ELUSIVE AND ILLUSIVE DIVERSITY FACTORS IN THE PRESIDENTIAL SEARCHES OF THREE NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGES: A DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This study explored the presidential search and selection processes conducted between 2014 and 2016 by three North Carolina Community Colleges. All three institutions have completed their search processes and hired a president sometime between 2014 and 2016. To understand the hiring processes of the three colleges, and the importance of making a “good faith effort” in the outreach and recruitment of women and minority candidates for the position of president, a document analysis of materials related to their presidential search processes, recommendations and advice from reputable search organizations, and the presidential search processes of other community college systems, was done. Manuals, organizational recommendations, timelines, and meeting minutes were reviewed. In addition to these documents, an examination of the racial and gender make-up of the final domain of selected candidates, board of trustees, and search committees, was done.

Key Words: North Carolina, Community College, Leadership, Gender, Race, Diversity, Minority Female, President, Search Process, Board of Trustees, Search Committee, Search Firm, Consultant
Dedication

This work is dedicated to my rock, my ace, my love, my husband, Stacy L. Scott. You were extremely supportive throughout this process, giving me the time I needed to complete this work, the ear I needed to vent my frustrations, and I am extremely grateful for the amount of overtime you put into taking care of our family. Thank you for pushing me, giving me space, and respecting my craft.

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Chapter 1

Community College Leadership in the Millennium

Across the country, community college presidents have retired or are planning to retire. In 2012, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), a national voice and leading advocate for two-year colleges, projected that 75% of community college presidents plan to retire over the next ten years. In 2013, it was projected that over “40% of the nation’s 1,200 community college presidents were likely to retire in the next five years,” (Fain, 2013, para. 1). In 2015, out of the 1132 community colleges in the nation, 269 saw a transition in presidencies (Smith, 2016). Many institutions are unprepared to replace retiring presidents, as the focus has been on diversifying student bodies and faculty to build community representativeness (Toner, 2016). With the demographic shift in student populations where by 2050 it is estimated that the United States will be majority-minority, and with pending community college president retirements, attention must be paid to recruiting new and diverse candidates to serve as community college presidents. To replace retiring presidents, institutions’ focus must be on selecting effective leaders who possess diverse traits and abilities.

Traits of a community college leader. The American Association of Community Colleges, AACC (2008) identified several attributes community college leaders should have including courage, persistence, integrity, and confidence, to name a few out of an exhaustive list of leadership traits. The AACC (2008) also recommended that institutions including the non-profit association for community college governing boards, the American Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), president’s associations and individual community
college governing boards of trustees, among other organizations, must take the necessary steps to identify qualified leaders.

In “Crisis and Opportunity: Aligning the Community College Presidency with Student Success,” a 2013 joint publication of the highly regarded non-profit organization, the Aspen Institute, and Achieving the Dream, a nongovernmental reform movement whose focus is on student success, eight search consultants from across the nation were interviewed, and described community college trustees’ priorities in the hiring of a new community college president (Crisis and Opportunity Report, 2013). This report focused on the success of community college students, specifically on the increase in student retention and graduation rates, and the wave of community college president retirements, and the need to repair the community college leadership pipeline (Fain, 2013).

The “Crisis and Opportunity” report (2013) discussed five characteristics trustees value: fiscal management ability, fundraising capacity, external relationship-building skills, communication skills, and ethical and risk-averse behavior. Combined, these characteristics offer a portrait of a charismatic and honest community college president, capable of ensuring institutional stability and establishing strong relationships with many external actors, from legislators, to corporate executives, and to community members (Crisis and Opportunity). However, the report also indicated that three key elements were missing from the profile of a president trustees look for:

- A deep commitment to student success
- The ability to effectively lead change within the community college environment
• The willingness to take risks

Like information found in Crisis and Opportunity, the AACC (2013) outlines several competencies community college presidents must possess to effectively support and lead their colleges. These competencies are organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, community college advocacy and professionalism. These six competencies support the life of the college when executed effectively. The supportive structure of the college is dependent upon the overall health of the organization, including physical, financial and human assets of the college, open dialogue and listening skills, healthy relationships that foster inclusiveness and diversity, advocacy of the community college mission, and a demonstration of accountability and improvement of self and others (AACC, 2013). Leaders who possess these competencies are successful in producing high quality results, worthy of national recognition, they contend.

