have been in office for a considerable amount of time. Placed in a relational context, does maturing of relationships among constituents produce an adverse influence on effectiveness? Birnbaum theorized that the loss of perceived effectiveness among older tenured presidents had more to do with a retreat from earlier developed relationships particularly among faculty. He wrote:

The press of routine obligations, as well as the need to attend to the sporadic crises of institutional life, make it difficult for presidents to continue to engage in the processes of interaction and discussion that marked the first phases of their terms. (p. 90)

Birnbaum found effective presidents willing to invest time in maintaining support of key constituents throughout their tenure. This involved a willing to communicate and make collaborative decisions. What the Birnbaum study did not do was explain how these relational characteristics were best employed.

Summary

This review of the literature has provided information relative to leader relationships from a broad theoretical perspective to a narrower review of scholarship specific to the focus of the study; the construction and maintenance of college presidential relationships. The review has attempted to demonstrate the importance of relationships in the leadership process and identify the need to better understanding this complex process through future research. Clearly, as demonstrated through this review, there is a correlation between relationships and effectiveness in the context of leadership and, specifically, the college presidency. This study went beyond the impact of relationships on organizational effectiveness and looked at the whole lived experience
as perceived by college presidents currently engaged in those relationships in an effort to derive a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.
Chapter III: Methodology

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the nature of relationships as perceived by the leader relative to the specific context of a new college presidency. This qualitative, exploratory study used interviews as the primary method to gather data in the hope of constructing meaning from the participants about the construction and maintenance of relationships by virtue of their unique leadership position. The main inquiry focused on the following questions: How do new college presidents construct and maintain the complex relationships brought about by the unique nature of the leadership position?; How are their personal and professional lives affected by the relational process?; How do new presidents interpret, filter, and respond to relationships when considering trust and authenticity in performing the responsibilities of the office?; How do new presidents feel their relationship development impacted their leadership effectiveness?

Relationships are very much part of the human experience; therefore, qualitative inquiry seemed most appropriate for this particular study. According to Patton (2002):

Qualitative methods facilitate study of issues in depth and detail. Approaching fieldwork without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis contributes to the depth, openness, and detail of qualitative inquiry. (p. 14)

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) found qualitative inquiry to be most appropriate when searching for greater meaning as opposed to quantitative measures of pre-defined variables. Denzin and Lincoln explained:

Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape the inquiry. Such researchers emphasize the value-laden nature of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning. (p. 4)
My interest in choosing a qualitative method was driven by both personal and research purposes. As a life-long educator, specifically in higher education, I am interested in my role as a leader and how I might approach relationship construction and maintenance should I have an opportunity to be president later in my career. From a research perspective, to understand the depth of meaning associated with relational experiences a qualitative approach is prudent and driven by a research purpose (Bickman & Rog, 1998).

Finally, a qualitative paradigm was chosen because it was best suited as a constructivist approach to understand and interpret emergent data (Creswell, 2003). Multiple perspectives were sought relative to the unique life experiences of presidents entering into and maintaining relationships as leaders. As the researcher, I, with an open mind, searched for themes within the data, and uncovered pieces to the puzzle that, hopefully, will lead to further inquiry and depth of understanding.

**Phenomenological Perspective**

A phenomenological approach was used treating presidential relationship construction and maintenance as the phenomenon. Philosophically, phenomenology is rooted in the work of Edmund Husserl who argued that objects do not exist without human consciousness interpreting their meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). According to Creswell (2007), “A phenomenological study describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon” (p. 57). In interviewing eleven relatively new presidents I captured their individual experiences and reduced them to the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). My role, as the researcher, was to interpret between the meanings of the study’s participants (Van Manen, 1990). While, philosophically, I approached the research from a phenomenological perspective; the exploratory nature of the inquiry, the breadth of the topic, and the limited access
to the participants made it difficult to meet the level of depth typically found in a pure phenomenological study. The inquiry covered a broad subject matter (leadership relationships) requiring fairly focused, semi-structured interviews. The participants, as elites, afforded me limited direct access for in-depth inquiry specific to the many dimensions of relationship construction and maintenance for college presidents.

The methodological perspective followed the works of Max Van Manen (1990) as outlined in his book, *Researching Lived Experience*. Van Manen suggested a six step approach to phenomenological research; however, he cautioned that the steps need not be strictly and sequentially followed. They were:

- turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us as we conceptualize it;
- investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;
- reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon;
- describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;
- maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;
- balancing the research context by considering parts of the whole. (pp. 30-31)

I have a serious interest in higher education and the relationships that shape the leadership experience. This interest has driven me to better understand associated concepts through formal learning experiences. In the interest of gaining a deeper understanding, and after finding a gap in the research literature specific to my topic, I conducted this study. My research challenged me to investigate the experience (relationship development and maintenance) through direct contact with those in the midst of the phenomenon. Through a comprehensive review of collected data I reflect on the essential themes identified in an effort to move beyond the seemingly obvious to a deeper level of understanding the phenomenon (Van Manen, 1990).

I was challenged to carefully interpret the research findings through the art of writing. According to Van Manen (1990):
To do research in a phenomenological sense is already and immediately and always a bringing to speech of something. And this thoughtfully bringing to speech is most commonly a writing activity. (p. 32)

The writing is rich with anecdotal narratives, not for the purpose of illustrating a particular finding, but to bring myself and the reader to a greater depth of understanding from the perspective of those living the experience. As I wrote the research report the writing itself provided an opportunity for me to reflect upon my findings, and based on my review of the written word, required the practice of rewriting to better express meaning (Van Manen, 1990). This interpretive, hermeneutic process allowed me to mediate between the different meanings gleaned from the data (Creswell, 2007). The choice of associating more closely with Van Manen’s approach allowed for interpretive interaction for me as the researcher as opposed to Moustakas’s (1994) psychological phenomenological approach where the focus is on describing participants’ experiences while setting aside, or bracketing, the researcher’s views and experiences (Creswell, 2007).

Van Manen (1990) pointed out the importance for the researcher to maintain a strong and focused orientation to the phenomenon being studied. I kept my attention drawn to accurately gathering data specific to presidential relationships and was not distracted by my own pre-conceived notions or those of past related studies. Equally important, particularly for a study of this nature with its topical complexities, I made a point to not get lost in the data collection, interpretation, or the writing as to stray from the research context. Van Manen’s approach encourages periodic opportunities to step back and look at the various pieces under review to insure that they relate to the whole.
Data Collection

The primary method of data collection was through semi-structured interviews of eleven college presidents. The purpose of the interview in hermeneutic phenomenology is to gather narrative material that will promote deeper understanding of the phenomenon and to establish a conversational relationship with the interviewee to help facilitate an understanding of the meaning of phenomenon (Van Manen, 1990). According to Seidman (2006), “At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make out of that experience” (p. 9). Qualitative interview expert, Steiner Kvale (1996) succinctly stated:

> The qualitative research interview is a construction site of knowledge. An interview is literally an *inter view*, an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest. (p. 2)

I enjoyed the opportunity to sit down with these college presidents in one-on-one conversations; establishing relationships with these leaders and gaining rich and candid narrative about their experiences. During my pre-candidacy status of my doctoral studies I had two experiential learning opportunities interviewing college presidents. The first focused on cultural change at one institution as a result of presidential leadership. I interviewed three former, living presidents of the college and performed a historical review of the literature related to the long-standing first president. This project gave me an opportunity to practice the establishment of balance in forming the interview relationship. In the context of a qualitative research interview it is important to establish enough rapport with the interviewee to reach a comfort level where her experiences are openly discussed; however, too much rapport can compromise the quality of the interview by shifting a disproportionate amount of attention to the interviewer’s perspective (Seidman, 2006).
My second experiential learning project/pilot study involved interviewing three current presidents, each with less than three years in office, with the focus of the interview being on relationship construction and maintenance. That project shares considerable commonality to the focus of this research. I developed a series of six primary interview questions along with a subset of questions in the event the interviewee did not address a particular aspect of the primary question. I used a modified version of those questions for this research project (see Appendix A). The questions encouraged the interviewees to share specific stories relative to relationships in order to gaining further depth of the experiences (Van Manen, 1990). These questions were reviewed by two college presidents not participating in the study for their feedback in an effort to further refine the interview (Creswell, 2007).

That experiential learning project/pilot study was very helpful in both the practice of establishing rapport and interviewing elites. Interviewing people of high status brings challenges such as access and the desire for the interviewee to manipulate the direction of the interview (Seidman, 2006). Again, a balance needs to be struck by the interviewer in allowing the interviewee to tell his story without getting too far off topic to compromise the intended purpose of the interview. This point is echoed by Van Manen (1990), “It is important to realize that the interview process needs to be disciplined by the fundamental question that prompted the need for the interview in the first place” (p. 66).

The experiential learning project/pilot study did serve as wonderful practice in honing my interview skills. Having learned from a previous project involving presidential interviews, I understood the delicate balance of having an interviewee tell her story, and what is most important to her, while not straying too far off topic. During this pilot study, when we were
sufficiently moving away from the focus of the interview, I gently redirected questioning to get back on track.

The experiential learning project/pilot study was also of value in identifying themes through an analysis of the interview data relative to relationship construction and maintenance. Although only three presidents were interviewed, all identified relational challenges with an inherited senior staff. Despite different levels of urgency to make key organizational decisions, each president voiced concern over cabinet level administrators. Their approach in addressing these relational challenges markedly differed. One of the presidents was quick to replace administrators who were viewed as incompetent or resistant to a new vision for change. Another was more gentle and encouraged problem administrators to move on to another institution. The last president in the study was still struggling with a contentious provost and in the process of developing a strategy to replace her.

Relationships with faculty were problematic among two of the presidents, both feeling that the provost was a key source of the strain. The other president in the study anticipated challenges with faculty relations once decisions were made to reduce academic programs based on financial necessity. Relationships with students were viewed mostly as symbolic and important. There was time set aside for occasional student contact but it was a small part of the presidents’ weekly schedules.

In all three cases the presidents were married and shared concerns over the adjustments their spouses had to make in assuming their new role. The presidents felt a strong sense of responsibility for helping their spouses find a comfortable fit in the new community and were relieved as the spouses further identified with their new setting. Finally, each president spoke of
the “lonely” nature of the position and felt the spouse played a key role, as a confidant and companion, in filling that loneliness gap.

**Participants**

The participants in the study were eleven college presidents who have served approximately between one and four years in office. Interviewing those with less than one year may not have given them the full range of understanding and experience to address the topic of relationship construction. Beyond four years presidents may tend to overlook key aspects of their relational interactions. Phenomenological studies can range anywhere from one to hundreds of participants with a range of three to ten being an accepted practice (Creswell, 2007).

The study used purposeful sampling consistent with a phenomenological study as it was essential for the participants to have experienced the phenomenon; in this case, leader relationships in the context of a college presidency (Creswell, 2007). There was an element of convenience in the sample in that time and distance considerations for myself, as the researcher, were taken into account. I limited the participant pool to a geographic cluster of states feeling it important to conduct face-to-face interviews with the participants in their own settings. This enabled me to establish a better rapport and make observational notes with respect to non-verbal behaviors. When interviewing elites this is the recommended practice (Dexter, 2006; Kvale, 1996; Stake, 1995).

I chose to limit the participants to presidents of four year private or public institutions of less than 6,000 undergraduates where the president lived in-residence. Through a review of the literature, I found an important relational leadership challenge of the position comes from the requirement to live within the campus community (McLaughlin, 1996; Oden, 2007; Ostar, 1983; Riesman, 1980). This excluded most two-year, community college presidents. Additionally, the
nature of constituent relations, particularly to students and faculty becomes more removed in larger institutions, therefore, a focus on mid-sized or smaller schools was chosen for this study. The Carnegie Classification System (Carnegie Foundation, 2010), and members lists from the American Council on Education and the Council of Independent Colleges were used to identify potential participants.

Prior to each interview I examined available information about the participant for the purposes of quickly establishing credibility and rapport to make the most of the experience (Kvale, 1996). For example, I reviewed presidential inaugural speeches and other communications via campus websites and other publications.

Each participant received, in advance, a statement summarizing the nature of the study as well as an informed consent stating approval to conduct the research by the Institutional Review Board at Antioch University (see Appendix B). The informed consent included:

- the right of participants to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time
- the central purpose of the study and the procedures to be used in data collection
- comments about protecting confidentiality of the respondents
- a statement about known risks associated with participation in the study
- the expected benefits to accrue to the participants in the study
- the signature of the participant and the researcher (Creswell, 2007, p. 123)

As with any human research study, there was potential for psychological harm. Although the nature of the study and the participants would indicate that potential be minimal, ethically, when dealing with recalling human emotional experiences it was not discounted.

Interviews were arranged for each participant at an agreed upon location most convenient to them. With the exception of one interview, which took place in a building lobby, the interviews were conducted in the interviewees' offices to make participants at ease and minimize the time commitment of the interviewee (Dexter, 2006). All interviews were recorded for
transcription purposes. Following each interview, I made self-reflective/observational notes outlining distinguishing aspects of the interview beyond the dialogue that had meaning to me.

Data Analysis

According to Van Manen (1990):

Phenomenological themes are not objects or generalizations; metaphorically speaking they are more like knots in the web of our experiences, around which certain lived experiences are spun and thus lived through as meaningful wholes. (p. 90)

The spirit of the Van Manen quote, and the use of Hycner's (1985) recommended guidelines, guided me in analyzing the data. These, however, served as guidelines, as being too rigid in applying step-by-step processes to a phenomenological study is contrary to the nature of the research approach (Hycner, 1985).

The first step of the process was to transcribe the recorded interviews followed by listening again to the interviews to capture the general meaning. In capturing this meaning it was important to understand my own feelings about presidential relationships and attempt to extract what is meant from the perspective of the interviewee during this stage of analysis (Hycner, 1985; Van Manen, 1990). This remains an interpretive process as described by Van Manen as opposed to purely a descriptive process which is a distinguishing characteristic of Moustakas's psychological phenomenology (Creswell, 2007). As recommended by Hycner, I outlined my own presuppositions to a doctoral level researcher who reviewed my findings as a check to insure that they did not taint my analysis. Later, in Chapter Five, during the reflective process of interpreting the findings, opportunity to interject my own thoughts with respect to the phenomenon takes place with the expectation that the process of capturing the essence of the meaning among participants will have reshaped my initial presuppositions (Van Manen, 1990).
Following a review of the recordings for broad understanding of content, I conducted a line-by-line analysis of the transcripts to capture a general and literal meaning (units of general meaning) of the responses independent of the phenomenon being studied (Hycner, 1985). These units of general meaning were analyzed to consider their relevance to the questions asked about the phenomenon (presidential relationships). Those deemed unrelated were eliminated from the data analysis. The remaining units were clustered into units of relevant meaning. A colleague skilled in thematic analysis of interview data reviewed the transcripts and the clusters to compare consistency of interpretation and insure that my presuppositions did not taint the data. At this point the clusters were examined in search of the themes, or essence of meaning, specific to each cluster. This was followed by a review of the interview transcripts and a summary of each as it related to the identified themes. The interview summary, themes, and transcripts were sent to each participant to check for accuracy with respect to my findings versus the participant’s intended meaning. An analysis of themes throughout all of the interviews was conducted to identify commonality and uniqueness and a written summary of the findings was conducted.

Chapter Four details the findings from the data analysis of the participant interviews. A description of each president is given including relevant demographic information about the participant and her setting. Interview data is summarized through use of the themes and an explanation is given with respect to the strength of the theme as well as participant responses which deviated from the theme in an effort to fully capture the essence of their meaning. Direct quotes from the participants are included to provide the reader with a greater understanding of my interpretive findings.

Chapter Five discusses the findings as they relate to the presidency within the context of the participants’ experiences. Relevant literature regarding relationship development and
maintenance for a college president is revisited in light of the study's outcomes. Opportunity for future research is also discussed.

Credibility

Patton (as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) identified three questions to ask when assessing the credibility of a qualitative study:

1. What techniques and methods were used to ensure the integrity, validity, and accuracy of the findings?
2. What does the researcher bring to the study in terms of experience and qualifications?
3. What assumptions undergird this study? (p. 216)

Techniques and methods used to ensure the integrity, validity, and accuracy of the findings. The nature of this exploratory study was to capture the essence of the lived experience involving presidential relationships. Although through data analysis, themes were identified, there was no attempt to generalize the findings. The nature of this study was to gain a deep understanding of phenomenon based on the participants' experiences rather than develop hypotheses and generalizations (Patton, 2002). I, as the researcher, needed to provide a clear, yet thick description of the participants and the interviews to help readers identify with the experience (Creswell, 2003). According to Janesick, "Validity in qualitative research has to do with description and explanation, and whether or not a given explanation fits a given description" (as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 216). I engaged in member checking at two different stages of the data analysis (Creswell, 2003). First, participants reviewed the raw data from the transcripts followed by a review of the themes identified. Additionally, an independent researcher skilled in qualitative data analysis reviewed my interpreted findings.

I clearly stated my presuppositions allowing the reader to understand the meaning on the subject of leader relationships that I brought to the research and the subsequent changes that took
place through the research process (Creswell, 2003). According to Kvale (1996), in order to check validity:

The researcher adopts a critical outlook on the analysis, states explicitly his or her perspective on the subject matter studied and the controls applied to counter selective perceptions and biased interpretations. (p. 242)

The central method in obtaining data for this study was the interview. As such, I as the interviewer played an active role in constructing meaning at each stage of the research process (Seidman, 2006). It is important, from a credibility standpoint, that the reader understand my position as I gathered, analyzed, and interpreted the data.

It was also important to identify information found to be inconsistent with the themes identified in the data analysis (Creswell, 2003). According to Hycner (1985), “This procedure requires the phenomenological viewpoint of eliciting essences as well as the acknowledgement of existential individual differences” (p. 292). From a validation standpoint, it demonstrates to the reader that I, as the researcher, did not omit findings or attempt to make findings fit into themes arbitrarily.

**Researcher qualifications and presuppositions.** With respect to researcher qualifications, I brought 30 years of administrative experience in higher education to the study. I have worked directly and indirectly with a number of college presidents and their constituents giving me a broad understanding of the academic culture. Through formal education, with a Master’s degree in Counselor Education and having advanced to candidacy in a doctoral program in leadership and change, I felt as though I had a good theoretical and practical understanding of relational experiences. Through my combined experience and education I felt I had the perceived credibility to have engaged with the participants in order to gain their trust in speaking candidly about their lived experiences. I also saw my professional experience as a
detriment from the standpoint of having presuppositions relative to presidential relationships and needed to be mindful of those through each stage of the research process.

My presuppositions are drawn from my life experiences, which includes personal and professional relationships. When analyzing data I had to be careful to not view what was being said through the lens of my own values systems relative to self, work, and family. For instance, looking at responses from presidents with small children I needed to be mindful not to compare how I chose to relate to my children at that time in their lives. In a professional sense, I have worked for different college presidents as an administrator and use that experiential learning, along with academic learning, to form an opinion on the nature of that type of relationship. In analyzing the data it was important for me to not totally suspend my views, but to balance them with the formal learning I obtained through my in-depth study of both content and method.

**Assumptions.** The assumptions that strengthen the study are provided in demonstrating the importance of conducting the research and making a case for using a phenomenological perspective as the best method to employ. Through a review of the literature related to presidential relationship construction and maintenance it was demonstrated that this group of leaders serves a significant societal purpose and knowledge of their experiences could provide deeper meaning for those who follow, making them better prepared for the role. The literature review also demonstrated that there is a lack of empirical studies in this area making this research project worthwhile. Through the methods review an argument was made for using a phenomenological approach when investigating the human experience of relationships.