Some community college leaders have received national recognition in the last five years like Dr. Sandy Shugart, from Valencia College. Dr. Shugart understood the importance of meeting the needs of students, which resulted in higher completion rates. Valencia College’s focus on student performance begins when students set foot on campus. Attention on student success during the first five courses is an early predictor on whether or not a student will graduate (Rees, 2015). Dr. Shugart’s focus on evidence-based culture, which looks at data on student performance, increased enrollment and graduation rates (Rees, 2015). Another exemplary leader is Dr. Jackson Sasser, president of Sante Fe College, the winner of the 2015 Aspen prize for Community College Excellence. Under his leadership, the college developed applications (apps) for students to navigate the registration process, in addition to critical
thinking components to the healthcare curriculum, and the creation of degree programs to keep up with the local workforce (Hough, 2015). Shugart, Sasser and other exemplary presidents are leading examples of what the AACC highlights as effective and supportive leaders. Despite the recognition of successful leaders, a crisis of retiring presidents and the question of who will fill these vacancies exists as reputable organizations like the ACCT, The Aspen Institute, and the AACC offer recommendations and tips for hiring community college presidents prepared to lead colleges in the millennium.

In addition to aligning the community college presidency with student success, increased focus has also been placed on resources to serve the increasingly diverse student populations of community colleges. Female Black and Hispanic students are more likely to enroll in two-year colleges than any other group, as indicated in a 2014 collection of data that established that 62% and 57% respectively were enrolled in community colleges compared to 55% of White students and 52% of Asian students (US Dept. of Education, 2016). More and more, diversity is at the core of all community college education institutions, as initiatives and programs have been established to meet the needs of distinct student populations, most notably first-generation (first to go to college), low-income, minority male and female (more often Hispanic and Black), and immigrant students. However, an emphasis on diversity and inclusiveness should not be exclusive to the college campus student body, as these constructs are critical in institutions’ administration and faculty bodies (US Dept. of Education, 2016). The American Association of Community Colleges and the American Association of Community College Trustees issued a joint statement on diversity and leadership in community colleges:
Community colleges are the most diverse and inclusive institutions of higher education in the United States. Community colleges serve larger percentages of African Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, and students with disabilities than any other segment of higher education, and well over half of community college students are women. Most of the women and minority higher education presidents are found in the ranks of American community colleges. However, progress has been slow in identifying and employing presidents who are representative of the student bodies and the communities served by the colleges. Presidents and trustees should mirror the populations on our campuses and be committed to the participation and success of all groups. (para. 1)

The US Department of Education (2016) implores institutions to examine current and historical policies and practices relative to diversity. Old models of searching and hiring will stifle efforts in replacing retired presidents with a diverse candidate, experts warn (Toner, 2016). A diverse and inclusive campus environment is a responsibility across all levels of all higher education institutions, and campus leadership plays a crucial role in promoting work that demonstrates a commitment to spearhead development and implementation efforts (US Dept. of Education, 2016). This study thus aimed to contribute to research on diversity with a specific focus on gender and race within community college leadership hiring processes within three North Carolina Community Colleges.

Context

Like the rest of the country, North Carolina has been going through a major shift in community college leadership, with many presidents retiring. At the time this research study was
conducted, five community colleges were undergoing searches for a new president. In 2016, six new community college presidents were hired in North Carolina. From 2011-2016, 30 presidents were hired to serve a North Carolina Community College (NCCC).

Based on the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) directory of member institutions, North Carolina is the third largest community college system in the United States with 58 public community colleges (in comparison, California has 114 public community colleges and Texas has 67 public community colleges). The NCCC system focuses on student success. Through an open-door system to accessible academic opportunities, North Carolina community colleges train and educate individuals, contributing to a competent workforce. An analysis of documents on the search and selection processes of North Carolina Community Colleges provided information on processes conducted within a system with over 50 years of history.