**Limitations**

One of the limitations of this study is the number and randomness of the participants. Given the amount of data acquired from the process of interviewing it is difficult to analyze, in a
phenomenological sense, beyond a small number of participants (Hycner, 1985). Additionally, I, as the researcher, was limited in terms of time and distance to travel beyond a certain region which limits the geographic diversity of the participants. Care was given, however, to select from a diverse group of presidents with respect to gender, ethnicity, and institutional type. Also, the limitation of geographic region allowed me to conduct face-to-face interviews which are best suited to acquiring rich information (Seidman, 2006).

As the primary instrument in gathering the data, I brought a degree of subjectivity that could skew the essence of the meaning of the participants. This is countered by: being cognizant of my presuppositions and biases through the process; articulating them in the study; allowing participants review of data analysis; and utilizing an external reviewer. Additionally, given the nature of hermeneutic phenomenology, there is an expectation that researcher subjectivity will be inherently part of the process (Van Manen, 1990).
Chapter IV: Findings

Participants in the Study

The participants in this study were a purposeful sample of college presidents who met the criteria necessary to further understand the meaning of relationship development and maintenance using a phenomenological approach. The criteria for participation included: (a) tenure of between one and four years (approximate); (b) president of a private or public four year college or university; (c) institutional student population of 6,000 or less; and (d) campus residency. Potential participants were identified from lists generated from the Council of Independent Colleges and the American Council on Education and limited to a multi-state geographic area in order for me to conduct interviews using a face-to-face format on the campus of each participant. The pool of potential candidates numbered 47.

The potential candidates were contacted by email requesting an on-site interview. Of the 47 who were contacted, 10 immediately agreed to participate, one wanted additional information, and one sent an email considering the request. The potential candidate that asked for more information later accepted the invitation to participate. The president who was considering the request was again contacted by email and, at that time, declined to participate. Two presidents graciously declined to participate, and the remaining potential participants did not respond to the invitation. After examining institutional profiles and participant backgrounds (of those who agreed to participate) to ensure broad demographic representation, I attempted to secure additional participation from presidents serving at public institutions but was unsuccessful. Given the undergraduate size population limitation (under 6,000) there were only nine of the potential 47 participants who worked at a public institution.
Table 4.1 shows the profile of the participants and their respective institutions using the Carnegie Classification System.

Table 4.1

*Participants and Institutional Types*

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<th>Gender</th>
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The 11 participants in the study represented diverse academic and demographic backgrounds. Of the 11 participants, three were from public institutions and eight from private institutions. There were two women's colleges and two religiously affiliated institutions represented. Nine of the participants ascended through traditional academic ranks; one left a career in a different profession; and one ascended through the ranks of student affairs. For 10 of the participants it was their first presidency, one had a brief presidency prior to assuming her
current position. Two of the presidents served as interims prior to being offered the permanent position. Eight of the participants were female and three were male. Ten of the participants were Caucasian and one was African-American. Ten of the participants were married and one was openly lesbian.

The nature of the interviews. Interviews were conducted over a two month period, making accommodations for busy presidential schedules which included cancellations and rescheduling. Prior to each interview a review of information related to the president and her or his institution was conducted. Materials reviewed included: the president's resume and inaugural address; a website search; and a campus newspaper search. The purpose of reviewing background information was twofold. First, it enabled rapport to be established quickly with the interviewee which maximized the depth of information gained. Secondly, reviewing information prior to the interview provided an opportunity to identify any potential relational themes that could be explored during the interview.

Each interview lasted approximately 60 to 75 minutes. A set of questions (see Appendix A) was used as a guide to glean information relative to relationships; however, the interviewee was allowed to follow a path that was most important to him or her. The flow of the interview began with casual conversation, information about the study, and background information about the interviewee. Most interviewees were then asked questions about preparations made to introduce themselves to the campus community when assuming the presidency. All of the participants were asked about the nature of their relationships with various constituencies. Participants were then asked to discuss the nature of changes in personal relationships as a result of the presidency. Most were also asked questions relative to trust, authenticity, and social distancing. And finally, they were asked to discuss effectiveness relative to relationship
development and maintenance. Although a couple of presidents were guarded, most were very open to discussing both professional relationship challenges and successes and personal relational issues given the assurance of confidentiality through use of pseudonyms.

**Phenomenological Data Analysis**

As mentioned in Chapter Three, my first step in analyzing the data was to listen to the audio recording of each interview to gain a general sense of the meaning of the participant relative to relationships. I then, personally, transcribed each interview as a means to maintaining security of the data and to gain a deeper understanding of the content as I listened and typed. Following the transcription of each interview I performed a line by line examination breaking the data into units of general meaning and individually rewrote them on the margin of each page. Following the extrapolation of the units of general meaning I grouped them as they related to the subcategories of the topic (relationships). The clusters of units of general meaning were then further reduced to units of relevant meaning. At this point a complete transcript and the data analysis was sent to each participant and a graduate of the Ph.D. in Leadership and Change Program from Antioch to check for consistency of meaning interpretation.

After member checking the data with participants and verifying the analysis of each interview with a doctoral level researcher, I performed an analysis of all eleven interviews by comparing the abovementioned units of relevant meaning to identify themes among the subcategories of the relationship topic as outlined in each interview. For example, I reviewed all units of relevant meaning from each interview that related to questions about cabinet member relationships to identify themes associated with those relationships. The themes were checked against the review of the doctoral level researcher for consistency of interpretation.
The themes were categorized under four main areas related to presidential relationships in an attempt to answer the research questions proposed in Chapter Three which include:

- How do new college presidents construct and maintain the complex relationships brought about by the unique nature of the leadership position?
- How are their personal and professional lives affected by the relational process?
- How do new presidents interpret, filter, and respond to relationships when considering trust and authenticity in performing the responsibilities of the office?
- How do new presidents feel their relationship development impacted their leadership effectiveness?

Having used interview questions as a general guide, the interviewee was allowed to emphasize what she, or he, felt was important relative to relationships; therefore, not every interview covered each area with the same level of depth. Some questions were added based on the direction of the conversations where other questions were eliminated based on ground covered and time constraints. What follows are the findings including several direct quotes from the participants to both validate the data analysis and better form the essence of the meaning relative to the topic. Where there was significant repetition of thought not all quotes from all participants were included in the section.

Findings

Context. Context is certainly an important variable in any leadership situation. After examining the data it became apparent that there were common challenges among most of the participants which had much to do with their early decisions. Before addressing themes related to the research questions, I will explore the themes shared by most of the presidents relative to the circumstances they entered which shaped how they approached relationship construction and
maintenance. There were two over-arching themes in terms of context: the extraordinary economic downturn and its impact on each institution, and the climate challenges as a consequence of their predecessors’ tenures.

A clear and common theme throughout all of the interviews involved the economic downturn and the subsequent challenges in developing relationships. For example, President 8 shared her early experience as a result of troubled finances:

So my first introduction to the board as president was on day four. I called an emergency meeting of the chair and the vice chair and the CFO and I said, "You need to be aware of the situation that the college is in, it's dire and I'm going to cut the budget by $1 million by our first meeting in September and here's a plan on how I'm going to get to that.”

Her experience was not unique as another participant stated:

I'm just beginning to hit that wall where people are like, "What do you mean? What do you mean you're not giving that money back to us? What do we mean we can't have another faculty position?" You know, I had to start, the first thing I had to do was cut budgets. That's a lousy way to start a presidency. (President 3)

The economic downturn did not distinguish between previously well-endowed schools and tuition driven institutions as President 1 explained:

I think the recession was tough because all of a sudden we were in a position of not adding; it's not a question of what we're going to add, it's, oh my God, we're going to have to adjust and things had to be cut back, and that's a little harder.

State school presidents were also quick to mention the challenges of bad economic conditions in establishing relationships, "and the basis for that (changes in campus budgeting practices) is fiscal distress that [College 11] has experienced, really, for the past seven years and the projected future distress is the cause for change” (President 11).

Presidents responded differently to financial challenges, all having an impact on the campus community’s perceptions of their new leader. Two of the presidents mentioned their
refusal to further encumber the endowment to balance a budget. Among the relational tensions created by preserving the budget was with faculty as expressed by President 1:

And I think it got tough during the market downturn because the faculty's view was that you could just take from the endowment and there's no reason to have to cut anything. That just was not an option and in some ways they were not ready to take responsibility for it. We had to.

President 7 mentioned the relational challenges brought about by financial tightening as he chose to spend scarce resources on maintaining financial aid levels to attract and retain students who were experiencing their own fiscal challenges. This focus on increasing financial aid created tensions among other constituent groups vying for limited financial resources. President 10 described her institutional fiscal crisis:

And in fact, it was literally, the place was strangling itself. It was, well — We can't paint the wood work around the building because we can't afford to. We can't clean the windows because we can’t afford to.” And then prospective students would show up and say, “Do I want to come here?”

Two presidents mentioned using the bad financial situation as a reason to make critical staffing changes early in their presidency. For example, President 5 stated, “I started to restructure and luckily we had this budget crisis at the time so I had a very good reason for getting rid of upper administrators who I felt their positions weren't needed.”

Clearly, this theme of financial challenge was viewed by all presidents as a handicap in starting their presidency, and having varying degrees of impact on relationships among specific constituency groups as will be further explained in the sections that follow.

The other overarching, contextually related theme was the predecessor's role in creating the existing climate for the new president. Nine presidents made direct reference to their predecessor in creating a challenging climate for them as they entered their presidency; two made no direct reference to the role of a predecessor in creating relational challenges.
President 2 was very clear that his college suffered from a lack of leadership for many years, mostly caused by rapid turnover at the executive level. There had been no fewer than five presidents, or interim presidents, in a ten year period of time creating a skeptical campus community. President 2 shared feedback from a faculty leader, “You have to understand, this is a place that has never been managed. People (presidents) have come and gone and everybody has cut their niches out.” President 2’s relational challenge was to be defined as much in his potential longevity as it was his actions.

President 9 came into a situation following rapid and controversial leadership changes. She felt that the campus community had unique relational needs from a leader:

So I think that they were looking for that void to be filled. I think it was also a, sort of traumatized community, for lack of a better term just because of what happened. So I think they were looking for nurturing and moral support in the sense that the world is going to be all right.

President 10 did not have the unstable leadership of Presidents 2 and 9 but suffered from past practices of a long standing presidency. President 10 came into a situation where the college was in difficult financial shape and her long standing predecessor had micromanaged many aspects of the operations. According to President 10, “I had to do a lot of culture change, but I had to change the culture of the cabinet from one of, you know, people who obeyed their boss in the old days and didn't allocate decisions, and kept information.” President 11 shared many of those sentiments as she discussed her predecessor’s leadership style:

And we’re going to use a planning formula on how every responsible center gets money and they are also going to have very clear information on the money they are spending. That doesn't currently exist. Previously, it was pretty much in one pot and it was between the president and provost (as to) who begged for what, who obtained what.
President 1 also felt the effects of a long standing predecessor who differed markedly from her data driven approach to decision making which challenged her relationships with cabinet members who were used to doing things the old way:

I think this is an institution that operated for a very long time without very much information… and I am a data hog and so one of the things that clearly had to happen when I got here was that we needed to be much more data-driven than we were in our discussions and our decision-making.

Presidents 6 and 7 made no comments specific to predecessor behavior resulting in relational challenges for them.

The theme of financial challenges was viewed by all presidents as a handicap in starting their presidency. Predecessor behavior, to a lesser extent, was also viewed as an impediment to relationship development. Both of these contextual themes contributed to a sense of urgency on behalf of presidents to create change in an effort to fix what was broken, as was expressed by President 9 in discussing cabinet changes:

I certainly want to come in and give people some opportunities to get to know you and you get to know them so that you can assess them. But I was also very clear that you don't have unlimited time here. That there is this notion that you have space and time to maneuver. But the truth of the matter is that, as I used to say after my first year was over, if I'm here for 10 years, one tenth of my time is already done. So part of me had said, in my private world I said, ‘I'm going to go down with my people. I want to go down with my people, I don't want to go down with – if I just changed the so-and-so person earlier it would've made a difference.

Both themes had varying degrees of impact on relationships among specific constituency groups as will be further explained in the sections that follow specific to staff, faculty, students, and trustees.

**Constructing and maintaining relationships.** Following a brief discussion on the nature of the study and the gathering of background information, each interview began with questions related to the construction and maintenance of presidential relationships. Information
covered included the different approaches presidents employed in introducing themselves to campus and an analysis of the relationship development of each major constituency group: staff (cabinet), board of trustees, faculty, and students.

**Introduction to campus.** There is an old adage that first impressions can be lasting impressions. With that in mind, the presidents were asked to reflect on their strategies in preparing for their introduction to the campus community and their focus on relationship construction during the early days of their presidency. Among the 11 presidents, seven responded that they had given thought, in varying degrees, as to how they would introduce themselves to campus and where they would invest energies in terms of relationship development.

President 2 spent more time than any other respondent discussing his preparation to join the campus community. He was given the opportunity to have several months between his previous position and the start of his presidency and he chose to use some of that time visiting the campus to extensively survey its culture and to develop an entry plan. He had participated in a new presidents' program where they were encouraged to develop an entry plan but he was clear that it was in his nature to do that anyway. He interviewed several people from various constituencies and describes his reasoning:

I began to form a picture of this place without being faced with having to make any decisions and I did the same thing (with each constituent group) and tried to meet some community people and I began to formulate for myself, for nobody else's vision, I formulated for myself an environmental assessment of this institution. (President 2)

President 4 also spent time prior to her formal arrival on campus meeting different campus groups in an effort to forge relationships and assess the challenges that lay ahead. She visited campus twice in the spring prior to her official start date. Her predecessor helped her
arrange social gatherings during her first visit with faculty and students followed by a visit focused on getting to know her cabinet.

President 9 chose to focus on relationship development before being formally recognized as the new campus leader:

I decided not to do my inauguration during the first year…. to do that in the second year. That would be a different phase of introduction. The initial phase was going to be about as much personal contact that I could have with individuals. So I started out on the campus level with multiple interviews in various departments. I sat down with every department and every staff. I did that outside of the context of the leadership of those areas. That was really important. Don't have the managers there so people can say what they need to say. So there was a lot of effort in doing that.

President 1 also had a well thought out plan to develop relationships but quickly learned that the pace of the job can derail well-intended efforts:

I think that when you finally get to campus, I think you can have views about how you are going to do it and then the pace picks up in a way that in some ways you try to stay to your game plan but just what happens may take over.

President 11 spent the early days of her presidency immersed in getting to know the campus in an effort to develop a plan that all constituents could read to better understand the direction her presidency was going to take the institution. She did not approach the presidency as a single person, but more of a leader inviting everyone into the presidency via this quickly developed plan (report) based on listening to those around her:

To me a lot of it is cultivating relationships and inviting people to my presidency. So how do I invite people to this presidency? In my view the report was an invitation to be part of the presidency. My plan and the specificity of the dimensions and the different items are a way that people can see how I would ask and hope that maybe they would want to relate to me. So they don't have to guess. It's almost like the framework that I have is a way to invite people on how they could best work with me but also having this notion of being part of the larger narrative of what we're trying to accomplish. I mean, I'm the president, but more importantly, there is the presidency, it is way more than me. I mean, I might be at the front of the parade but it is a body of people all trying to go in a direction.
President 8 gave much thought as to how she would construct relationships upon arriving on campus and she developed this approach with her husband. She learned that her predecessor chose to be very formal and distant from the campus community and consciously decided to take the opposite approach:

My predecessor had told me as I was coming in and she was leaving that she had chosen not to engage pretty much in the community or with the students in a variety of ways that she could have and she was very up front about that. And so my husband and I talked about how are we going to be? Because however we start, that's going to be the expectation over time. It's hard to change that first impression and we decided that we were going to be fully present to the campus. So that meant not only engaging people, but continuing the relationships.

President 10, entering her presidency at first as an interim, did give thought to relationship construction in the context of constituents' needs and she also drew on experiences from her past presidency. She understood that the current situation created a campus climate of uncertainty, “They needed that warm sort of, ‘we're community, we are team, touch,’… So that was really critical.” She also had learned from her previous presidential experience, where relational challenges precluded her from making a difference, to, “break down silos” early in her tenure.

President 5 knew that she had knowledge gaps in terms of fundraising and external relations and chose to focus on those areas prior to assuming the role of president. She counted on her cabinet and human resources director to provide her with information about key leaders once she arrived on campus. She also felt that she possessed good assessment skills in terms of where to focus in a relational sense.

Presidents 6 and 7 did not discuss any well thought out plan in constructing relationships. President 3 had already been acquainted with the campus community, which brought other
unique relational challenges that will be further described in the individual constituency sections that follow.

President 7 was not intentional in how he went about constructing campus relationships and expressed this as a shortcoming. President 7’s professional background, although highly accomplished, came from outside of higher education and when asked how much he thought about developing new relationships he responded, “I gave it some (thought), but not enough.” He recognized the unique characteristics within the culture of higher education and found that he had a learning curve to overcome in developing relationships.

**Staff (cabinet).** All of the presidents in this study considered relationship construction and maintenance with each constituency group important; however, the group where the presidents had most control in terms of composition and shaping, was the cabinet. Among the eleven presidents the cabinet related themes included: early personnel changes; restructuring; replacing the provost (chief academic officer); and changes in the expectations of the president relative to cabinet functions and relationships.

Eight of the presidents chose to restructure their cabinet. Of the three who chose not to restructure, President 11 has only been in office for one year, and President 3 was internal and comfortable with the current structure. President 2 did not give a reason for maintaining the current structure.

The reasons for restructuring varied depending upon individual circumstance, but all who chose to make these changes were addressing a perceived impediment in having a high functioning group. For example, President 1, who emphasized the need to be data driven, added to the cabinet a director of institutional research in an attempt for the cabinet to have the information necessary to make the most appropriate decisions. President 5 replaced an open
vice-president position with an executive assistant who, politically, was well connected with the campus community.

Eight presidents had to replace the provost (chief academic officer), many citing relational differences or disagreement with the future direction of the institution under the new president. Five were asked to leave and three retired shortly after the new president assumed office. President 2 was very specific in describing the difference between himself and his old provost, “I’m a nuts and bolts data-driven professional school mentality and my former provost was a humanities person and, you know; well figure it out. Well it didn’t work. She decided, to her credit, at the end of year two that she was going to go back to the faculty.”

President 6 not only had relational differences with the provost but linked the provost’s poor relational ability to his own effectiveness in forging faculty relationships:

I came in and inherited a provost who was not good at relationships with faculty; not good at communication; not good, really not good at the job, in a way, but specifically not good at building relationships with the faculty. I mention that as background to saying that I think the one relational handicap that I had was that because of her limitations and my desire to still not be the provost, that in other words, she still needed to have the primary relationship with the faculty, I think I got off to a somewhat slow start building relationships with faculty.

President 8 was also challenged in the area of faculty relations after replacing a long standing provost. She was especially challenged in that she did not have the same freedom to speak to the campus community about the circumstances behind the need for change as did others. Ultimately she did confront the faculty in a meeting and stated, “I can't speak to you any more about it except to say that we had very different visions about where the college was going.” Senior faculty publically supported her right to make changes to the cabinet which she identified as being very helpful in fostering better relationships. She was also careful to fully engage the faculty in the search process to find a replacement for the provost. Conversely,
President 2, who recently replaced his provost, felt that the move could potentially improve his relationship with the faculty.