The search and selection processes for hiring North Carolina Community College (NCCC) presidents, as documented in the North Carolina Association of Community College Trustees (NCACCT) manuals, promotes “equal employment opportunity,” (NCACCT, xx). NCACCT manuals implied that search and selection processes for each NCCC may vary based on the needs of an institution (NCACCT). In the search for a new president, NCCC’s have performed a variety of search and selection processes, but minimal research has been conducted on the varying hiring processes with an examination on the gender and race of individuals influencing the search and selection of a president, and the gender and race of the final candidate domain. Changes at community colleges and the focus on gender and race in leadership roles come at a time when student populations continue to evolve.
Diversity in student populations. Cohen (1988) discussed the high rate of minority enrollment in two-year institutions, as White undergraduates enroll at a rate of 34%, Blacks account for 39% of students attending college; Hispanics, 53%; and Asians 43%. Transformational changes occurred on college campuses as populations of people of color increased (Valverde, 2003). Towards the end of the 19th century there was an influx of immigrants, with 24 million arriving in the United States (Valverde, 2003). Another 20 million immigrants arrived in the United States towards the end of the 20th century (Valverde, 2003). This population growth contributed to large enrollments for four-year and two-year college campuses, with 4.65 million enrolled in 1965, 14.8 million in 2000, and 17 million in 2011 (Valverde, 2003). The growth in enrollment was primarily due to social movements, including desegregation of schools, the civil rights movement, and affirmative action, which all created avenues for underrepresented populations to further their education.

In 2009, community colleges enrolled “48 percent of the nation’s African American undergraduate population and 58 percent of its Hispanic undergraduate population” (Harbour, 2015, p. 20). The undergraduate population at community colleges included 44% of Asian/Pacific Islander students and 50% of those who were Native Americans (Harbour, 2015). In 2012, racial and ethnic minorities comprised 44.2% of the 12.8 million community college students (Long and Bumphus, 2016). Another influx of students, similar to the immigrant population growth in the late 19th and 20th centuries, is forecast. With an increase in ethnic/racial minority student enrollment, further discussion on gender and race in community college leadership is needed.
Problem Statement

The intentions of creating an inclusive environment in a workplace include, “reducing bias and increasing the diversity of the employee and management population” (Bregman, 2012, para 12). Companies and organizations focus their efforts on search and hiring practices to build a diverse workforce to meet the needs of diverse clientele, and academia is no exception. When viewing the national community college landscape of employees, men make up 47% of full time senior administrator positions, and Whites make up 80% of senior administrator positions. Senior administrators include Directors, Deans, Associate Vice Presidents, Vice Presidents and other American females within higher education administration, the numbers have increased in the last two decades. However, the total population of African American senior administrators, men and women together, make up 10%. For the purpose of this study, the role of president in North Carolina Community Colleges is the focus, with specific attention on the gender and race of the presidents.

Female presidents of community colleges nationally make up 29% of the population (Moltz, 2011), and 8% are Black. Among community college women presidents, African American females hold 43% of the presidential positions, tied with Hispanic or Latino women presidents (AACC, 2014). It is evident African American females have made great strides in obtaining a president position in community colleges nationally. However, while North Carolina has done well with hiring female community college presidents, the state has seen few minority females assume community college presidencies, and only one African American female has been appointed to a presidency. In 2011, the North Carolina Community College System approved the appointment of Dr. Stelfanie Williams, the first African American female president
of Vance Granville Community College. However, in the over 50 years of the NCCCS existence, Dr. Williams is the only African American female to be hired as a president. With the appointment of just one African American female president in the history of the 58 North Carolina Community Colleges, it is important to explore the search and selection processes with a specific focus on gender and race.

**Importance of research.** This document analysis explored gender and race through the analysis of three North Carolina Community Colleges that have completed their search for a new president. An examination of three NCCC’s provided a snapshot of the subset of schools’ search and selection processes and how gender and race were represented throughout the process, from representation among committee members and boards of trustees within the search and selection process, to the final candidate domains. This document analysis was important for two reasons. Literature often emphasizes diversifying student populations at higher education institutions with little focus on diversifying administration (Arnett, 2015). Literature also discusses the importance of diversifying faculties in higher education, as there is a lag in the number of faculty members of color who are hired (Fujiomoto, 2012). However, there is limited discussion regarding diversifying the community college presidency with a specific focus on gender and race.

**History of the North Carolina Community College System**

Before the establishment of the first community college in North Carolina (NC), the first junior college was opened. Buncombe County Junior College (BCJC), located in Asheville, NC, opened in 1927, and was the first locally supported two-year public college supported under the
Smith-Hughes Act of 1917. The Smith-Hughes Act issued national approval for public schools to offer vocational education using federal funds for trades and industries, agriculture, and home economics programs (Randolph Community College Archives and Special Collections, 2014). BCJC offered vocational programs and courses to transfer to NC Universities in Raleigh, Chapel Hill, and Greensboro. BCJC was later adopted as North Carolina’s first community college with a name change to Asheville-Biltmore College. In 1957, Asheville-Biltmore College became the first state supported community college and eventually converted to a four-year public university with a name change to The University of North Carolina at Asheville. In the coming years, additional state supported community colleges would open their doors to students in areas across North Carolina, including Charlotte and Wilmington, where both cities offered two of North Carolina’s original community colleges. Both now operate as four year institutions.

In 1963, under the control of the State Board of Education, a Community College System and Department of Community Colleges was created under the Omnibus Higher Education Act (Randolph Community College Archives and Special Collections, 2014). The Omnibus Higher Education Act, also known as the Higher Education Act of 1965, was created to increase educational resources in higher education institutions and give students financial assistance to attend. In 1979, the control of the Community College System was changed by the General Assembly (North Carolina Community College System, para. 10). No longer under the State Board of Education, The State Board of Community Colleges controls the NC Community College System with a board establishing policies, regulations, and standards (Dowdy, 1996). By 1969, North Carolina had inaugurated 54 institutions with enrolled students seeking careers and training in a variety of professions. In 1978 the last of the 58 community colleges in North
Carolina was incorporated into what had become the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS). In 1988, the NCCCS office celebrated 25 years of existence, and was established as the nation’s third largest community college system.

NCCCS’s focus is to provide post high school education and training. Several of the colleges started as technical institutes or centers, where the primary focus of education was to provide training and education to upgrade worker’s skills geared towards specific industries such as health occupations, electronics technology, architectural drafting, and adult basic education, to name a few. All 58 community colleges now serve as institutions for advanced learning post high school, centers of training for specific industries, entry points for furthering education to a Bachelor’s degree and beyond, and a place for professionals looking to develop new skills and knowledge for their current professions. All NCCC’s provide educational resources for individuals seeking to earn their GED’s or to gain basic skills not acquired in high schools. The majority of North Carolinians live within 30 miles of one of the 58 community colleges (Stancill, 2015). There are over 321,000 students enrolled in one or more curriculum programs, and close to 498,000 continuing education students enhancing their work-related skills at the 58 community colleges. (Stancill, 2015).

From the founding of the first community college, through the establishment of the 58th community college, the North Carolina Community College system’s record of providing post-secondary school education and training to communities and businesses was considered exemplary. NCCC’s had a great deal of success providing communities and businesses with workforce training and education through the initiatives set forth by leadership. In the 2016 economy with current and pending NCCC president retirements, North Carolina’s community
colleges, like other states community colleges nationwide, were facing a pressing dilemma to update and diversify community college practices amid pending retirements.

Community College Leadership

In working towards a more equitable future for community colleges, much focus is placed at the helm of the college. The administration, specifically presidents, have a great deal of responsibility in leading the college; and amid community college president retirements, expectations run high for incoming leaders repositioning themselves in a role reserved for change makers. In 2015, out of the 1132 community colleges in the nation, 269 of those saw a transition in presidencies (Smith, 2016). More than ever before, literature is focusing on who will lead community colleges and from where leaders will come. Toner (2016) points out several strategies in identifying successors, including internal hiring and looking at non-traditional candidates who could increase diversity efforts. Smith (2016) also affirms that seeking existing leaders outside of the hiring institution who can adapt, may enhance the institution through a well-crafted search process.

Search and Selection Process

A president search and selection process is an opportunity for higher education institutions to initiate a thoughtful assessment of an institution’s present and prospective needs before choosing a leader (Hamos, Heffernan, Neumann, Storbeck, 2014). The search and selection process for every higher education institution varies depending on the needs; however, the four steps that apply to all presidential searches include (1) institutional assessment and cultivating a profile; (2) candidate recruitment; (3) candidate evaluation; and (4) selecting a new
president (American Association of Community College Trustees, ACCT, n.d). While these four steps are critical in searching for and selecting a new president, higher education institutions implement a structured process created specifically for the individual institution. Processes are often decided by centralized hiring authorities or a structure of decision makers. Authorities and decision makers often control the operations, costs, and qualities of an institution. They are also tasked with hiring presidents. For many states, a state agency is positioned between the community college and the state government, enforcing state-wide policies for the institution, but also shielding institutions from invasive state policies (Eckel & King, n.d.). In other states, centralized hiring authorities for community colleges are boards of trustees who are locally elected and/or governor, or legislature appointed people (ACE, 2004). For some states community colleges have a state system and a board of trustees.