President 9 is currently struggling with the provost relationship which she feels directly relates to the strength of her faculty and staff relationships and her ability to focus on other aspects of her presidency. She had chosen a new provost but feels there has been a learning curve forcing her to focus a disproportionate amount of attention on relations among the cabinet:

I think that the new provost came on and I said, ―Oh, thankfully the new provost is here.‖ And I probably pulled out of that team (academic administrators) a little bit earlier than I should have. So they are still trying to work out their interpersonal relationships and I can make that easier sometimes when I am in the room because the turf gets diminished when the president comes into the room, at least verbalization of that turf, and the president can make some decisions sometimes that says, ―Well let's just say we're going with that right now." If I'm not in the room then they can fight to the death over the turf, right?

President 10, operating out of a sense of fiscal urgency, was able to make quick changes to her cabinet; among those she felt critical was the provost, ―What I needed was an academically oriented provost and also somebody who would be a number two when I am away, and somebody I could really lean on for help with critical decisions.‖ She chose to bring in someone with a proven academic administration history and who was familiar to her.

All of the presidents cited challenges with developing the cabinet to meet their expectations which differed markedly from the previous administration. In many cases, those with conflicting expectations with the new presidents either left on their own, retired, or were asked to leave.

For instance, President 11 explained her situation where she expected the cabinet to function more autonomously in areas she felt it inappropriate to be involved:

I think it's been harder on them than me. I think it is a re-toggling. When you have a long-standing president who also grew up within the culture there has been a definite flow of what you take to the president and, in fact, from what I would prefer I have been engaged in and asked to confer on more tactical and lower-level things than I think I should. So
it's not a matter of they don't bring things to me, it's like, "Why are you bringing this to me?" So it's more just adjusting where I think my time and talent should be and then the time and talent of the cabinet and who has aligning authority and responsibility. This has been a system where a tremendous amount of authority and responsibility has rested with the president and I am divesting some of that because I find that most of the current thinking in higher education administration says that this is a bit old school. So I'm actually (saying), "You're a VP, you have this responsibility, you don't need me to check on you."

President 4, in an effort to change her cabinet’s past reporting to the board, struggled to create the change in expectations:

And (I have) very strategically talked about the change I needed to have happen with them (her cabinet) for the change to happen at the board level. They have to know how to straddle strategic and operational, otherwise we are going to be pulling the board into their operations which is what they were doing before; sharing their annual goals with their committee chair; well I had to clarify, that is not their committee, it's not like an advisory committee to your operation. You are supporting that committee. It literally had to shift and that was introducing my cabinet to the way I want them to work.

President 7 was subtle in his comments about his cabinet's old way of thinking and his cautious and purposeful approach to change:

There are some folks who are here for a long time and they're excellent but they're well into their careers and their fields have changed. So we need to modernize what they do and they know it. And they've worked long enough, hard enough, when they're ready they'll step down and we'll figure out the future. In other cases there are positions that rotate like provost and deans and those we're evolving to get the right people in the right spots, and that takes time.

President 9 was more direct in articulating her expectations to her cabinet:

I want them to be a little more high functioning than I think they are. But it really is more about who I am. We talked a lot about my expectations of the cabinet. It is; lead your area, lead your area. And for me that means you're going to be, yes, into the details, but you should be coming to me sometimes and saying, "You are missing it, here's the next big thing.” I've been thinking about where we are as an institution.” I can't be the creative force in your area. Not that I don't have any creative ideas there, it's just that I don't have the time to be the creative force so, hey you have to do that for yourself and lead your area so you can help this institution. If you will do for your area, what I'm trying to do for the entire institution we will be coming along. So helping them get to that space is, I think that is part of my job; to help them.
President 5 shared how she used expectations as a means to help facilitate movement out for those who were slowing down her agenda. After struggling with the appropriate approach in handling difficult cabinet members she sought advice from experienced presidents at a new president's workshop. Their advice was to immediate fire the troublesome cabinet members which conflicted with President 5’s management style and personal values. Through further consultation with a mentor she was given the advice to be clearer about her expectations:

I said, “You know, that fits so much more with my style of doing things.” So that’s what I did. I made very clear what my expectations were and within less than a year one of my most problematic cabinet members chose to retire.

The data presented here relative to cabinet relations suggests that this is an area where new presidents are quick to judge whether or not the relationship will work, and respond accordingly. Most presidents appeared happy with new hires, however, some expressed concern over making too many changes before there was a sophisticated understanding of institutional culture and practice. Among traditional cabinet positions (provost, enrollment, finance, development), the provost changed more often than others for this cohort of presidents. New presidential expectations seemed to be a catalyst for friction between presidents and different members of the cabinet.

**Students.** All of the presidents in this study recognized the importance of establishing relationships with students. Much of the student contact took the form of both scheduled activities and casual contact. Scheduled activities included regular meetings with student leaders and open forums on campus. Six presidents maintained regular office hours for individual student access. Seven presidents made available their home for student gatherings. Casual contact occurred through attendance at athletic and cultural events, walks around campus, and dining in student cafeterias.
One of the presidents took advantage of student feedback early in her presidency to better understand, and address the needs of this population. President 8 systematically visited residence halls in the evening, meeting with students to learn more about their campus housing satisfaction. She explained:

I went six times and they told me things that I was really surprised about. Some things that they wanted were unrealistic. We are a religious institution. We're not having overnight visitors of the opposite gender. But others were completely reasonable; library hours. So I asked students on the strategic planning committee to get a group together and find the top five mandates that if I come in and make this change it will mean something: longer library hours, fitness center hours open longer on the weekend, open gym for intramurals, longer hours that they can go between the residence halls at night to study where they don't have to be checked into their room. I went back the next week and I said effective immediately this will be done. It made a difference.

She credited the relationships fostered by those meetings, and the immediate response to student issues, in significantly increasing residence hall occupancy.

President 5 was very purposeful in establishing an eclectic group of student leaders to better understand their issues:

They are my sounding board, so we meet once or twice a semester, we eat together and it is an open agenda. Whatever they want to talk about, they talk about. It is my way of keeping my ear to the ground with the students and giving them a sense of ownership that they can come to me with problems.

Scheduled office hours for students were practiced by six of the presidents interviewed. One of the presidents, President 8, has an open door policy and stated, “Rarely a day goes by when a student does not stop by to see me.” Scheduled office hours have an unstructured format with no appointments necessary:

First of all we established open office hours. So, students come to my office, I have open office hours tomorrow. Students can come to me and talk to me about whatever they want to talk about. (President 9)

I schedule one morning or afternoon; it depends on the semester, as just open hours for students. Anybody can come in and talk and sometimes I get two and that’s fine. (President 7)
Yeah I always have a line at the door and they come in; sometimes they have issues, sometimes they just want to come in and talk, they want to meet me and have a conversation. I always enjoy, always enjoy those. (President 3)

Two of the presidents were directly involved in extracurricular programs with students and one taught a class, although she felt the time commitment was excessive given the demands of her job and she would be unable to teach in the future.

Informal meetings through walking campus, attending events, and eating in the cafeteria were viewed as a valued part of each president’s contact with students. Ten presidents reported that they attended athletic events on a regular basis.

Many presidents spoke of student relationships as a source of personal rejuvenation and a reminder of the importance of their work as a symbolic leader:

I say all the time, “If you want to feel better go talk to the students.” They want to have your attention not forever, just a little bit. They want to know that you care about them. We absolutely do. (President 9)

The relationships with the students are important for me, sort of to remind me why I'm here but I think it's important for the students too; to see a role model, to know that there's somebody who cares and supports them. (President 10)

Those are students (referencing a picture of students she has as a screen saver on her cell phone). That was a media shoot up in the cafeteria and I decided to put this on here for a while because that's the point. So as I'm doing my work and I'm in meetings and stuff they're looking back at me. (President 11)

There were only two presidents who shared stories specific to an individual student interaction. President 2 spoke about attending an athletic contest away from campus:

And interestingly at the beginning of the game one of our kids got hurt and the coach was there. It was a tournament, all day, and I spent the day in the emergency room with the kid. And it was interesting, the dad, I called dad, and he said, “whoa, the president is taking care of my kid.”

President 8 was very reflective in sharing a story about a young lady who, unknowingly to the President, identified her as a role model years earlier:
I've had very long days, I've had some very challenging days, and I had days where I thought, —did I make a mistake?” But the thing that always revives me is the student. And so yesterday a young lady comes to meet me, in fact she was leaving a note for me when I came back from a meeting and I invited her in and she said, she told me her story, it's unbelievable… She's been raising her young sister who's in high school. She's caring for an ill grandmother… She has one semester left before student teaching and then she's going to put her sister through college. Unbelievable. She's got a small gap in financial aid and I said I'll call and figure this out. Well we got it all worked out, no problem. But here's what she said to me besides the fact that that story tore my heart. She said, —When you first came here you were talking to a group of students and you were saying things and pointing to different ones in the audience and you pointed to me. And you commented, and since that moment you've been my role model.” And I was thinking, oh no, I was really stricken with horror at that. But she said, —I've got straight A's ever since. I'm the one who sent you those Christmas cards in the mail.” And I got them but I just didn't know who the girl was. I knew the name but not the face. And I went home and I told my husband that. And I said to him, —Whether I want to be her role model or not she made that designation.” Whatever I do on this campus, or in this community; people watch. And it doesn't mean that I can't make a mistake or be human. I am. I make them all the time. But to some people, it is important and I have to think about that. People who take this presidency, if they want to be that hands-on, they have to think that that's what they're signing on for because I didn't sign on to do that for that young lady although am honored beyond belief that she feels that way. In her mind she gave me the role and now I feel I have an obligation to be that.

**Faculty.** The presidents in the study, collectively, spent more time discussing faculty relationships than any other constituency groups. Several of them emphasized the importance and complexity of the president-faculty relationship. Thematically, nine of the presidents expressed some degree of challenge and sources of strains in the relationships; eight reported sources of contention involving the financial climate; four discussed difficulty with faculty governance; six spoke of challenges as a consequence of cabinet level personnel decisions. Several presidents discussed strategies to overcome strained faculty relationships; some with more success than others. Nine of the presidents came from faculty ranks and spoke fondly of their time in that role. Of the two who had not been full-time faculty, only one expressed challenges related to not fully understanding the academic culture.
As reported earlier in this chapter, economic challenge contributed to many presidents’ difficulties in establishing positive relationships with faculty. Difference of opinion over salaries was discussed by President 4. Although she would describe her relationship with faculty as favorable, President 4 reported:

Oh yeah, and there are things we disagree with, they were concerned about their salaries. I said that we had to have a salary equity study done before we, you know, and we got that done last year and found out that we were in pretty good shape.

President 4 shared the findings and her plan to resolve the few inequities that were reported outside of acceptable ranges. She has been able to improve salaries which appears to have contributed to generally favorable faculty relations.

All of the presidents reported regular contact with faculty through the governance structure; however, four found this to be a relational source of challenge. President 1 expressed frustration with faculty who she felt were taking the opportunity of a change in leadership to gain influence in decision making processes:

They (faculty) didn't know how to interact with anybody because this old president, all of a sudden they had a window, and it was like, so here is our moment to figure out how to have a greater role in the administration and I was all for faculty governance but also felt that the president has certain responsibilities and so we're still navigating that. One of the things that I have forced us to do is to review our governance so that we can actually clarify some of these things….all of the sudden with a new person in they’re pointing to stuff and say, "No we get to do that, and you get to do that." And I would say, "No that's not what it says and it can't be that way." So a little bit of tension there but it's a work in progress.

President 1 took a pragmatic approach in addressing faculty differences:

You know, I think ultimately, the reality is that you are not going to please all of the faculty all the time and you just have to make sure that you have enough people that trust and respect you and believe in what you're doing that in some sense they help you shout down the ones who are trying to cause trouble.

She went on to describe a situation where a particularly contentious faculty member was challenged by his colleagues, thus resolving the problem.
President 6 also shared frustration with his faculty and their difficulty over their power and decision making:

One of the biggest faculty concerns has been around governance and shared governance, and I’ve noticed that at least part of the problem is (that) there’s not a clear distinction made by many faculty here between when they are on a topic in which faculty voices need to be given a special weight and hearing, such as certainly curriculum, but also, say, promotion and tenure standards, or processes, or organization of our schools and divisions, they’ll pronounce on those things. They’ll also pronounce on you know, –we think our retirement benefits should be higher,” or, –we think this or that should happen,” where they’re essentially an interest group or constituency within the college.

President 6’s relational challenges were exacerbated by strained relations between the provost and faculty which were, eventually, resolved with a personnel change (replacing the provost).

President 6 feels that the quality of a president-faculty relationship is significantly impacted by the strength of relations between the provost, deans, and faculty. He has spent time with small groups of faculty and has solicited faculty leadership for ideas to reinforce his commitment to hear their voice and be an academic president”:

We’re trying to have a really good conversation about faculty governance in which it becomes clearer for faculty members that, while they’re welcome to pass resolutions about anything they want, sometimes those resolutions will be handled essentially as authoritative and sometimes the resolutions will be taken under advisement.

President 9, as did President 1, found faculty governance challenges to be connected to past relationships where the faculty’s voice was not viewed as significant in the decision making of the administration. She expressed her preference:

I believe in shared governance but sometimes they don't know how to operate within the framework of shared governance. And for me that means these faculty members have to take on what it means to be a leader in shared governance not just a decision-maker in mass around particular topics.

President 9 attempted to improve relations by calling on faculty leadership to suggest ideas to better engage faculty in decision making. Unfortunately, the outcome was to revert to previous practices as she described, –Critique from the outside and write a list of all of those things that
you don't think are going right but you never have to get into the fray.” Despite the attempt to
further engage faculty governance, she described her relationship at the time of the interview as
“strong” based on her openness and accessibility.

President 2 has experienced a contentious tenure with faculty over several issues fueled by an ambitious change agenda necessitated by the institution’s financial problems. Through faculty governance, some of the contention became the source of public scrutiny. Issues brought forward by the faculty included President 2’s decisions relative to budgeting and personnel. He was frustrated by the contention and shared his feelings in the interview:

The great irony of the whole thing is I am a firm believer that the faculty should control an institution and what I'm trying to do is undo all of the deals and get back to the place where an elected representative body makes recommendations to the president and it is a two-way street.

Data driven, President 2 gathered what he considered to be relevant and objective information in an effort to combat misinformation. He used informal and formal gatherings to share this information and also asked for an external consultant, respected by the faculty, to visit campus in an attempt to improve relations. President 2 expressed that he felt faculty resistance to change functions on a continuum with a small and vocal minority leading the resistance, a large and disinterested middle, and a small, less vocal, group supporting institutional change.

Of the four presidents who shared frustration over their relationships with faculty governance, all were also operating in a climate of fiscal challenge.

Presidential relationships with faculty are not solely based on direct interactions. There is a certain relational connectedness through the actions and interactions of senior cabinet members and faculty. For example, in explaining informal faculty gathering at his home, President 6 stated, “Things like breakfast at my home were an effort, in a non-threatening way, to create some relationships given that primarily it needs to flow through the provost and the deans.” Six
presidents mentioned being handicapped by the perceptions of faculty directly towards unpopular cabinet members, or presidential decisions to replace popular cabinet members. For example, President 10 had two key cabinet members who carried over unpopular practices from a previous administration that were contrary to her philosophy of transparency and inclusion. President 9 had an administrative vice-president who discouraged creativity through limiting access to funding for faculty. Both, Presidents 2 and 9 created contention among faculty by replacing popular senior administrators.

In many reported cases, when changes were made among senior cabinet members, presidential relations with faculty improved:

So I hired a new Provost and I’ve got to tell you, he's fabulous. I'm so glad that we did it because he's the right person in that job and (name) was not quite the right person in that job. The faculty are very happy. So that relationship, I felt, was absolutely critical for me, and now I feel like I have a partner there in that job so that's really good. (President 3)

I got rid of the person who was causing problems, chose to leave, and I replaced that person with someone at a lower level but with someone who had good solid relationships on campus and I got a lot of good will out of that move. (President 5)

So you need people to be able to go to the CFO and not feel like they're going to see a, feel like they're going to inquisitor, be, someone who's there to tell them why the heck you're thinking about that we don't have the money. You need to have a partner, we have to think of these people is a partner, not some, you know, anti-people. So the faculty found a partner in her and that was critical. (President 9)

Several presidents shared approaches in constructing positive, effective relationships with faculty. President 7, coming from a non-traditional professional background, found faculty generally resistant to new ideas and he needed to learn from experience how best to relate to them:

So you have to be very, very careful... again with the faculty and educational principles...um...when one’s making the point... identify first the principles that they agree with and go from there and make sure that everything you’re doing and they’re doing, you can ascribe from a point that everybody buys into... by definition faculty are
conservative and they can’t help but push back… or some of them won’t and you have to figure out how to work with that and find the right ground.

President 6 pointed to the academic trappings in his office which are intended to be a reminder to faculty of his own faculty background so that he can speak in a more collegial way.

He also emphasized the importance of knowing who influential faculty are among the group:

I know all of the people that are likely to speak up at faculty meetings and whether they’re the constant critics or the thoughtful, you never know where they’re going to land but wherever they land it’s going to be influential with their colleagues; you know those people early, I mean as early as the interview process actually. So, I certainly pay attention to those folks.

President 11, having only been in office for a year and coming from a non-academic, higher education background developed the following strategy, which is in contrast to her predecessor:

Because what I'm putting out there, absolutely, is extraordinary transparency, a clear system on how we are going to organize ourselves as an organizational structure, and a formula that you can see and use the data yourself to crank out who gets what money, but, there is going to be an expectation that we have got to be entrepreneurial, and we have got to make some structural changes or we won't generate the money. That's the good news, is that everyone has that information clearly so there are no surprises. So if we don't make payroll; believe me, we're doing everything we can to always make payroll, there will be no surprises and people will see it almost at the same time that I see it and there is an engagement I tell people, ‘I promise you will be included, I don't promise that you will be satisfied.’

Three presidents spoke to the power of one-on-one relationship building in order to have effective relations with faculty. President 8, who had to share the institution’s financial challenges shortly after arriving, was being viewed skeptically from the faculty who were unaware of the problem. She described a meeting with one vocal and disgruntled faculty member:

Faculty member: ‘You come in, we don't know you at all, and you told us there's a crisis. Why should we believe you?’
President 8: Now it was said very seriously and not disrespectfully but I was a little surprised and I said well, ‘I'm going to tell you what I know about the financial situation
of the college, and I can talk at length. You tell me when you've heard enough that you
know we have a problem.” He said, “fair enough.” About 10 min. into my conversation
he said, “You've got me; we have a problem.”

President 9 discussed an exchange following a faculty chairs’ meeting where she had to
share negative news about the college:

So the best compliment, I went to talk to the chairs, she said (a negative faculty member)
—“That was a great meeting,” she said, —“We believe it when you say it. We believe it when
you say it.” That was important, and it's important for them to believe when you say it; so
don't overpromise.

Finally, President 2, who, as previously stated, faced a variety of challenges with his
faculty described the power of working on individual relationships. After disagreement over a
search process some faculty provided misinformation about the president’s role in the process.
President 2 sought out the source, shared the facts, and described his role in the process. The
faculty member apologized for his perceptions. As President 2 described it, —“It's almost like, one
at a time.”