For some states, the process for hiring a community college president consists of two steps, with the approval coming from and state system and from the board of trustees. The Crisis and Opportunity Report (2013) emphasized the existence of numerous authorities’ adept in hiring presidents; however, many college presidents are hired by a board of trustees, and 70% of presidents are appointed by a board of trustees.

**North Carolina community colleges hiring process.** North Carolina has a centralized community college hiring process. The board of trustees and the NC State Board of Community Colleges are engaged in the selection of a new president. The NC State Board of Community Colleges consists of a combination of 18 members who serve as a trustee for a NCCC in a region of NC (NC has six regions), representatives appointed either by the NC House of Representatives, NC Senate, or the NC Governor, and a NCCC student who is the President of
the NC Comprehensive Community College Student Government Association (N4CSCGA), an organization representative of students’ needs in NC community colleges. The board of trustees of the hiring college selects the president and the NC State Board of Community Colleges approves the candidate for president at the end of a search process crafted specifically for the hiring institution. However, there are no set guidelines for NC community college president searches and due to the absence of mandatory procedures, there is a need to review the search and selection processes of North Carolina community colleges.

This dissertation focused on the presidential searches of three North Carolina community colleges, South Piedmont Community College, Central Piedmont Community College, and Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College. These three colleges were chosen because they all concluded their search and selection processes by the end of 2016, and because they reflected how in the second decade of the twenty first century, most North Carolina community colleges go about the task of finding and choosing a president. These three colleges were also representative of different regions of North Carolina. Moreover, the college websites provided a great amount of information on the processes used to search for candidates, reflective of the differing approaches used by NCCC in seeking and hiring a president.

Significance of Research

Like many community colleges across the nation, NCCC are experiencing a turnover in leadership and continue to execute search and selection procedures to hire new leaders to assume the president position. For every higher education institution, the search process is a critical part in selecting a president. Literature on community college leadership hiring is centered on
selecting new presidents and one of the elements of focus is hiring traditions. Compared to many business corporations, higher education institutions hiring practices are complex bureaucratic structures requiring stringent credentials and skills, which may exclude aspiring entrepreneurial educators as promising presidents (Wilson, 2010). In *The Hiring Game: Reshaping Community College Practices*, Jones-Kavalier and Flannigan (2008) discussed how community college hiring practices are often rooted in the historical and cultural traditions of an individual college. A review of hiring traditions and processes is needed so they can be amended when necessary to encourage the promotion of diversity in the selection of campus leaders, particularly among women of color. Revisions of hiring traditions and processes may boost the selection of underrepresented groups into campus president positions, eliminating the barriers because of these traditions.

**Diversity: Gender and Race**

In response to the barriers women and minorities face in the workplace, and the Civil Rights Act of 1991, The Federal Glass Ceiling Commission was created. A 1986 article in the *Wall Street Journal* popularized the term *glass ceiling*, a concept that is a reality for many women and minorities who attempt to advance themselves in the professional arena. The Federal Glass Ceiling Commissions’ mandate identified barriers that have impeded the success of women and minorities (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). This mandate also identified favorable practices that have contributed to advancing women and men of color in private sector leadership positions (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). The glass ceiling concept is an obscure notion for those who view diversity as an aspect of compliance rather than an essential component to the life of an organization (Williams and Martin, 2010). Components of the glass
ceiling concept such as the education and career pathways women and minorities take for professional advancement and women and minorities preparedness, requires additional research. An additional element of the glass ceiling concept includes career opportunities. With the wave of president retirements in higher education, there is an opportunity to examine the glass ceiling concept, or more specifically gender and race in higher education president hiring.

**Gender and race in NCCC leadership.** At the time this study was conducted, a view of leadership gender and race demographics in NCCC’s in 2016 showed that there were 37 White males, 13 White females, 5 Black males and 1 Black female currently positioned as Presidents (College of Albemarle and Martin Community College were searching for new presidents during this time). While increases have been made historically in NC with the promotion of female presidents, the statistics of minority female presidents lags with the appointment of one minority female.