There were two presidents who did not mention any specific faculty relationship
challenges in their tenures. President 10 described her relations with the faculty as good and felt
they were grateful for her arrival and getting the college —out of the ditch.” President 5 also felt
very good about the relationship that she has established with faculty. She credited her past
experience in union relations and her emphasis on openness and collaboration. She stated, —“We
established a new way of accommodating each other that was a lot more positive and
collaborative; more sharing of information confidentially sometimes that would not get in the
minutes, and problem solving and it’s worked out really well, knock on wood.” The nine
presidents who did discuss challenges, with perhaps two exceptions, did not view their
relationships with faculty at the time of the interviews as bad. In fact, most would describe the
relationships as good and the actions that they took in response to those challenges as having
been effective. The two who continued to have challenges had a clear plan to improve the situation and were also seeing positive indicators in terms of financial recovery for their institutions.

All eleven presidents interviewed spoke to the quality and dedication of their faculty as a whole, and the importance of fostering positive relationships. President 10 best described it:

One of the big jobs coming in here was to establish a relationship with faculty. The prior president had had no use for the faculty, no use for the faculty. And the faculty is the core of academic institutions. If you don't have happy, effective, you know, good faculty you will not have good academic programs.

**Board of trustees.** The composition and reporting responsibilities of the board of trustees (or equivalent governing body) is significantly different for state schools as compared to private institutions. States often have a board and chancellor overseeing the entire state system, and a local board assigned to each campus within the system, as is the case with the three state schools represented in this study (representing different state systems). Local boards assume different responsibilities depending on the charge outlined within the state charter. Private school boards of trustees, despite having perhaps a more focused controlling interest, can, in practice, vary significantly in how they interact with the college and its administrative leadership. Because of the diverse differences in board practices (all having a degree of trustee responsibilities) I chose not to exclude public schools from this study.

When examining the nature of board relationships for the presidents in this study, all early in their tenure, there are two important items to consider. First, with no exceptions, each governing body chose the president and therefore, collectively, it would be in the board's best interest to see that person succeed. Secondly, with the exception of one past president, no president in this study had significant experience relating to boards in their past. In the words of one of the presidents:
What you do know when you come in, obviously, is that you were the board’s choice for the position so they’re very behind you hopefully; unless the process was a real mess. They’re behind you but you don’t know what that’s going to mean or how that’s going to play out. (President 6)

In examining themes, all of the presidents expressed generally positive relationships with their respective boards. Three presidents shared specific examples of how the board supported them with critical changes in institutional practices. All eight private school presidents consulted with the board chair at least every two weeks by phone or in person with most having weekly consultations. Of the eight, six reported having very close and helpful relationships with the chair, the remaining two felt the board chair relationships were adequate and collegial. Four presidents discussed fundamental changes that took place in the nature of board relations with the institutional leadership during their presidency. The three state school presidents met less frequently with their chancellors or local board chairs.

President 8 came into her presidency to find the institution’s financial situation extremely challenged (similar to other presidents in the study). As President 8 explained, her board was not aware of the severity of the situation:

So my introduction to the board after that meeting (a meeting with the chair) was I visited each of the members individually, either here or at their home or at the club; wherever, their office, to explain what the financial situation of the college was and to say that I had a plan. That met with everything from shock to embarrassment to outrage to concern that I would leave.

Through the implementation of her plan, which included cuts in personnel, she was able to put the college on solid financial footing in a short period of time. Her success with the financial situation strengthened her board relations which was useful when she proposed major changes in the academic area. A small minority of faculty, unhappy with the changes, bypassed President 8 and went straight to board members. The board did not respond to the disgruntled faculty and unanimously supported the changes. The board chair asked the president to handle
the disgruntled faculty. President 8 felt that support demonstrated the board's commitment to allow her to manage the institution while they oversaw broader governance issues.

Presidents 6 and 3 also provided examples of board support that gave them confidence to stay on course with their agendas. President 6 spoke of having an exceptionally good relationship with board leaders who he consults with regularly, ―It's updates, it's brainstorming, it's strategizing. I've been vulnerable; I've asked them questions where I don't know the answer.” He also mentioned the value of the board conducting an assessment on his performance. He described the feedback as being, ―On target, very helpful, and very constructive,” and felt it a good practice for any presidency.

President 3 shared an experience where she had a board meeting and noticed how the board’s focus had moved away from operational concerns, choosing to focus more on global issues which deviated from past practices. She described the encounter:

What they did want to talk about was, ―What do you think are the big game changers over the next 10 years?” I said, ―Okay, what do you mean?” Well they didn't really know what they meant as it turns out, but they're worried that we were not thinking about what happens if suddenly all liberal arts colleges go down the tubes and no one will write the check anymore for a liberal arts education. So anyway, we got into some conversations about global trends and the rising superpower over there in China and what impact does this have. It was very interesting conversation but I certainly didn't have all the answers to all of the questions so I'm walking out of their thinking, ―Oh my gosh!” The board chair comes to me the next morning and said, ―Just want you to know that this was a fantastic board meeting.” I said, ―Will that's good.” He said, ―That's great, this is what the board wants. They want to sit around the table and wrestle with some of these big issues. They want to know that you're thinking about some of these things. You guys can go off and think about them some more. This is what we like to do.” That's a whole different context than we had years ago where someone raises an issue and they get all feisty with the president. You know, sort of a little roughhousing and intimidating; it wasn't like that. It was just intellectual, high-level discussion and, you know, let's keep thinking about these things together.
President 3 mentioned a helpful retreat that she attended designed for presidents and new board chairs to better understand respective roles and build relations. One other president, President 4, found a similar retreat with her chair as being very helpful:

The board chair and I, we maintain very close communications and I think contributing to that was our plan to attend, the month before I started, one of the conferences specifically designed for new presidents and new board chairs. So that took us off-site together for a few days and really allowed us to, as part of that conference, chart out our goals.

For four of the study’s participants, their presidencies marked an opportunity for the boards to better understand their relationship with new leaders:

Part of a goal, that which I was hired to do, was to really raise the level of how the board deals with strategic issues and their engagement; not in operations, but you know, in appropriate governance matters. (President 4)

It was a ripe situation for me to come in because I think that it meant that people were willing to lay down all of the stuff that they used to do and so that made it a little bit easier to come in and give the board some opportunities to bring in some consultants to help them with their own development and I think that eased the relationship because everybody was in a learning mode… there is work to be done here and I think that the board members value that. I think that my next big step with them is to try to develop board leaders. I think that finding those key people who are going to be leading their colleagues (is important). (President 9)

I had said that I would like to be able to bring issues to the boardroom where we don't have the solutions yet; but I don't want them sitting around the table telling us how to solve the problem. You have to give the space to worry over things together and then send us (the administration) off to try to figure out the solutions and I think that they are starting to get that. (President 3)

I just handed out to our council (referring to the local governing body which is part of a larger state system) today, it said, "here are the responsibilities of college councils: you run the search for new presidents; you approve plans for changes in student discipline, and it's all watered down stuff." And of course they don't necessarily see themselves that way. They see themselves as miniature boards of trustees. (President 2)

There are certain tensions between a president and the board when changes in roles are introduced but the presidents above, who wrestled with this issue, felt that, ultimately, relationships will be strengthened as a result of their efforts. In most cases, positive relations
with the board chair were instrumental in helping to facilitate an environment of change among the board. For example, President 9 shared, —A lot of it has to do with the board chair and two or three keyboard numbers who will keep people out of the weeds."

All eleven presidents emphasized the importance of healthy president-board relationships. Some shared the complexity and time commitment involved in developing relationships with this group:

They go through a process that’s very stylized and in some ways they even generate their own views of who you may or may not be and you have to work with those and fix those. In my case, my approach with them is a little different from the faculty in some ways because I’m not the board’s leader in the same way…. It’s to be very, very straightforward with a person one-on-one. —This is what I think, what do you think? Where should we go? How do you feel about it?” I spent a lot of time before I started, even, meeting the board, meeting other key alums and that’s a lot of what I do. They’re all substantive discussions. A lot of (it is) my listening and a lot of my asking, and a lot of debate about things. The main thing with the board, much like the faculty, even more the board, it's more but it's easier…is to treat them like grown ups. To treat the person as if they’re just as smart as you, you just happen to have this job. (President 7)

The rest of the board is 30 individuals, and in some respects are all over the place; some are interested in the finances of the institution and some are interested in other things and some have very specific foci that they’re interested in and want to talk about all of the time. So it’s 33 different relationships. (President 6)

The board relationship is critical. If you have board members that are working at cross purposes with each other…you can't do it, it won't work. So, maintaining good board relationships takes a lot of work. Board members want attention and so it's phone calls and lunches. I have a rule; I respond to every board member e-mail immediately even if I don't have the answer to the question I tell them I'll get that and get back to you. (President 10)

Within the hierarchy, presidents report to boards and need to maintain strong relations to be effective. In the early years of their presidencies, some have challenged the locus of control in different areas, but all report that they have been successful in maintaining good relationships with this important constituency.
Personal and professional relationships. Presidents were asked questions relative to the nature of personal and professional relationships (outside of the college) with respect to changes and influences on their effectiveness. The topics included: family dynamics; work/life balance; spousal advice; mentors; and interaction with other presidents.

All of the presidents were involved in spousal relationships with ten being married and one having a significant other. Three of the presidents have young children who live with them on campus, one has college age children living on campus. Among the spouses, five are employed (two at the same institution as the president), four are retired, and two (both females) are not employed. Eight of the spouses have worked in the field of education; six have worked, or are working, in higher education as a faculty member or administrator. Some of the demographic information, such as specific vocations of spouses or children’s ages is not included to insure anonymity for the participants. The identity of those working at their spouses institution will not be shared, both, to protect identity, and there was little narrative data to share about the uniqueness of that situation.

Family dynamics. An analysis of the data related to family dynamics identified five themes: encouragement; time away from family; spousal relationships; attending campus events; and the president’s house. The most prevalent was the consistent support that all eleven participants felt they had from their significant other. That support took the form of encouragement to become president prior to taking the position. Among the eleven presidents, most mentioned sacrificing time with their families because of the demands of the job; two out of three with younger children mentioned an emotional toll because of time away from children. Two presidents were specifically concerned about the effects of time away on their spousal relationship. Seven spouses regularly accompanied the presidents when attending on-campus
events. Three spouses played active roles in helping at fundraising events. None of the spouses had institutionally defined, paid or unpaid, spousal roles. Nine of the presidents regularly used their homes for various campus related gatherings.

President 11 accurately portrayed the level of support that presidents reported getting from their spouses when she said, “I don't recommend anyone who is in a very rocky relationship to take this. This will not strengthen it. But it's been remarkable” Her significant other was a formal part of the presidential interview process creating a level of stress and test of support from the beginning as she feared jeopardizing her mate’s chances to be president. President 11 told her, “if this was meant to be then it will work out, so you can't mess it up.” Others shared their experiences of spousal discussion and support in being presidency:

My husband and I had many, many, many hours of reflection. We were reading the same materials. We were talking about the same things. He's corporate, he's not in higher ed. so this gave us a chance to really say this is a decision that we can make together and that's how I came to begin to look. (President 8)

I leave my house every day believing that I can do it. I don't come back every night to the house believing that I can do it because I've been through the day, right? But I leave every morning, and I would attribute that to my husband. He's the one, that all of these positions that I've had throughout my career, he says, “Hey, you should apply for this.” (President 9)

He came to this literally as a partnership and an adventure and so the support for me is incredible. (President 10)

Despite high levels of spousal support, the presidency requires a great deal of time away from family which did surface during several of the interviews. President 2 described the demands, “literally, live my job 24 hours a day.” Consequently this is the first time that he is taking a vacation without any work responsibilities, “think for the first time in three years though, in May, we are going to (location) for four days, unrelated to campus, totally unrelated;
it's just to read a book or do whatever.” When asked about the sacrifice of family time President 3 shared:

Oh boy, I'll say, there is a lot of wear and tear on the family with this job. Some of it is just the hours that I work. I work a lot. I guess that every president does. It's a rare night though that I get home before 6:30 and then I eat dinner and then I'm on my computer almost every night. Or, I am at an event on campus and then I'm doing way more traveling so in January I think I was only in the office about five days. So that takes a little bit of a toll, frankly. I would not have wanted to do this job when my kids were young. In fact, I wouldn't have done it because it would've been too emotionally wrenching I think.

Three other presidents expressed the difficulty they would have if young children were part of the equation during their presidencies.

For those presidents with younger children, two of three found themselves challenged in spending adequate family time:

I think the tough thing about these jobs is that they're relentless. They're relentless and there's not a lot of space for other things so I think you have to manage that a lot with your spouse and with children. I think the role we are all playing in trying to help them be all that they can be is difficult just because of the time issues. (President 9)

A lot of this job happens on weekends and evenings and so there's always tradeoffs, but the tradeoffs become more acute when you have a child at home. I did last spring; go twelve straight days, I was in town, but twelve straight days, including weekends, without seeing (name) because I left before he got up and came home after he went to bed. That felt horrible, and I actually resolved to myself, —Don't do that.” You got to say no to some events and get home at a reasonable hour. And he goes to bed early so that means go home at the end of the work day and not do an evening event. So the tradeoffs can be quite severe. I didn't do it (have children) to be an absentee dad so I would walk away from this job in a moment if I felt I couldn't manage the tradeoffs, but we're still adjusting. (President 6)

President 7 has young children at home but did not share any challenges specific to sacrificing family time. All three presidents with younger children sighted advantages to being in the position while raising children, including the economic/life style benefits and diversity of campus life.
Both President 10 and President 3 shared instances where they realized the position has the potential to affect their spousal relationship:

I know that sometimes I work too hard. I think if I were not married and left to my own devices I would literally be on my computer an entire weekend. In fact this weekend was a good example because I got in late from traveling, I got in after midnight on Friday night, so on Saturday I wanted to catch up on e-mail and write notes and so on then I found out that we also had two basketball games that had been rescheduled and I thought I should go to those and my husband said, “I'm going to exercise,” and he didn't say, “I really want you to come with me.” I said to him, “Next time ask me?” And I thought about it, and thought that it is time I paid attention to my health and my relationship with my husband. Why should… He went off to exercise the weekend before without me because I was working. I can't let that happen two weekends in a row. So I went with him and I think it was the right decision. It was a wonderful hour. It was the right amount of time. It pushed me physically but not to the point of total exhaustion. And he said, “I was starting to give up on your coming with me.” (President 10)

I find that we actually have to go away from here to get any time together which seems really weird. We live in this big beautiful house and we've been trying to get one weekend this semester where we just leave town. Actually, the last thing I want to do is travel (because of her extensive work-related travel). (President 3)

Seven presidents had their spouses and families regularly attending campus related events with them. Most expressed that those are times enjoyed by all. For example, President 7 takes his family to athletic events where he confesses to being an overenthusiastic fan. President 4 invites a large circle of relatives to campus for particular culture events and feels that the community enjoys seeing her enjoying her family. President 11 shared this about her and her significant other’s involvement, “It's fun for both of us, it's fun. Football games and going to plays and going to lectures; we love higher education, we love college life.”

Another factor that has potential to affect personal relationships is the often expected community access to the president’s home. Nine of the 11 presidents discussed regularly hosting campus events including student, faculty, staff, and trustee functions:

I'll invite different student groups to the house, the college house where I reside, and whenever we do events, if we can work it out, rather than using our food service people,
we have a culinary arts program, so we will try to work it out with our bakery students. (President 2)

I have students over to the house, they love to go over to the house so, and I mix that up, it might've been the dance team, it might be student government leaders, you know, it gets mixed up in terms of the group I might have over. (President 10)

Oh it is constant, what goes on in the house. That's why I'm saying it is part of what we do, you know. (President 4)

SGA has been to our house for dinner, sports teams have been to our house for dinner, we have all of the freshman to the house for dinner. (President 8)

President 3 shared some of the tensions of having people in and out of the house at different times:

And people are in the house all the time setting up and taking down... Our staff is incredibly nice but it's weird, you're in bed, and you're getting up in the morning and all of a sudden you're realizing that there is somebody in the house down there. I'm trying to be very good about, I actually have a calendar, in the kitchen, sort of who is coming or going, and what days in regards to facilities and catering, but still, things happen.

President 1 managed to keep most hosted events during weekday evenings which gave her and her spouse more privacy on the weekend. When speaking about a discussion he had with fellow presidents, President 2 had this to say:

You literally live in a glass bowl. I know that most of the presidents, newer presidents, that I've talked to, the people that started in the class that I was in, been at it three to five years, if they could go back now and have a choice of if there is a housing part, take the house or housing allowance; I don't know of one of them who would take the house.

**Work/life balance.** Presidents were closely divided in terms of how well they were managing their work/life balance with five feeling well adjusted and six still in search of the right balance. For those who were well adjusted, they confessed to always being mindful, given their busy pace, to make time for themselves. President 2 will occasionally add another day to a business trip (at his expense) to relax with his wife. President 5 had an overly demanding
My life was over scheduled. Now, my husband is retired; and guess who does the grocery shopping and the cooking? Now we have more time to spend doing things together. Like today, he went skiing with friends so we will have leftovers for dinner. It is very easy. I have more control of my time. I can tell my assistant to hold these two hours and there is virtually nothing that can prevent me from completing what I needed to complete in those two hours.

President 11 and her significant other try to keep life in perspective, “There is a period of time we’re going to work crazy, crazy and this is where we’re kind of; you know we’re not martyrs, no. I sleep eight hours a night. I eat three meals a day.” Four presidents maintain separate homes where they can occasionally escape campus. There were those who were struggling with balance issues. For instance, President 3, President 6, and President 10 spoke of work challenges that kept them away from family time. Three presidents were concerned about a lack of exercise time.

**Spousal advice.** When presidents were asked about how they used their spouse, or significant other, in seeking job related advice, six actively sought consultation; particularly those who had spouses with a higher education background or relevant experience related to the issue such as a financial background in dealing with fiscal difficulties. President 9 expressed that her husband was particularly strong in a strategic sense and she depends on him for that perspective; whereas, President 10’s husband is good at refining her speeches but stays out of strategic discussions. President 7 was grateful for his wife’s higher education experience and shared, “We talk about everything and she is smarter than I am and she’s more sympathetic than I am and disagrees with me most of the time.”

Five of the presidents do not use their spouse or significant other for advice, but some use them to vent, or as sounding boards. For example, President 6 expressed:
Not as an advisor. It's not as an advisor. A lot of times just articulating something you see it in a different light. First of all the problems seem less cosmetic than when you're carrying it by yourself; and secondly, a lot of times in articulating it answers suggest themselves that don't suggest themselves when it's just sitting in your head. So I say not as an advisor, but it has an asterisk.

**Mentoring and peer relationships.** Seven presidents reported that they were engaged in mentoring relationships to varying degrees. Two mentioned having an assigned mentor and one president opted for professional coaching rather than making use of a mentor. President 4 explained why she was interested in an executive coach at this point in her presidency:

I have had wonderful mentors over the years. I almost see it as like a before and a now because I think there were mentors in the more classic role that I have had, but I think since I've been here I'm much more strategic in terms of a coach, executive coach. In fact, I, it was a recommendation from my board, you know, do what you need to do. You're going to have to have someone to bounce things off, kind of keep you out of the weeds, etc. and because I'm forging a new role, new challenges, I didn't want people I know.

Two of the presidents named their fathers as mentors, both having experience in the field of education. Two presidents use their mentors through observing their leadership as opposed to active engagement. President 11 expressed, "I've tended to listen to people whose performance I have admired who had gotten things done and achieve things and I've watched how they've done it. Of course I've learned from my mentors and my tormentors."

Of the four who did not have a mentoring relationship, President 6 offered a perspective on why he did not engage in a regular mentoring relationship:

You know, I've done that very little, I actually think that I should cultivate, there are people who I feel I could call including the president I worked for at a previous institution. You'd have to respect me, you have to know me so we could cut straight to it, "Here's what I'm thinking about." I actually, I can only think of one case in which I did that and it was a president even though I was talking to him about something else, and suddenly a question popped up in my mind, "by the way would you help me think this thing through," and he did. I believe it is important to do that and I'm not sure why I don't, except that the problem is in front of me and I don't even think, I just start working on it.
Seven presidents consult regularly with other presidents on relevant, job related issues. Four of those seven spoke of being able to share with peers because of their level of understanding and discretion.

It is truly a unique perch. You know, the constituents that we have to play to; the information that we need to know, it's just, you just don't know until you're in that role. (President 4)

We'll talk again (with a president’s group), you know, next month and we can share whatever because it's not going anywhere. So that's helpful, very helpful. (President 8)

I feel like I've hit it. It's just an accident. I had a lot of time with my other colleagues where there is a good degree of trust and civility and, actually, collegiality. (President 11)

Same issues, sort of a commiseration a little bit, and you just really need that…you need peers to talk with, so I guess for me it's been with these group sessions (with other presidents). (President 3)

Of the four presidents who did not regularly consult with colleagues, lack of time was a factor in discouraging the practice. President 1 indicated, “So you almost have to be either in person or on the phone, and on the phone is hard just because our lives are so crazy so to actually make a phone call, you almost have to make an appointment.”

Interpreting, filtering, and responding to relationships when considering trust, authenticity, and loneliness in performing the responsibilities of the office. This section analyzes data related to trust, authenticity, and loneliness issues. Presidents were asked to discuss who they trusted when discussing sensitive issues related to presidential decision making. They also responded to a question about maintaining social distance from people at their institutions. Additionally, they spoke about the degree of authenticity that they felt they had sacrificed in fulfilling the duties of the office. Finally, the participants were asked, based on the nature of position relative to trust, authenticity, and social distancing, if they experienced a sense of loneliness.
**Trust.** Presidents were asked to identify those to whom they would trust and confide in on sensitive institution issues. Some views about trust and confidants also emerged during other parts of the interview. For instance, all of the participants mentioned their spouse, or significant other, as someone to whom they could share confidential information. Six presidents identified their cabinet as a group that they trusted and could confide in; however, several qualified their responses:

I would say it's my senior officers. I have, I think I have four senior officers who I really do trust and they have been here a long time and they are going to be here a long time. We figured out how to work together. You know, I think there always is, I think I'm pretty easy going, I want people to tell me the truth, I think they all figured out that they can do that and it's safe for them to do that so I think that I have figured out with folks how to do that. (President 1)

I trust my cabinet, as it is constituted this year, I trust my cabinet. And while I would say there are some issues that I have to deal with exclusively, I really try to build a cabinet that we can; and even if we have differences of opinion, and we do, that we can share those and there will be respect. We try to work towards consensus. (President 8)

Three of the presidents who felt a level of trust in members of their cabinet also identified assistants whom they promoted from within the institution to work directly for them. President 3 said of her assistant, “She's handling a lot of things, she's unloading into my head, I'm unloading into her head and we have developed a very strong relationship; so that's huge as well.”

President 5 also referenced her assistant, “She is absolutely closed mouth when it comes to talking about anybody and she has a good head on her shoulder.”

Three presidents felt that they could trust no one. President 2, who has dealt with considerable contention among some members of the community, was very clear in his response to trust:

Have you ever watched X-Files? Trust no one. I trust one person, my wife. I don't trust anybody else. I'm not paranoid. I'm not saying that somebody is going to hurt me. I'm just saying, this is not higher education, or being the president...on any given day there are 1,000 variables that affect the choices people make, and I am, literally, in kind of a
vulnerable place because if people make judgments about me they are making judgments about this whole place and it is a heavy weight to carry, and you carry it.

President 6 also shared his feelings on lack of trust:

In a visceral way, ‘I just trust that person because they have my back no matter what, we’re bonded together; I don’t trust anyone.’ I’m not distrustful, but there is no one who I have that kind of trust.

President 6 qualified his response by explaining that he relates trust to expectations. He has expectations of his cabinet and, therefore, has learned how to work most effectively with them.

President 7 mentioned the board of trustees as the group that he would turn to with most sensitive issues and President 11 focused on her role as president to create an environment of trust rather than identifying individuals or groups that she particularly trusted.

**Social distance.** The data, relative to themes, on social distance revealed consistent responses. Ten of eleven presidents felt that there needed to be clear boundaries between themselves, as presidents, and the campus community. Two of the respondents occasionally socialized with faculty or staff but still felt it important to not make it a regular practice.

President 10 felt that occasional social opportunities may be acceptable but a president must be careful not to create a perception in the community of favoritism:

One of the hardest…you can't become good friends with anybody who is at the institution. You have to because otherwise…you can develop a friendship to a certain level but you can't confide. You even have to be careful that you don't start having dinner together too often or socializing too often. You can do a little socializing but you can't (do too much) because it will be seen as favoritism. You can't talk about confidential things. It's, you just can't.

President 9 was also concerned about perceptions as well as having time limitations to socialize:

And I just think it's hard to do, I've tried to create a framework of accessibility and connectedness and the ability (for people) to engage me in my day-to-day interactions and I haven't built those interactions in another timeframe. I just don't do it that way. I don't think it's a terrible thing, but I think you have to do it very carefully and, you know,
I'm not a big; that's not the way I do things anyway. It's not who I am. It's more like, "Let's come to a reception, let's talk, come to my office; let's do that. But, let's go to the movies; let's go out to dinner, no."... eighty percent of that time is for my kids.

President 1 also mentioned time constraints to relax socially because of the many formal social commitments, "We spend a lot of time, socially through work so on a weekly basis; this week I think I'll have four dinners with faculty, students and others."

One president, President 7, had a different perspective as he regularly socializes with staff and faculty:

I don't do it. I don't try to maintain a distance because I can't. Once you do that, and most people would say you have to; there's all sorts of things you learn in president's camp (for new presidents) you know, "Always make sure when you go outside of the college you have to dress this way; you can't talk to this person." I'm not doing that... So for me, my approach is to live the position as a fulltime experience, you know, without being psychotic about it.

**Authenticity.** All eleven presidents felt that they had not sacrificed much authenticity as president; however, seven of those presidents qualified their answers by identifying times when they needed to be "presidential":

I mean I can't survive if it is not one in the same or, I'm pretty blunt in the sense that I'm confrontational, but I pretty much tell you the way it is; what's on my mind in a sensitive and compassionate way inasmuch as possible. But yeah, I couldn't even imagine, that would be cognitive dissonance at its worst. (President 4)

I'm always conscious of being the president even in the grocery store. My child said to me last summer, I was going to run to the store for something and I was in gym shorts and a T-shirt and I said, "Oh, I have to change my clothes before I go to the grocery store," she said, "Being the president sucks sometimes!" And we had a laugh about it. It's true, there are things, where I feel I have to be dressed up but, I just feel like there are things that I no longer do that I once did. I always am aware that I could run into somebody, and I often do, who starts to bend my ear about... In fact one time I met someone at the grocery store... I was putting groceries in the trunk of my car and I hear this voice say, "Boy, that doesn't look very presidential." Of course, my response was, "Presidents eat too." But, all that said though, I can't live with myself if I'm not being pretty much who I am. So I do try to keep things smooth around the edges, but the core of me is the core of me and I couldn't do this job if I couldn't let myself be myself. So, for better or for worse, I am who I am. (President 3)
Yeah, I think it is probably just a decision of my own to stay that way…it was the only way I'm ever going to do any job. On some level if I can't be myself then it would just be too hard to go to work every day particularly since you're not just working nine to five, Monday to Friday. Clearly, on the margins, you find some things that you have to be a little bit more careful about and you want to think twice before you completely be yourself but, I'm not sure there's really any other way to do it. (President 1)

Five presidents spoke of the importance of having a good fit between the person and the institution. For example:

If I'm doing this job at (named institution) I would not feel, I could not feel the same way. I couldn't because you'd want to make it more of who you are; what you think is important, those are your real values and they're a little different. I mean certainly if I were doing this job at, my god, (named institution) or (named institution), I couldn't do it because it would be a different culture, different values, as one could identify them. To try to be authentic there and not have people say what planet is this person coming from? It's just different. (President 7)

If this were a campus where the corporate dress was expected and required and that was a sign of competency or leadership, it probably would not be the best fit for me. So I wear blue jeans on Saturdays and Sundays and, you know, there you go. But I did think about (it), and I said, —You know this is not who I am.” I think so far, the feedback that I have gotten is that I am genuine. (President 11)

Three presidents mentioned the concept of always needing to be —on” in public.

President 9 mentioned, —There is a certain —on’ that is required much at all times but it's not inauthentic because my personality style is sort that way.” President 8 shared the danger of slipping out of the expected role of president, turning off the —on”:

There are times when I am dealing with some very weighty issues and they are serious issues. So, when someone sees me they might think, —gosh, she wasn't really friendly or she wasn't smiling when she was walking to her car.” Well it's because I was thinking about how I'm going to handle this e-mail that just came like a bomb.

Loneliness. When the participants were asked about their identifying with the concept of loneliness, seven of the eleven felt some degree of being lonely in the role of president. Four of those respondents felt that their role as a final authority in the decision making process contribute
to their feeling of being lonely. All participants credited strong family support systems for either not feeling lonely or minimizing the feeling of loneliness. For example:

Some days are more than others. I think right now I'm feeling that a little bit, actually. We've had a couple of difficult personnel issues; bottom line is that I have to make decisions, you know, those things are never fun. So yeah, there is something to that and there is irony in that because you never get any time to yourself? (President 3)

You know it's not so much making tough decisions in isolation. You're surrounded by people all the time, you're getting input all the time, but no one else walks in your shoes. It is different, again, it is one of my themes, ―is more different than I thought it was,‖ even after watching presidents up close every day for many years so there's all of that. (President 6)

First of all, you don't know who is BS'ing you, so I have to take everything with a grain of salt and try to figure out what people are doing, and saying behind the scenes as well as what they are saying to me…Sometimes I have to make decisions that are contrary to what people are advising me. (President 5)

**Effectiveness.** The final part of the interviews focused on the presidents' perspectives as to how they measured their effectiveness relative to the position. They were asked to consider effectiveness beyond traditional metrics (e.g., higher retention rates, larger endowment). Presidents were then asked to respond to whether or not they felt relationship construction and maintenance was foundational to their work.

In terms of effectiveness, the largest theme came from four presidents who felt that they would be effective if, in their tenures, their institution’s reputations grew while they strengthened the quality of their academic programs to the degree that their graduates would have a relevant education:

I will know that I have been an effective president in retrospect when we have built the academic programs that I think are the important ones for the next generation of student leaders of the world; when we have actually done it. That we have, and we can see students graduating who’ve had meaningful impact from those, those are the big ones…When you're an old guy like I am and you realize because you’re not that smart, but you look around and there’s no class of other people to take the world forward…You know there’s not some heroic, brilliant cadre of people who will take the world forward if you and I don’t. So, once you realize that and then you say, ―if you really think the way
you educate kids at your institution is the way to do it,” then it's really important that that the service is delivered to every group of people who ought to take advantage of it or the world is not going to be in the right place (President 7)

I firmly believe that this college is ready for its next phase. We've been here for a long time, we're no spring chicken, we are going to be here for many years educating students and that's important, so how do we make sure were the model for the 21st century for colleges? And if we really believe that the world needs more leaders, which I truly do, then we are an important part of that. And so, I think those are some pieces that are not about the metrics, but are about helping everyone get this thing going in the right direction. (President 9)

I think about the success of our students; I so believe in our mission, I am a liberal arts advocate through and through, passionate about it, and I am just all about wanting students to make a difference in the world, and that is not a throwaway line, I need and so, I guess it's not my success, the institutional success is measured by what graduates go off and do so you want them to do something that really makes a difference. So there's that piece, and then there's also, there's also the joy in the community about what we are doing together that extends from the dishwasher to the faculty member to the student so I am all about people really enjoying, really finding true enjoyment in the community that we have here which I think is quite special. (President 3)

But there is a letter that you get from a parent, there is a letter that you get from student; because one of my mantras is, “It's all about the student.” Everything that we do, it's all about the student. So when you pick up this newspaper and they are really understanding a brand-new partnership that we have formed and are basically calling their students to action, to learn about, I mean this is what it is about. It's about, “What's transpiring in the lives of these students that is true to the promise that we are making that it is going to be a transformational learning experience?” So those are the things that really resonate, you know, with me, but there are all kinds of metrics, all kinds of metrics that we monitor, but you can ask anybody, “It's all about the students.” (President 4)

Three presidents measured effectiveness to the degree that they could communicate with and inspire those around them to move their institutions forward:

To be effective you have to create an environment where people do their best work. That's your job. Your job is not to try to do it all but to help people be effective. The way you know is when you have successes. And so for me the way I know is the turnaround we see in enrollment, the curriculum reforms that we've done, the people who have agreed to come here, I mean, the fact that we were able to lure some very high-profile Dean candidates to this tiny little college, the fact that this place is looking better and functioning better, there are a lot of very concrete measures of that. Ultimately, effectiveness here, is a thriving college in every sense of the word where whether you work here or you're a student here you feel that you are getting your best out of yourself
and for yourself. But what I particularly love is when people take initiatives and succeed and then get to enjoy that success and then it builds on itself. (President 10)

If we are meeting our goals, and well, there is a soft side to it too, which is the interpersonal relations; you could be meeting your goals and having votes of no confidence in the senate at the same time but I judge whether we are moving ahead, weather we are moving in the right direction…the role of the leader is to make sure the herd is generally traveling in this direction. So, when I look around and say, –So what are we doing with the curriculum? What are we doing with students? What are we doing with fundraising? What are we doing with the physical plant?” If we are all moving in the same direction then that is good. (President 5)

I would be most happy if I felt that people, some cross-section, faculty, staff, and maybe even students; the faculty and staff; if they knew where the institution was heading and why and what their part in it needs to be. It's icing on the cake if they are also supportive of that direction, but I don't expect universal support. I think effective leadership is, –There is a vision, we are heading somewhere, there is a reason for it, and it has been effectively communicated broadly across the campus.” (President 6)

Two presidents spoke about creating positive change while at the same time preserving the institution’s culture and mission. President 1 shared, –I think it'll be through what changes we implement and what things we decide are really important that we managed to protect and keep.” While President 8 expressed:

For however long my time here is, that while private education, the economy, and the college in particular, have suffered through very difficult economic times and some of the decisions that were made were very difficult; that our mission did not suffer and that the school has thrived, not just survived, because of some of the initiatives that occurred through the time that I was working with all of the entities on campus to take the institution forward.

Two presidents found it difficult to separate metrics from effectiveness. President 11 had invested in the development of a plan that she referenced throughout the interview and very much equates her effectiveness to the specific measures identified in that plan. President 2, having discussed his reliance on hard data, also was pressed to discuss effectiveness in terms other than numbers. He shared:
If in a demonstrable, accountable way, the key performance indicators that we have selected demonstrates; shows, that the campus is better off, whether it’s retention rates, solvency in finances; if we can demonstrate it then I will have been successful.

All eleven presidents in this study felt that relationship construction and maintenance was foundational to their effectiveness as leaders. The respondents had several different areas of emphasis as to why they felt strongly about relationships and effectiveness.

Three presidents spoke about interpersonal qualities that they felt important to have in developing relationships. President 6 talked about listening and how he has learned that as president, listening takes on additional importance, —So you need to be a really excellent listener which to me means I mainly have to remind myself to really listen; What is this person really getting at?” President 11 spoke to the virtues of trust, —But I can't underestimate the importance of trust and building relationships and inviting people to the presidency.” President 1 also mentioned trust as an essential element in building successful relationships:

But that comes from being fair and being trusted and working hard and being honest and… the more people you put on that list that have interacted with you and feel that they've been, you know, you meet those criteria, the easier it is to get stuff done and the more support you have when times get tough.

President 9 focused on presidential relationships serving as a means to disarm critics to the point of actually garnering their support:

When people are out there; when student, staff, and faculty are out there in any mode where they are critiquing the institution it's harder to do it when you know the president. You say it in a different way. If it's some faceless...we don't have to care; it's people over there. So some of it's about helping people help the institution even in their critique to do it in the right way. And when you have better relationships, and when you feel good relationships, they even do the critiquing in a better way.

President 7 discussed the need for presidents to be direct and engage in dialogue with stakeholders to be effective. He cited examples of seeing other presidents —run their institutions into the ground” because they were unable to connect with constituents. His formula for success:
The only way to lead is to be direct and try to figure things out. Try to engage in real discussion with the groups that you’re trying to work with and bring the place forward and do so from positions of principle that you feel totally comfortable with saying it in public, out loud, and articulating, and operating; that’s really important.

President 8, in describing why she felt relationships were foundational to her effectiveness, emphasized the importance for presidents to understand the nature of the position and the culture, and to be able to embrace it. She is president twenty-four hours a day and feels that it is inescapable. If someone did not enjoy that lifestyle there would be a disconnect leading to ineffectiveness. President 8 finished her answer about relationships and her effectiveness by sharing a personal encounter with a student (previously quoted) who saw her as a role model that she found to be personally powerful.

President 2 reflected on his own increased awareness of how his actions have challenged some relationships on campus:

I might have rebalanced, if I go back, the way I'm looking at it, the way I'm going to answer it is, if I could do it all over again, I might have underestimated the sensitivity of some people along with their reluctance to change. Now, would I be any less aggressive in making those things happen? No. But there may be a better way of doing it.

President 2 went on to say that he felt his aggressive approach was necessary to expedite critical changes that were necessary to get the institutional on the right track. A casualty of these actions was the friction created by his actions; however, he felt that was a necessary compromise.

Both, President 5 and President 3, talked about a president setting the tone for the community to be relationally healthy in order to best serve the students. According to President 5, “What I try to do is set a tone that says we value other people, we are not going to be dismissive of other people’s ideas and that we are going to be transparent in our decision making and that we value individual students.” President 3 was very candid in her emphasis:

And I'm all about the relationships. That's what we sell. Who is going to pay to come to a place like this if it's not about the personal relationships? You know, that's what enriches
the educational experience, so I do think that that is foundational about everything we do here, and certainly everything that I do.

President 10 spent time answering the question by going through each of her relationships with different constituent groups on campus, relating their importance to her work. She emphasized successes that she had in working with faculty and crafting her cabinet and felt that because she has strengthened relationships she is in a better place to spend more time away from campus focusing on the important presidential role of fundraising.

President 4’s answer to the question was short and to the point:

I'm a relational leader, I mean, it's all built on relationships. I am not a transactional leader, particularly, if someone who works with me is not in that mode; it doesn't work, it just doesn't work, I learned that over the years.

Summary

This study found that relationship construction and maintenance was considered, by those presidents interviewed, to be an important dimension of their work. There were several themes that emerged.

Challenging financial situations and predecessor contributions to existing climate issues were viewed as impediments to several presidents’ relationship development. The majority of presidents did give thought as to how they would construct relationships prior to beginning their responsibilities.

In response to relationships with various campus constituencies, each group had its unique challenges. Cabinet related themes included: early personnel changes; restructuring; replacing the provost (chief academic officer); and changes in the expectations of the president relative to cabinet functions and relationships. All of the presidents found contact with students to be important and it took the form of structured meetings, casual interactions, and event attendance. The nature of these relationships appeared mostly symbolic with only two presidents
discussing, in detail, personal interactions with students. The presidents spent more time discussing faculty relationships than any other constituency group. Many described these relationships as complex and a large majority was wrestling with challenges in those relationships over issues involving finances, governance, cabinet positions, or a combination of the three. Trustee relationships were perceived to be positive among all of the presidents and the board chair played a pivotal role in helping to nurture those relations. Several presidents reported the necessity to clarify trustee responsibilities early in their tenure.

In terms of personal relationships, all of the presidents identified the importance of having a supportive family in order for them to manage the demands of the job. Several of the presidents reported the nature of the job creating a strain on family or spousal relations and the ability to maintain a healthy work life balance. The public access to the presidential home was seen as a contributing factor to personal relational challenges. The group was divided on using their spouse for advice about work. The majority of presidents did benefit from mentoring relationships and contact with other presidents.

There were several themes that emerged from discussions of interpersonal feelings. All of the presidents felt that they could trust their spouse with sensitive information and a slight majority indicated strong levels of trust with members of their cabinet. There were a few presidents who trusted no one outside of spouses. All of the participants felt that they had not sacrificed their authenticity as a result of the position, although a few shared examples of where they were cognizant of their behavior. A large majority were sensitive to maintaining social distance from members of the campus community. The majority of the presidents identified, at one time or another, with feelings of loneliness as a result of the job and all credit strong family support in minimizing the feeling.
The participants had many different interpretations for being an effective president. Many felt it important to strengthen the institution's reputation while building academic programs relevant to address societal needs. A few identified effectiveness with being able to motivated those around them to move the institution in the right direction. There were a couple of respondents who felt that creating positive change while preserving institutional values was important. All of the presidents felt that relationship construction and maintenance was foundational to their effectiveness for a variety of different reasons.
Chapter V: Discussion

Introduction

This was an exploratory study of presidents’ perceptions of relationship construction and maintenance relative to effectiveness. The data analysis identified common themes among the participants along with responses that deviated from the themes but help to bring fullness and added meaning to the topic being referenced. As this is not a study seeking to generalize findings, the themes capture the essence of meaning, and deviations from the themes add depth to the narrative. What follows are: conclusions based on my perceptions of the essence of the findings; implications; limitations of the study; opportunities for further research; and personal reflections.

Conclusions

In developing this exploratory study I chose to use a phenomenological approach using presidents who were early in their tenures (one to four years). Philosophically, it made the most sense to approach this study from a phenomenological perspective as I explored the meaning of those experiencing a particular phenomenon (relationships). From a pragmatic perspective, using the phenomenological approaches of Van Manen (1990) to design the study, and Hycner (1985) to analyze the data provided the necessary framework to conduct the research. The benefit of doing this was to capture the phenomenon of relationship construction and maintenance while it was happening, rather than interviewing established or past presidents who may not be clear in their memory, or, perhaps, romanticize those memories. The trade off could be a greater level of guardedness by the participants because they were talking to an unknown researcher while actively engaged in their presidencies where confidentiality has greater risk were their identities to become known to any of their stakeholders. I found, surprisingly, most of
the participants very candid in the interviews and certainly honored the requests of, “Please keep this confidential,” or, “You can’t write that in your report.” Had I conducted interviews with these same 11 presidents five years from now, contexts would be different, as would be their reflections.

**Context.** Context is an important consideration in all leadership situations. In this particular study, extraordinary circumstances greatly impacted the experiences of these leaders and how they constructed and maintained relationships. Most, if not all, of the participants were operating in situations with extremely tight financial resources as a result of one of the worst economic downturns in recent history. Both state supported and private colleges were negatively affected, whether it was from a loss of government support or diminished returns on endowments, the study’s participants began their tenure with limited options including: fewer department resources; downsizing; and higher costs of attendance. Further, many presidents did not have the benefit of time to nurture early relationships before introducing change with its anticipated resistance (Guskin, 1996a; Kotter, 1996; O’Toole, 1995). As explained by one study’s participant, “Normally academics change slowly; we don't have time for that. We have a crisis” (President 10). Had financial circumstances been better, giving presidents’ time and money to invest in social capital (Bornstein, 2003), resistance, and strains on relationships, might have been less.

The other contextual issue that came through in the data was the climate created by the presidents' predecessors. Although not as prevalent as the financial circumstances, this contextual issue did hamper relations with various constituencies on campus; whether it be strong faculty rifts based on years of changing leadership (President 2), or the need to redefine board roles based on past presidential practices, as President 9 described her early months with
the board, “They were in a learning mode about who they were.” All leaders enter a culture that has been shaped by past leadership and must learn to deal with it; however, it was interesting that most (nine) of the presidents, in a respectful way, were critical of past leadership and the resulting climate challenges.

Context certainly contributes to all new leadership situations and it appears that there were extraordinary circumstances unique to this study’s participants that forced early decisions and had an effect on their relationships. However, there are studies that found it common for new presidents to feel a sense of urgency and a compelling need to take quick actions regardless of unique circumstances (Bensimon, Gade, & Kauffman, 1989; McLaughlin, 1996).

**Establishing and maintaining relationships.** Interviews began with participants reflecting on their professional relationship construction and maintenance; thoughts about introducing themselves to their new community and reflections on relationships with different constituents.

**Introduction to campus.** “No period is more important for creating a successful president than the time span starting from the appointment and continuing through the first six months of service” (Guskin, 1996b, p.16). Whether it be on their own, or in cooperation with the board, the literature suggests that a president should develop a well thought out entry plan (Martin, Samels, & Associates, 2004).

In this study, several presidents reported that they created an entry plan related to developing relationships among constituencies. One of the presidents found she had to deviate from the plan shortly after her arrival because of other pressing issues. Among those who did not have carefully crafted plans, one president confessed that he should have given it more thought.
Certainly not conclusive, it appears that those who did have a plan found it an effective approach in transitioning into new relationships.

**Constituencies.** Conclusions relative to a constituency group cannot be seen in isolation as there is considerable interconnectedness among the different areas delved into in this study. For example, the financial climate was seen as an inhibiting factor, particularly when constructing faculty relationships; ineffective provosts were also an important factor in developing positive relationships with faculty members.

**Faculty.** Faculty relationships occupied much of the interviewees time in describing them and, admittedly, they were the most challenging. Historically rooted in the culture of academia, especially in recent times, it is common for there to be a contentious relationship between presidents and faculty members (Bergquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1992; Wergin, 2007). In this study, many presidents spoke of fostering positive relationships through establishing trust and transparency in decision-making. This approach had served Presidents 5, 10, and 11 well. These three presidents had predecessors who experienced difficulty in relating to their faculty. The predecessor of President 5 maintained a distance from the unionized faculty and chose to meet only as required. Presidents 10 and 11 had predecessors who were very guarded about the financial decision making at a time of depleted resources. Opportunities for more communication through meetings and transparent processes, in the opinions of these three presidents, were effective:

What I wanted to do was to be open and transparent with the faculty. I had learned that the culture here was that when administration went to college senate meetings they sat in the back of the room and didn’t say anything. Well I chose to sit in the front row and make a report at virtually every senate meeting. If I couldn’t be there fine, and once in a while there was nothing to report but my practice was to go there, sit up there, visibly talk, be part of the senate. I don’t debate or anything like that, but I give about a five minute report at the beginning. The other thing that my predecessor had done, was our union contract stipulates that the President has to meet with the union once a semester
and he had chosen to meet just once a semester. I chose to meet every month, so every time there is a labor management meeting I am there and the union leadership, this is the faculty union, and the union leadership realized there was an opportunity to start a new kind of relationship with the administration because they had been very adversarial and they had been very nitpicky about issues, always having to throw something in the administrations face. We established a new way of accommodating each other that was a lot more positive and collaborative and more sharing of information. (President 5)

I do come to faculty meetings. Some places they don't want the president there. They wanted me there. In fact, I had to say, —You don't want me here the whole time because you need time without me.” (President 10)

Previously, it was pretty much in one pot and it was between the president and provost who begged for what, who obtained what. I use those words because that's what I was hearing back from people and so we're changing that radically. (President 11)

Others chose to challenge faculty governance in an effort to clarify roles and expectations. This had not yielded the same positive results. Higher education functions under a system of shared governance and it appears that in at least some of the cases in this study, faculty chose to test the definition. This power struggle represented significant challenges for both President 2 and President 8. President 2 chose to seek external help to resolve relational differences, whereas President 8 chose to make herself more vulnerable to faculty critics by agreeing to regular meetings with faculty to improve communications:

They submit anonymous questions ahead of time and then the moderator just reads them to me and I have to respond there. I don't know who sends them. And there have been some winners let me tell you; I think bordering on disrespectful in some cases. And I think some of the other faculty are shocked at some of the questions because I hear that after the fact.

Some of the presidents responded strategically in fostering better relations by engaging with vocal, disgruntled faculty on a one-on-one basis. These new relationships are not built on a foundation of trust and mutual respect, rather, they are direct, confrontational, and fact based in an effort to neutralize the opposition by debunking misinformation. Another strategy had been to replace key senior cabinet members who had a negative effect on faculty relationships.
The presidents’ problem with faculty relationships in this study is consistent with the findings in an American Council on Education (2007) survey where presidents identified faculty relationships as the most challenging. When asked how they typically spent their time, presidents reported time spent on faculty issues to be tenth, behind areas such as strategic planning and community affairs. I did not ask this study’s participants about the amount of time spent on faculty issues, although the literature suggests that new presidents spend more time on campus, fostering relationships, than more seasoned presidents (Birnbaum, 1992).

It was clear from the findings that the presidents understood the importance of developing strong relationships with faculty; however, a combination of context, administrative leadership problems, and personal leadership styles created challenges. The difficult context (financial issues and predecessor practices) was something that the presidents seemed to understand within months of their tenures. How those presidents chose to respond to the challenges certainly impacted the quality of faculty relationships. As will be discussed further in this chapter, several presidents opted to replace the provost, a position considered by many, to be an integral player in developing president-faculty relations (Mortimer & Sathre, 2007). Changing a provost does cause discontinuity in an existing relationship with faculty. Despite a faculty’s feelings towards a previous provost, the new person is not only unknown, but ultimately the president’s choice, which implies a greater sense of loyalty towards the president. In instances in which faculty-presidential relationships are problematic, the new provost will be under tremendous pressure to show commitment to the faculty.

Many of the presidents in this study expressed concerns over trust in relationships and no one referenced an individual faculty member as someone to whom they could closely trust. Additionally, all but one president spoke about the need for social distancing with members of
the college community, which would make a president less accessible and less known, in a direct sense, among faculty. These interpersonal issues could well inhibit the presidential-faculty relationship from maturing beyond a superficial level, which in academia, starts with a degree of contention. A majority of the presidents identified with the concept of loneliness; many associating the feeling to being the final decision maker. Despite claims of collaboration and the importance of faculty relations, there appears to be a relational contradiction brought on by self-imposed distancing, lack of trust, and the consequential feeling of loneliness for the sake of position power.

The difficult fiscal climate at the institutions in this study required quick analysis and plan development by a president and her leadership team. In a study on academic turnarounds at financially struggling colleges, Terrence MacTaggart (2007) expressed the importance of transparency and real faculty engagement in the fiscal decision making process. Transparency was mentioned several times by the presidents in this study; however, at the final decision making stage they did not report a great deal of faculty input or interaction.

From experience, I have observed presidents, early in their tenures, take painstaking efforts to gather input from hundreds of stakeholders, for the sake of transparency and collaboration, followed by a total disconnect with those stakeholders when final decisions were made. As the change literature suggests, building a strong coalition and empowering others is critical to successful forward movement (Kotter, 1996). In an academic context, this requires fostering relationships among influential faculty who will feel ownership for difficult decisions and carry that flag among their ranks. To accomplish this requires that these faculty leaders not only be involved in the entire decision making process but that they have a sense of trust developed from reasonably close relationships with members of the leadership team; whether it
be the president or provost. Maintaining social distance as discussed by a number of the presidents would tend to undermine the development of such trusting relationships.

One fascinating result was the difficulty with faculty experienced by presidents having emerged from faculty ranks. These presidents seemed very surprised by the rejection from a constituency group who they knew most about. This was very much unanticipated when starting the job because they felt they spoke the language and took for granted that there would be instant acceptance. Yet the reality is that the tension between faculty and presidents is most often not the result of the personalities of the individuals involved but the different roles they fill and the very different functions they perform, which often leads to very different perspectives and interests. The challenge for presidents and faculty is to understand the legitimacy of these differences rather than criticize the other and diminish their perspectives and interests, and develop the relationship bridges that can lead to trust based on respect and the reality that their overarching interests are the health of the institution. This is easier said than done in the context of fiscal difficulties and a history of strained relationships from previous administrations.

\textit{Staff/cabinet.} A president’s relationship to her senior administrative team is critical to successful relationships on a campus; this is especially true of the provost position and a strong connectedness to president-faculty relationships. According to Bornstein (2003), "A politically astute, well-connected academic officer is invaluable in assessing the faculty’s readiness for change and in preparing the political ground for new initiatives" (p. 154). Speaking to the nature of the relationship, Mortimer and Sathre (2007) wrote, "The importance of the constancy needed in the president-provost roles to achieve effective working relationships is often overlooked” (p. 78).
In this study, eight presidents had replaced, or were in the process of replacing, the provost. Five had asked their provosts to leave; the other three departures were a result of retirement following the presidents’ clarification of expectations. There were mixed results in finding successful replacements, and in most cases president-provost relationships were still in formative stages because of the newness of the process. President 3 did report that she has forged an exceptionally strong relationship with her new provost and he appears to be well received by faculty.

The results of this study would suggest that it is not a question of whether to replace the provost; it is often more an issue of when. Early in her presidency, President 5 sought advice from a presidential group and was told, “If you are going to get rid of people get rid of them now.” She was not comfortable doing this and, instead, clarified expectations resulting in resignations. Two other presidents lamented that they might have taken too long in replacing the provost.

Not only is the provost instrumental in serving as a conduit between the president and the faculty, that person plays a critical role in working with senior cabinet members to advocate for the academic program of the institution. Given the importance of the provost’s role for both the faculty and the cabinet, turnover of provosts is a complicated period in terms of relationship development among cabinet members, including the associated, territorial power struggles among the senior administrators. In a period of fiscal difficulties and competition for scarce resources, any decrease in the allocation of resources to the faculty could be perceived as a new and inexperienced provost’s inability to advocate for them. This would have a deleterious effect on faculty-president relationships.
The provost, for many presidents, is seen as a second in command who operates as the decision making authority in the absence of the leader. Through the transitional period in which the president is developing trust and confidence in the new provost, a president will tend to focus on internal matters, especially involving the academic area, rather than paying the anticipated attention to external affairs such as community relations and fundraising or strengthening relations among other internal, non-faculty stakeholders.

Outcomes to the changes in provosts were mixed, where some presidents felt it created new opportunity to work with someone more closely aligned with their vision, while others were still questioning whether or not the new relationships were going to work. The risk of taking no action when a president-provost relationship is not working could also have a profound negative impact on effectiveness (Kezar, 2004; Mortimer & Sathre, 2007). Two presidents in the study alluded to challenges with an existing provost. The president-provost relationship, on many fronts, is important to a president‘s leadership effectiveness and, in this study, most judged quickly their ability to work with the academic leaders and chose to replace them.

Restructuring was another action taken by many presidents which not only resulted in the need to forge new relationships with individual senior administrators, but required establishing new patterns of relationships among the group as responsibilities became redefined. In two cases temporary vacancies in the cabinet were actually filled by the president until replacements were hired. This shortened the president’s time to devote to other areas. The early decisions to restructure, however, were in response to the presidents‘ needs based on their assessment of institutional circumstances and potential ability of individual cabinet members to be effective under their leadership. These significant, early decisions, differs from some conventional wisdom of experienced presidents who feel that a new president should move
cautiously and learn about the institution before advocating for major change (McLaughlin, 1996). Again, the question of when to act surfaces. President 9 shared that she did not plan on making sweeping changes to her cabinet and she would not advocate her approach for other new presidents; however, she also pointed out that she had a limited tenure and did not have the luxury of time to get a high functioning team together. Former Rhode Island President, Joseph Kauffman framed the challenge:

Ultimately, a new president must face a serious reality: to either tolerate a less than ideal staff and try to convert them; or, force their resignations, deal with the controversy that may entail, and hope to recruit the ideal people you have in mind. To pursue the latter course usually means making a commitment to stay in your post long enough to rebuild what you have torn apart. This sober consideration frequently results in the decision to make do. It can be frustrating. (Bensimon et al., 1989, p. 35)

The presidents in this study felt a sense of urgency to create change and sought the quickest, most controllable area in which to start: the senior administrators in their cabinet. Aside from a few positive and longstanding relationships with board members or faculty, these cabinet members were vulnerable to the will of the president. Additionally, given the negative views by the presidents regarding their predecessor’s tenure, it is likely that senior cabinet members were unpopular among faculty members as well. President 2 actually drew criticism for not making changes as faculty were looking for administrators to blame and eliminate following bad financial news. Among those people who presidents trusted most, cabinet members were second only to spouses. In the eyes of most of the presidents, if they were to succeed, then fielding the best team was extremely important. President 9 was succinct in describing a view that she would not accept if her presidency failed, “If I just changed the so-and-so person earlier it would've made a difference.”

As new leaders, the presidents in this study appeared to rely on what was most comfortable for them based on their own perception of constructing an effective presidency.
Presidents bring an understanding of an effective cabinet based on past experiences (Sanaghan et al., 2008). In this study, most of these past experiences came as academic administrators, working directly with their respective presidents. Many expressed admiration for their old bosses and were personally successful under their leadership. These past experiences led the presidents to have a fairly clear notion of what constituted effective relationships with their senior administrators. Some presidents clearly expressed having a different leadership style than a cabinet member resulting in that cabinet member’s departure:

As I got here I started assessing my team and I could tell there were going to be some changes that were going to have to be made to the cabinet. (President 5)

We do have very, very different styles. I’m a nuts and bolts data-driven professional school mentality and my former provost was a humanities person. (President 2)

To the degree that the presidents took into consideration institutional cultural factors is not clear as that was not explicitly asked during the interviews; however, most provided contextual considerations necessitating the replacement of cabinet members. For instance, President 6 felt that the faculty needed a more relationally oriented provost and President 9 replaced a chief financial officer in an attempt to change the negative campus perception of that operation. Interestingly, an outlier in the area of cabinet replacements, President 7, who did not come from an academic, administrative background, chose to exercise patience in making cabinet changes. Recognizing the longevity of the cabinet members and their contributions to college, he overlooked some of their outdated approaches and chose to work with them until they were ready to move on.

Several of the presidents reported a “disconnect” in expectations between themselves and their cabinet, to a large degree fueled by past practices of a predecessor. Beyond changes in
personnel, nurturing relationships and clarifying expectations was a strategy employed to reduce the divide. President 11 provided a good example:

This has been a University where a tremendous amount of authority and responsibility had rested with the president and I am divesting some of that because I find that most of the current thinking in higher education administration says that this is a bit old school. So I'm actually; you're a VP, you have this responsibility, you don't need me to check on you.

These clarifications of expectations take time and effective relational skills to convey, adding to the importance of being a relational leader.

Important considerations for the presidents in developing high functioning teams includes: a negotiation of expectations whereby members of the team feel a part of an interdependent system (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Hogg, 2001; Hollander & Jullian, 1969); the ability to recognize and manage the emotions of self and others (Goleman, 2001; Goleman et al., 2002); and the ability to develop individual members of the team in a way that they feel appreciated and understand their contributions (Gerstner, 1998; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

These characteristics of relational leadership were sporadically demonstrated among presidents with respect to cabinet members but most viewed the relationships more through the lens of a command and control situation. For example, President 4 explains:

So we are all working to pull me out of operations and have them run the college but there is a need to, since the team is new, I am new, the direction of the college is kind of coming together in my presidency, they need to be in touch with me to know where I'm at on things. So even if it's just, what they perceive as operational, I'm seeing it as a strategic issue that is linked to something else that they're not seeing. So that's something, you know, that we are learning, in fact, we're talking about specifically saying that this is kind of our learning curve because it's not just about keeping things from President 4, it's about finding that right balance so that we are not burdening her with details, but on those points when she needs to be briefed on something, or we need to ask if she has a particular perspective on something before we move forward; so we are kind of working on that dance.
President 10 spent time and resources on staff retreats to develop, as she described, a collaborative and high functioning team; however, as she further explained the process her need for control became more apparent:

You know, one of the things I said to them a lot is, when we did the retreat with them, I spent a lot of time explaining my expectations. That was part of what I was hoping to do there and also the different roles that I expect them to play… So we went through five or six modes that I wanted them to be in and what types of attributes that I wanted them to have.

The findings in this study on cabinet relationships are consistent with the literature in that presidents do make changes and restructure early in their tenures and expectations of existing cabinet members are often not in line with those of the new leader. An interesting observation was the contradiction among many in speaking about collaboration and trust in cabinet relations while taking actions that represents a controlling leadership style. This demonstrated lack of a relational leadership style may be an impediment as their tenures progress. A command and control style of leadership is a common approach often used as a default style when a leader is faced with complex and ambiguous situations (Wheatley, 2005). According to Wheatley:

I’m sad to report that in the past few years, ever since uncertainty became our insistent 21st century companion, leadership has taken a great leap backwards to the familiar territory of command and control. Some of this was to be expected, because humans usually default to the known when confronted with the unknown. Some of it was a surprise, because so many organizations had focused on innovation, quality, learning organizations, and human motivation. How did they fail to learn that whenever you impose control on people and situations, you only succeed in turning people into non-creative, shut-down and cynical workers. (para.1)

The path that many of the presidents are following may inhibit the collaborative environment necessary to solve the complex problems that these institutions, and higher education, face in the 21st century.

Board of trustees. Trustee relationships begin prior to a president’s arrival on campus through the interview process. As one president mentioned, assuming there was a clean process
(untainted or politicized), trustees have a vested interest in seeing their candidate succeed; therefore, positive relationships should be expected during the early years of presidential tenure. This was the case for the participants in this study. They all appeared generally pleased with the relationships established. All eight private school presidents reported meeting regularly with their board chairs and found this practice helpful in communicating to other members of the board and making decisions. Board-president relationships are viewed as essential to the success of the presidency:

Not only are board members, board chairs, and presidents inter-related; if they are to be effective, they are interdependent. Each contributes to the effectiveness of the others. These contributions to the relationship (on the part of the president and members of the board) create the entity called, "the presidency." (Penson, 2003, p. 9)

A theme that surfaced among several presidents was the period of time early in a presidency when trustees and the presidents clarified their roles and responsibilities. It appeared to be an opportunity for board members to be reflective of their past work as they contemplated the future relationship with new leadership. For the president, it was an opportunity to understand and negotiate the levels of interaction board members would have with the administration. Even when potential rifts developed, presidents seemed to feel that their boards appropriately ceded power to them. In two instances, well-connected cabinet members (with board members) were replaced by the president and the board expressed confidence in the president’s ability to make personnel decisions. Another president gratefully experienced her board’s dismissal of faculty concerns about proposed academic program changes. These early demonstrations of confidence stood out as important experiences for the presidents as they affirmed support and positive relational development from the board; a constituency critical to the success of the presidency.
Four presidents had shared the need for a clarification, or negotiation, of roles between the president and the board. In those instances most of the issues involved appropriate distributions of power between the two regarding operational and strategic initiatives. This may well be a good conversation for new presidents to have given the diverse and complex composition of a board and the confusion of roles that often emanates from the difficulties of prior administrations. Too often, especially in presidencies that have not been successful and where board members have had to assume operational activities, individuals or small groups of board members can get over involved with internal matters and compromise a new president’s ability to lead.

Aside from the chair, no president spoke of having a very close relationship with individual board members which would be consistent with the study's finding relative to social distancing. Many presidents had a strong working connection with the board chair, but social contact was interpreted as work. President 6, who spoke most fondly of his board chair and mentioned sending “well wishing” emails to board members over the holidays, was quick to point out that when his family paid a visit to the board chair’s home it was “work.”

Among the participants in this study, board relationships, especially the relationship with the chair, were viewed as very important and the success of those relationships was determined by regular communication and a mutual understanding of expectations. Their measure of a successful relationship was through positive feedback and support of major change initiatives. Many of the actions taken by this group of presidents early in their tenure, including program eliminations, downsizing, and budget reallocations typically evoke a negative response from boards (Bornstein, 2003). Perhaps because of the challenging circumstances that these
presidents faced upon entering office, there was no evidence in the data to indicate strains in relations with the boards.

Students. Most presidents in the study found student relationships to be important in both, a symbolic sense, and as an opportunity to acquire perspectives from this constituency group. Additionally, several presidents spoke enthusiastically about contact with students to be energizing which would be consistent with the American Council on Education (2007) survey where presidents responded that students were the constituent group that provided the greatest reward. That same survey indicated that presidents spend less time on student life issues than any other.

Interestingly, only two presidents shared stories of individual student encounters of a relational nature. President 2 spoke of his time spent in the hospital with an injured student athlete and his family and President 8 discussed an encounter with a student who considered her a role model. Other presidents discussed opportunities for individual student contact; however, did not offer specific examples.

The nature of student contact among presidents in this study is consistent with expectations found in the literature but should not be minimized in a relational sense. Open office hours, event attendance, visits to residence halls, dinners at the president’s house all contribute to establishing an environment of openness and accessibility for the students. These symbolic opportunities for student contact typically lessen as presidents advance in their tenures and turn their attention to external affairs (Birnbaum, 1992). The investment of time in the early years can serve as a standard for others on campus to follow in building community. Additionally, this sporadic contact with students provides narrative for presidents to validate student issues being discussed by cabinet members or through hard data. Given the concerns
over trust issues among several of the study’s participants, this additional source of information could be affirming when making decisions relative to student issues. Finally, this symbolic student contact serves as a needed ego boost for a new college president. As President 2 mentioned, “I think part of it (being president) is ego, any president that tells you that there is no ego in it is lying, lying through their teeth.”

**Personal and professional relationships.** The presidents consistently spoke of the high demands of the job, which included time pressures and a lack of privacy which challenged personal relationships. They also referred to the tremendous support their significant others provided in helping them to get through the rigors of the position. This would be consistent with the findings in the literature relative to presidential spouses (Smith, 2001; Vaughan, 1986). This study also identified the strains of having small children as two of three presidents with small children felt added pressures and three respondents with older or no children expressed that they would have found it difficult to do the job while raising children.

Among the participants in this study, the presidency, from a family relations perspective, appeared better suited for those with retired spouses. A readily accessible spouse allowed for additional contact with the president during infrequent downtime such as an occasional lunch on campus or the ability to have a travel companion. There was also the benefit of the retired spouse assuming routine domestic chore responsibilities. Additionally, in this study, three of the retired spouses were able to contribute to the presidency by assisting in formal fundraising activities. The benefits of this change in spousal status (retirement) appears to have contributed to the presidents sense of well-being and effectiveness:

The fact that I've got somebody who'll travel; travel gets lonely and he'll travel with me. (President 10)
He pays the bills, shops, goes to the dry cleaner, I still do some of the cooking, he does some of the cooking. He's very agreeable, and several times during the week he's on campus for events from all campus meetings to the business advisory committee that he participates in, to a variety of things for students; athletic events, dinners, whatever the case might be. I think he has never said no yet. He also does fundraising with me. (President 4)

Now, my husband is retired, and guess who does the grocery shopping and the cooking? Now we have more time to spend doing things together. (President 5)

In contrast, there are those presidents with spouses who are fully engaged in their careers adding relational pressures. For example, President 4 observed how she and her husband are likely to end the day, "Now it's more, "Okay, were exhausted, we're older, I have another hour of work to do. Or he's on the computer."

There was one president, President 9, who despite being challenged with the demands of young children, found them to be a positive source of diversion from the all-consuming nature of the presidency:

I cannot have my Blackberry, I cannot be getting on the computer, or dealing with winding up some last bit of business. Children require your undivided attention, they won't allow that. So I have to turn it off. And so when I walk into that house, whatever time it is we are on….But I also get a chance to really be released from the challenges at (college name) with them because kids, they require that and all of a sudden you are into what book we are reading, and what happened at school today, and all of that stuff.

There were no formal expectations by the college as to the role of the presidential spouse among the study's participants, despite a few being part of the formal interview process. In most cases presidents were allowed to determine for themselves, the spousal role based on what worked best for them. President 8 and President 10 considered their spouses to be full partners in their presidencies. When asked about pay for her husband’s commitment to the college President 10 responded:

No, and we've talked about that and he doesn't, we both think it would be a problem. First of all it would tie him down and then he wouldn't really be able to say no I don't want to
go on the California trip. Also, they get so sensitive, colleges; this idea of paying the spouse. What we decided was we are both earning my salary and that's fine.

Work/life balance issues, among participants, yielded mixed results as nearly half of the group felt as though they had struck a balance with the remainder still in search of a healthy balance. Almost half of the group sought opportunities to escape work by having a second home away from campus. Two of the presidents most challenged with work/life balance issues also had young children adding to their already demanding schedules. All eleven expressed an understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy balance, and for those who felt they had one, found it a challenge to maintain. No one reported physical or mental health related issues as a result of a lack of work/life balance, although three participants mentioned a lack of exercise.

Several presidents relied on their spouse for job advice, particularly when the spouse had past experience in higher education or a related field. In a study by Smith (2001), male spouses were used more for job related advice while female spouses were used more as sounding boards. Although this study yielded similar findings, prior professional backgrounds appeared to be more of a factor than gender.

Many presidents took advantage of mentoring and peer relationships as a source for additional advice and cathartic benefits. For those who sought advice from these external relationships, that advice seemed to be sporadic as most counted on internal sources (cabinet) and their own instincts. Contact with other presidents was most helpful as a means to share common experiences with people who understood at a deeper level than others. Participation in new presidents programs was mentioned by some as a good source for getting to know a cohort of colleagues in the field.
The reliance on spouses for advice, or to vent about job related frustrations, is quite
natural. Combining that reliance with a reluctance to seek counsel from mentors or fellow
presidents demonstrates the need for many of these presidents to limit input in decision making
processes. Of the seven who had mentors, two were family members and two were not used to
seek advice but served more as role models. Among the seven presidents who regularly
communicated with other presidents there was a cathartic value attached to the relationship but
no specific examples were given of how advice to problems was sought.

Interpreting, filtering, and responding to relationships when considering trust
authenticity, and loneliness in performing the responsibilities of the office. In terms
of trust, many factors enter into new relationships including: context; disposition to trust based
on past experiences; and reputations (McKnight et al., 1998). An initial level of trust is either re-
enforced or changed based on experiences as the relationship progresses. Trust serves as the
linchpin to effectiveness in several leadership models such as transformational leadership (Burns,
1978), servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977), and leader-member exchange (LMX) theory (Graen
& Uhl-Bien, 1995). Specific to education, the presence of trust has been cited as necessary for
effective academic productivity and collaboration (Bornstein, 2003; Daly & Crispeels, 2008;
Kezar, 2004).

In this study, most presidents identified past relationships (specifically their spouses) as
those who were most trusted to discuss sensitive, job-related information. President 4 made this
point clear, “I trust my husband. I’m a pretty trusting person, but I learned a long time ago that
you have to be really guarded in what you say.” Several presidents mentioned cabinet members
or assistants as a source of trust and confidence. The trust, in these relationships, appeared to be
based on the issues being addressed and the strength of the relationship based on past
experiences. For instance, two of the presidents expressed being uncomfortable in confiding in the provosts because of their newness while they were more comfortable talking with established cabinet members. Three of the presidents shared that they trusted no one (excluding spouses). For them, this lack of trust, in the short term, was not perceived as inhibiting their effectiveness with respect to institutional change and growth.

According to Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, trust is the “emotional glue that binds followers and leaders together” (as cited in Bornstein, 2003, p. 19). Trust relationships among the participants in this study are of a well-established, personal nature outside of the organization, or limited to specific cabinet members under specific circumstances. Because reputations and demonstrated experiences contribute to establishing trust in new relationships, presidents would naturally be cautious with inherited cabinet members from unsuccessful predecessors. Additionally, newly hired cabinet members, who may benefit from strong reputations as perceived by the president, still need to demonstrate behaviors that instill confidence for the leader.

Interestingly, there was very little mention of board members being a trusted resource despite frequent mention of regular communication regarding critical decisions. Perhaps these new presidents feel the need to present to the board clear, decisive solutions to challenges as opposed to risking unknown outcomes by engaging them earlier in a decision making process. The construct of trust can be defined as, “The extent to which one engages a relationship and is willing to be vulnerable (willing to risk) to another based on communication and the confidence that the latter party will possess: (a) benevolence, (b) reliability, (c) competence, (d) integrity, (e) openness, and (f) respect” (Daly & Crispeels, 2008, p. 33). The risks, for a president, are losses of control and vulnerability. Boards can diminish a president’s ability to guide the direction of
the institution. The absence of trust in “trustee” relations in this study may be a new president’s attempt to maintain that level of control or their anxiety about being vulnerable to board members to whom they report. Faculty were also absent as a trust resource which, again, may be a combination of a leader control issue and fear of being vulnerable as well as an inherent part of the culture of academia.

The concept of social distance was included in this part of the research because of its connectedness to the constructs of trust, authenticity, and loneliness. It may have just as easily been discussed in the personal relationships section of the research. Living and working in an environment where most waking hours are job related, the degree of comfort in forging social relationships could speak to a president’s willingness to trust and be authentic. Reluctance to engage in those relationships may well contribute to the construct of loneliness.

Studies associate the concept of maintaining a social distance, as president, to the position’s effectiveness (Fisher, 1984; Fisher & Koch, 2004; Fisher et al., 1988). Other studies suggest that social distance can inhibit authentic behavior and effectiveness depending on campus cultures (Birnbaum, 1992). Participants in this study, overwhelmingly, felt it important to maintain an appropriate social distance with only one respondent taking an opposite view. Reasons for social distance included: fear of perceived favoritism; inability to avoid work discussions; and lack of time to develop relationships. Many found required social activities with the campus community to take a considerable amount of time and involved a clear role expectation of being president.

While the reasons for maintaining social distance among the presidents may be legitimate they may not offset the sacrifice of creating an environment necessary for change through building close and trusted relationships. All of those in this study expressed a need to take action
and move their institutions in a direction that will strengthen their colleges’ positions within the higher education community. The challenges are much more of a strategic nature rather than those of a technical nature where the study of spreadsheets and past practices are needed to identify the right solution. The nature of the problems these presidents face are adaptive challenges requiring an examination of existing values and priorities. Technical solutions, which may have worked in past contexts, need to be reconsidered if these presidents are to meet the demands of the moment (Heifetz, 1994). To resolve the immediacy of a budget shortfall, perhaps quick-fix decisions must be made, but to ensure a stable financial future while creating a relevant, 21st century curriculum requires strategic engagement at all levels of the institution driven by the institution’s leadership. Maintaining a social distance could inhibit the development of relationships needed to meet these adaptive challenges.

Authentic leaders can contribute to an environment of trust, hope, and positive emotions among followers by providing a fertile environment for creating organizational change (Avolio et al., 2004). In this study, all of the presidents felt that they had not significantly sacrificed their authentic self in performing their duties. Several qualified those responses in that they felt there were times they “had to act presidential” based on circumstances. Examples included refraining from language that would be used only in the presence of family or tempering emotions when dealing with difficult circumstances. There was also mention of “fit” being important in being able to preserve authenticity. President 11 received feedback from campus community members that she felt reinforced positive aspects of her being authentic, “The feedback that I have gotten is that I am genuine, people use genuine, refreshing, easy to talk to, I mean I'm not ego – so my general sense right now is it is okay.”
Positive psychological well-being has been connected to a leader’s ability to be authentic (Ilies et al., 2005; Kernis, 2003; Toor & Ofori, 2009). At a surface level the participants’ self-perceptions of being authentic appear to be consistent with their positive feelings about their presidencies. Even those presidents who experienced considerable adversarial challenges still expressed positive feelings about being president. According to President 2, “If I'm not doing this, I don't know what the hell I would do; this is what I do.” The last words in President 2’s interview were, “I love this job.”

What is fascinating with these presidential perceptions view of maintaining authenticity is the consistent comments about their need to maintain social distance from those with whom they work and their lack of trust in others. How do these leaders maintain their authenticity in such an environment? The role they are assuming with key stakeholders is not purposefully disingenuous but, driven by the fact that they are presidents, which a number admit requires a 24/7 commitment and a need to be “on” when moving beyond the confines of the home. It would seem that many are not able to fully express their own personal interests and concerns, maybe even their personal values. Being authentic, one would assume, involves some degree of sharing one’s personal values and aspirations. This is not an easy path for an institutional president who is, in many ways, a symbol of the institution. As Bornstein (2004) writes, “The need to act as the embodiment of the institution diminishes the president’s individualism” (p. B16).

The construct of loneliness for a college president can be associated with the nature of the position (Guskin & Marcy, 2002; Riesman, 1987). According to David Riesman (1987), “Perhaps the most obvious thing to say about the personal side of the presidency is that, while it is professionally crowded, it is personally a lonely position” (p. 142). President 3 echoed
Riesman’s words, “There is irony in that because you never get any time to yourself.” A majority of the respondents identified with the concept of loneliness with half of them associating it to being a final decision making authority. Others identified loneliness to a lack of close relationships at work and frequent travel by themselves.

Despite many of the presidents in this survey identifying with loneliness, it was viewed as a sporadic and situational feeling, and strong family support systems helped to diminish the affect. When examining loneliness as an independent construct it did not appear to be impacting any president’s perception of his or her ability to be effective.

However, when considering loneliness responses with those from the related constructs of trust, social distance, and authenticity, a more problematic pattern emerges. The absence of building a larger circle of trusted confidents within the organization could well heighten the sense of loneliness in the presidential role. This sense of loneliness is exacerbated when presidents maintain a social distance and deal with the inherent blurring of the lines between the authentic self and being presidential; keeping critical stakeholders at arms length when honesty, transparency, and vulnerability may well be needed—especially in the highly complex and uncertain environment of higher education in the 21st century. These relational constructs, when factored together, may undermine the president’s ability to lead others to work with her to make the adaptive changes that are extremely important for the success of the institution.

The one respondent who did not choose to maintain social distance from the campus community, President 7, came from outside of academia and regularly socializes with members of the community; however, when asked about loneliness he credited his spouse because of her ability to understand his problems. For other presidents, the sacrifice of socially engaging in the community could add stress on personal relationships as spouses and family member lose
opportunities for relationship development with people who are very much a part of their daily lives.

The relational constructs mentioned in this section (trust, authenticity, social distance, loneliness) play an important role in leadership effectiveness in most settings. The unique nature of the college presidency and the 21st century challenges these leaders face heightens the importance of better understanding these multidimensional and complex constructs. The data in this study, when viewing trust, authenticity, social distancing and loneliness separately, has a different meaning than when viewed together. As a whole, a different picture emerges: trust appears to be fleeting; presidents may be less authentic than realized; social distancing may be inhibiting the growth of trust and authentic leadership; and loneliness may be more prevalent than a sporadic, situational feeling.

**Effectiveness.** This study was designed to better understand the meaning of relationship construction and maintenance on the effectiveness of college presidents. In an effort to better understand what effectiveness meant to each participant they were asked directly to explain how they would determine whether or not they were effective presidents beyond traditional measures (e.g., retention rates, balanced budgets). Four of respondents associated effectiveness to quality of academic programs and graduating students prepared to take on societal challenges. Three felt their effectiveness was best measured by their ability to inspire those around them. Two measured it in terms of creating institutional change while preserving mission and culture. Two defined effectiveness to the degree that they were successful in implementing their intended goals as measured by specific metrics.

The literature consistently links leadership effectiveness to relational constructs (Conger & Kanungo, 1987; Goleman, 2006; Lewis, 2000; Norman et al., 2010). Specific to the college
presidency, several experts have associated relational ability to performance effectiveness
(American Council on Education, 2007; Birnbaum, 1992; Bornstein, 2003; McLaughlin, 1996; Padilla, 2005; Risacher, 2004). The following quote, based on over 50 interviews with college presidents highlights the connection between the presidency and relationships:

We heard repeatedly from presidents and others that it is the individual and stakeholder relationships that a president develops and maintains that will most dramatically influence his success in the role. Failure to attend to those important matters puts him in the unenviable position of travelling uphill regardless of which direction he takes in a given situation. (Sanaghan et al., 2008, p. 47)

Having defined their effectiveness, the presidents in this study were asked to speak to the importance of relationship construction and maintenance relative to their being effective. All eleven felt effective relationship development was foundational to their practice. There were a variety of reasons for this with most focusing on relational skills including effective listening, trust, motivation, collaboration, and respect. The presidents’ comments support the existing literature and provide some meaning as to why presidents, in the moment, feel that relationship construction and maintenance is important; however, there is evidence from the data that indicates the actual practices of these leaders differs from their interpretation of effective, relational leadership. For example, President 4 spoke about the importance of being a relational leader to be effective; however, she felt that maintaining social distance was important. Her response to trust was, “I’m a pretty trusting person, but I learned a long time ago that you have to be really guarded in what you say. So I think I trust a lot but when you disclose, you have to be very cautious.” Her view on mentoring:

I almost see it as like a before and a now because I think there were mentors in the more classic role that I have had but I think since I've been here I'm much more strategic in terms of a coach, executive coach… You're going to have to have someone to bounce things off, kind of keep you out of the weeds, etc. and because I'm forging a new role, new challenges, I didn't want people I know.
Speaking about how effectively President 5 had forged relationships she stated, "What I try to do is set a tone that says we value other people, we are not going to be dismissive of other people's ideas and that we are going to be transparent in our decision making." She discussed social distancing:

I have chosen not to be close friends with any of my employees although we socialize together. Last week we had a Cabinet retreat and everyone came over for wine and munchies and conversation and we had a great time. I see that as more work related and bonding of the group rather than having close friends.

Finally, President 5 discussed trust:

There is virtually nothing that I couldn't talk to at least one member of my cabinet about because they are in such different areas that typically something that I might be struggling with won't affect every one of them. So I could talk to one that might affect another that I wouldn't want them to know or I would think they had a dog in the race.

There appears to be some contradiction in terms of transparency relative to maintaining a presidential social distance and selectively trusting members of the cabinet based on the issue. The behaviors are quite natural and all serve a purpose, but together they indicate the very complex and difficult relational environment in which presidents operate.

The intent here is not to single out presidents for having contradictory positions about relationships and related constructs, but to illustrate the essence of what came from the data which indicates the very difficult social environment in which the presidents in this study, and probably most presidents, live on a daily basis. The presidents in this study were not chosen as exemplars in constructing and maintaining relationships that resulted in effective leadership. They agreed to participate because they fit criteria as new presidents at small colleges and their participation speaks to their interest in the topic and their willingness to add to the understanding of relationship development and college presidents.
What Was Learned and Its Implications

The understanding of leadership relationship construction and maintenance is emerging but is still an underdeveloped area of research. I chose to conduct this exploratory study in an effort to identify and better understand issues specific to relational leadership and the college presidency. Where research on presidential relationships exists sporadically, as parts of other studies, I chose to focus exclusively on relationships and their complexities, from the leader’s perspective.

There are studies that demonstrated the connection of successful relationships to effective presidencies. Those studies focused on other aspects of the presidency with relationships having a tangential role in understanding the position. For example, Bornstein’s 2003 work focused on legitimacy; Fisher and Koch (2004) looked at the entrepreneurial nature of the presidency; while other works were specific to transitional issues (Martin et al., 2004; McLaughlin, 1996; Sanaghan et al., 2008). All of these works reference relationships not as the focus of the study, but a contributing factor in support of the main subject.

There are those works that contribute to the understanding of relationships through the reflective lens of experienced or past presidents; again relationships playing a subservient role to the focus of the work. Padilla’s (2005) *Portraits in Leadership: Six Extraordinary University Presidents* and Brodie and Banner’s (2005) *Research University Presidents in the Late Twentieth Century* serve as examples. The sage wisdom of effective, experienced leaders is of great value but it is hoped that this “active” perspective of new presidents contributes new knowledge to the understanding of relational effectiveness.

There have also been studies to better understand the president/family relationship contributing important knowledge to its unique nature (Oden, 2007; Ostar, 1983; Ostar & Ryan,
1981; Smith, 2001; Vaughan, 1987). This study drew from that understanding in an effort to encourage responses from participants to provide rich description of what was important in their world during the early years of their presidency.

This study supported existing research in that presidents find faculty relationships to be particularly challenging; cabinet restructuring is quite commonplace; and the demands of the job are challenging on the individual and the family. However, it goes beyond current understanding when exploring the contradictory nature of interpersonal constructs as presidents approach relationships.

The presidents in this study appear dedicated to the field of higher education and their individual institutions; however, their perceived need for social distance, their seeming mistrust for many of those people they interact with on a daily or weekly basis, and their sense of isolation seems to challenge their perception of being authentic. Given the complex nature of the role of president and the continuous advocacy from many constituents, when individuals assume a presidency it may well be that their preconceived notions of their authentic self are challenged, which could explain some of the contradictory perspectives that were expressed by the presidents.

In a similar vein, most articulated the importance of exercising strong relational leadership qualities yet they seemed to express perspectives that were contrary to those qualities. They described many of their early decisions as being made strategically, in what appears to be a command and control style rather than what one would describe as working collaboratively. This may not be uncommon for a college president who is new to the role and facing the difficult conditions they have to deal with upon entering their institution. However, it is a style which is
contrary to a collaborative, relational practice and might well tend to exacerbate some of the trust issues common in 21st century university life.

It was evident during the interviews that the participants, for the first time, were solely focusing on what relationships meant to them in the context of the presidency. Yet, I would suggest, in the complex university environment today, it would be especially helpful for new presidents to be involved in this type of conscious reflection; it should be as much a part of a new president’s activities as studying budgets or learning the latest fund raising strategies. Understanding the interplay between the role of president, the self, and the perspectives of constituents is necessary for relationships to flourish and for presidents to remain balanced in the face of the tremendous pressures they experience daily. Too often, when operating in crisis, and in a position where most discover a huge learning curve, this soft skill (relational development) is not typically found on a new president’s “to do” list.

Beyond reflection, new presidents need to take some risks in how they approach trust and authenticity in campus life. For necessary, substantial, and sustainable change to occur in universities there needs to be a climate of trust and collaboration among the major players. Trust cannot be unconditionally bestowed; however, it can be accelerated through purposefully constructing relationships. Several of the presidents in this study appeared overly cautious in this area; often choosing to approach relationships from a positional perspective, leaving out the personal, authentic self. This formal approach stands in the way of maturing relationships to the degree where meaningful partnerships are formed; partnerships necessary to focus on the common thread that holds the community together: institutional success.

This group of presidents wanted to create positive change for their institutions and understood that relationship development was important to do be effective. Although some were
finding success, most were engaged in a predictable, power centered, approach to leadership relationships historically modeled by past presidents. Similarly, a recent front page article from the Chronicle of Higher Education (Young, 2011) reported on a president’s cutting edge approach to maintaining an open and inclusive presidency only to receive a vote of no confidence from the faculty who argued that there was a disconnect between the relational rhetoric and the reality. Constructing and maintaining relationships requires a commitment of time and energy where ideals and practice must to be closely aligned. The excessive demands of the presidency, as described by this study’s participants, leaves little opportunity to pay attention to what may be most important in determining a successful tenure. Ironically, the creation of strong relationships, built on the basis of trust and collaboration, could be incredibly liberating for a president as others share the burden and responsibility to lead.

On a final note, the unique context common among the participants in this study, financial challenges, must be considered as a factor when constructing new relationships. Even in fiscally good times there are inherent, relational challenges between constituencies on a college campus; particularly between the administration and faculty. In a climate of scarce resources uncertainty, anxiety, and skepticism become factors in the leadership equation and serve as impediments to establishing a climate of trust. Had the presidents in this study began their tenures in a time of prosperity how would their opportunities and approaches to relationship construction have been different? The connection between context and leadership relationships is an area that lacks understanding and research (Uhl-Bien, Maslyn, & Ospina as cited in Day & Antonakis, 2011).

This study took a holistic approach to a complex phenomenon with many interconnected parts in an effort to make better sense of the whole (Van Manen, 1990). Through the use of
semi-structured interviews, participants were given the opportunity to consider those parts (e.g., faculty, students, trustees, cabinet, family, mentors, peers, trust, authenticity, loneliness) and determine what was most important to them relative to the whole (relationships relative to their effectiveness). As the participants had to make sense of the parts, I as the researcher, had to systematically examine those parts relative to the whole, mediating between the different meanings offered. The readers of the study may arrive at different meanings than I did based on their own world view.

It is my hope that current presidents will read this study and relate to those lived experiences to influence their practice based on their own sense making. For those contemplating a presidency, this work could help contribute to their understanding of future challenges relative to their life circumstances so that they can make informed decisions and better prepare for a presidency. Those who have an existing relationship with a college president might better understand that relationship. And, for the doctoral student in search of a topic, the study could help to formulate questions that take us to a deeper level of understanding the nature of presidential relationships.

Twenty-first century challenges to higher education will require leadership to create a campus climate where all stakeholders are both willing and agile to change with the times. "In a very real sense, the nation is entering a new age--an age of knowledge--in which the key strategic resource necessary for prosperity has become knowledge itself; that is, educated people and their ideas" (Duderstadt, 1999, p. 1). The demand for knowledge coupled with depleting economic resources will force higher education to consider sweeping changes to past practices. The 21st century college president, now more than ever, will need to build a collaborative community that creatively considers the most effective paths to meet societal needs.
Understanding how relationship construction and maintenance can contribute to the effectiveness of the presidency is of the utmost importance.

Limitations

In Chapter Three I referenced limitation to the study that I contemplated during its initial design. I mentioned the limited number of participants, which fell within the range of recommended phenomenological studies. Given the required attributes of participants and my limited geographic area, it would not have been possible to increase the number of participants. Additionally, narrowing the attributes may have been beneficial for the sake of comparison; again, given limited geography, that would have been difficult. For example, perhaps it would have been more relevant to interview presidents who recently completed a year in office. That change in attribute would have necessitated a broadening of the lens to cover a much larger area than the multi-state region covered for this study.

It could be said that the participants could have represented a larger demographic. For instance there were only three state schools in the study. In reality there were fewer state schools that were considered small enough (in terms of undergraduate enrollment) for the study as there were private institutions. From a gender perspective, there were three males and eight females. I made several efforts to increase the number of male participants but was unsuccessful. Perhaps, a future research study on the reluctance of male presidents to discuss relational issues should be considered. These limitations could have been overcome if I opened up the data gathering possibility to phone interviews. This seemed intuitively wrong when conducting a study on relations and leadership and face-to-face interviews was supported by the methods literature.
Future Research

This study was to explore the deeper meaning of a phenomenon. By virtue of the philosophical and methodological approach, the findings are thematically reported but not intended to be generalized. A future study could draw from the themes identified here to develop a survey to be administered to larger, purposeful sample using the same parameters (new presidents, in-residence, small school) in an attempt to generalize the findings. That survey could also be administered to new and veteran presidents to determine if there is a perceptual difference in how relationships are constructed and maintained. Another approach could be a longitudinal survey administered to presidents considered new (one to four years) and later administered (six to ten years) to measure any perceptual differences.

As this method sought to capture meaning among those directly experiencing the phenomenon, a grounded theory approach might be employed by interviewing several stakeholders engaged in a relationship with presidents to arrive at a general theory.

As demonstrated in the literature review, there is a lack of research specific to presidential relationships. Some of the stronger themes in this research were: turbulent relationships with provosts; a propensity to restructure; challenges with faculty relationships; importance of board chair relationships; significance of a family support system; maintaining social distance; a sense of maintaining authenticity while in office; and the affect of relationship construction and maintenance relative to the presidency.

An analysis of the themes related to interpersonal constructs found contradictory views relative to trust, authenticity, social distancing, and loneliness to the degree that many of the presidents were functioning in a command and control style of leadership rather than having a
more relational approach. There are significant gaps in research related to these areas that, based on these findings, would be worthy of further exploration.

   Because family, specifically a spouse or significant other, seemed to play an important role to the presidents in terms of trust and combating loneliness it would be interesting to replicate this study with presidents who did not have a spouse or significant other. Would they be lonelier? Would they view social distancing differently?

**Personal Reflection**

After spending countless hours traveling through snowstorms to far off destinations, rescheduling interviews at the last minute because of a presidential crisis, and double checking my battery levels in two recording devices to make sure that I captured the data, I asked myself, --Was it worth it?" As I thought about that and the never-ending transcription and analysis, I still would have to say, yes. I was in search of learning more about something that had interested me before entering into this Ph.D. odyssey. During my studies, there was a time when I drifted into another topic area that I thought would be more relevant to my role as a dean of students; after a year in the weeds I learned that the passion for that topic was not there and I turned back to relationships.

I took away from this study a better understanding of what it means to be a president from sun up to sundown. While many presidential studies focused on approaches to the duties of the office, I looked, holistically, about on and off the job relations. These reflections were captured as relationships were actively developing, when presidents could feel what it was like to have missed time with loved ones for the sake of attending a conference or having recently tempered frustration over the inability to influence a provost to do his job effectively.
Reflections from more seasoned or retired leaders may not have provided me with the rich description that I sought.

I will be forever grateful to those who were willing to participate in this study. Most expressed to me a genuine interested in the topic. One of the presidents had just come from a meeting where relationships were discussed and read my email invitation. He admitted that the timing was right, otherwise, perhaps he would not have accepted my offer. Another president told me that perhaps I caught him in a weak moment to have accepted my invitation. By the end of that interview I got the sense that, cathartically, it was as important for him as it was for me. For several of the participants, I felt that they valued the opportunity to share their views about something that just happened on a day-to-day basis in their lives, but when reframed under the common theme of relationships, made sense to them.

I close with a quote from Edward Penson (2003) which captures the essence of why I chose to employ the holistic approach to relationships for this study:

The president must understand that he/she is not the presidency. The presidency is not the president. The presidency is much larger than the president. It's tapestry is composed of these vital strands: (1) the board which is the primary strand, in reality, the boss”; (2) the administrative team which must be a real team not a team in name only; (3) the major stakeholder groups, the principal one of which is the faculty – the engine of the teaching learning matrix; (4) the president in his/her professional role; (5) the human being within the president who must be in close touch with the president for the good of both; and (6) the spouse, family, and close friends of the president with whom he/she must be able to maintain a genuine relationship without damaging it. All of these strands are relationships. They are woven together to form the tapestry that is the presidency. When all relationship strands are tightly woven and has great tensile strength, the presidential tapestry itself is strong and the president and board can accomplish virtually any agenda. When one or more of these strands is weak or fraying or torn, there is a rapid contagion among the strands and the base is weakened. The president and the board can do very little effectively until the weakened strands or relationships of the tapestry are reforged. (p. 9)
Appendix A
Interview Questions
(not all questions were asked by on time constraints and interview flow)

- Establishing and maintaining relationships
  - How did you go about establishing relationships with the campus community?
  - What preparations did you make prior to assuming the position?
  - Do you feel there is a difference in how presidents construct and maintain professional relationships when compared to leaders from other sectors? Please explain.
  - Please describe how you have developed and maintained relationships with:
    - Staff
    - Students
    - Faculty
    - Trustees
  - Discuss how professional relationships have changed from your previous position compared to your presidency.

- Personal and professional life changes as a result of presidential relationships
  - What is the nature of change in family relationships?
    - How has life outside of work changed?
    - How balanced is work and family?
    - What have you sacrificed?
  - To what extent are external relationships (e.g., mentors, peers) important in helping presidents maintain professional perspective?
    - Do you have a mentor?
    - How do you relate to other presidents?
    - Do you feel that you have someone who you can give you honest feedback related to work problems and your own professional effectiveness?

- Interpreting, filtering, and responding to less than authentic relationships in performing the responsibilities of the office
  - How do you know whom to trust?
  - Who specifically do you confide in?
  - Briefly describe your social life. If you spend time with work friends, how do you maintain professional distance?
  - Do you feel that you bring an authentic self to your professional relationships?

- Relationships and effectiveness
  - Beyond specific metrics, how would you define effectiveness?
  - How do you feel your relationship development impacts your effectiveness?
  - Do you feel that successful relationship construction and maintenance is foundational to your effectiveness?
  - What changes would you make in developing relationships that you feel would have made you more effective as president?
Appendix B
Informed Consent
INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT
Antioch University
Leadership and Change Ph.D. Program

You have been asked to participate in a research study conducted by, Mark Allen, a doctoral candidate in the Leadership and Organizational Change program at Antioch University, Yellow Springs, Ohio.

The study is intended to acquire information regarding relational experiences of college presidents through the use of a semi-structured, recorded interview. The length of the discussion will be approximately one hour with the possibility of a second, follow up, interview to discuss any questions that may have arisen as a result of the earlier interview. Interview times will be scheduled at your convenience. A summary of the interview(s) will be made available for your review.

Your participation in the study shall remain anonymous in that your name, the names of institutional affiliations, and colleagues, will not be used in a final report without your written permission. I will take appropriate steps to safely secure all identifiable data through password protected technology. The study is expected to be published as a dissertation in the public domain. I, as the researcher, reserve the right to retain data collected indefinitely for future scholarly publication. The study is intended to better understand the nature of relationship construction and maintenance of college presidents relative to their job effectiveness.

The risk in taking part in this study is minimal; however, does involve reflecting upon experiences that may be emotionally uncomfortable. If you are troubled as a result of the interview experience please seek appropriate mental health alternatives. You may also withdraw from the study at any time and all data gathered will be destroyed and not be used as part of the final report.

By virtue of your position, you offer a unique perspective on experiences that are limited to few in number, nationally. Presidencies are often defined in the early years of office and your reflections will greatly assist me in better understanding the nature of leadership effectiveness in higher education. I would hope that through this reflective experience you, too, will gain a deeper understand of a significant time in your professional career.

If you have any questions about this study and your involvement you may contact:
Lisa Kreeger, Ph.D. Chair, Institutional Review Board
Ph.D. in Leadership & Change
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References