**Appointment of first minority female president.** Out of 42 applicants from across the nation, Dr. Stelfanie Williams was chosen as the sixth president of Vance-Granville Community College (VGCC) in 2011 and assumed the position in February 2012. A college with three campuses in a rural area, Williams replaced Dr. Randy Parker, who went on to become the president at Guilford Technical Community College in Jamestown, NC. Her last position was Vice President for Economic and Community Development at Sandhills Community College. This was a new position at the college, where Williams had become the first African American woman to become a vice president (Central Carolina Community College, CCCC, 2011). Williams’ leadership quickly extended beyond her role at VGCC while during the year of her appointment, she, “represented North Carolina at a White House Regional Community College
Summit hosted by the U.S. Department of Education,” (CCCC, 2011, para. 11). Subsequently Williams has served on several executive boards for NC initiatives, including the NC Community College Adult Educators Association and NC Economic & Workforce Development Leadership Committee (CCCC, 2011). Before the promotion of Williams as the first Black female president, the first White female president of a NCCC, Dr. C. Neil McLeod, assumed the role in 1979, breaking up the all-White male cast of NCCC presidents.

**Appointment of first female president.** Dr. C. Neil McLeod became the first woman president of a NCCC when she assumed the presidency of Martin Community College on May 14, 1979, replacing Isaac Southerland. The NCCCS faced criticism over the years due to the lack of women or black presidents in community colleges (Christensen, 1979). A 1979 NC *News and Observer* article on Dr. McLeod’s appointment revealed details on her background, education and opinions on becoming the first female president, and discussed the NC community, questioning whether a woman can perform well as a president of a community college, as well as the amount of time it took to appoint a female to a president position.

Donald R. Stout, a former chairman of the board of trustees of MCC, who was active as a trustee during the time Dr. McLeod was appointed, believed the selection committee was not consciously looking for a female president, but that the best person for the job was chosen (Christensen, 1979). Dr. McLeod believed she entered the community college arena at a time when community colleges were looking to hire more women (Christensen, 1979). Dr. McLeod received a good reception from some in the community, while some others within the conservative Eastern NC farming community believed a woman was not fit for the job (Christensen, 1979). Before assuming the role as president, Dr. McLeod was the Vice President
for Instruction and Student Development at Piedmont Technical Institute (now Piedmont Community College) since 1977 (Christensen, 1979). Dr. McLeod left MCC in March 1982. At the time Dr. McLeod assumed her role as president at MCC, the student population of the campus was half Black (Christensen, 1979). Historically, it is not uncommon for the president’s race and gender to be dissimilar to the dominant gender and/or racial composition of college campuses. However, literature suggests a review of leadership and that a concerted effort should be made for leadership and student populations to mirror each other in the millennium. Thus, a review on NC community college president hiring in the millennium with a specific view on gender and race was needed.

**Theoretical Framework**

When hiring decisions are made in the consideration of community college presidents, literature on diverse leadership should be considered. While diverse leaders are present on community college campuses across the nation, practices and methods should be reviewed in considering the diverse leader, specifically within community colleges that use centralized hiring authorities to make the significant decision of choosing a president. Developed from the tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT), Critical Legal Studies (CLS), and Feminist Legal Theory (FLT) Critical Race Feminism (CRF) was the theoretical framework used to explore this subject. CRF explicitly examines the issues women of color face in structures of power.

**Critical race theory.** Research and discussion on CRT accumulated by Crenshaw and other contributing authors has led to the justification of its use on a subject related to the retiring and hiring of community college presidents and the connection to diversity. The evolution of
CRT occurred in the mid-1970 as intellectual beginnings in the efforts by Alan Freeman, Derrick Bell, and Richard Delgado (Crenshaw, 1996). Originally a concept created for legal thought, the coined term was Critical Legal Studies (CLS) before it developed into a movement, challenging the norms of “white” orientation, the historical and contextual relationships of racial and legal discourse, and oppositional racial identities (Crenshaw, 1996). CRT is a concept with the initial intent of challenging the traditional doctrine of CLS with five tenets.

The first tenet of CRT is to challenge traditional ideals of racism and the natural inclusion of this concept in the social order. This theory also includes the history and struggles of other minorities, encompassing race and gender. A second tenet of CRT analyzes the experiences of different groups, to debunk the assumptions and myths of the common culture that ultimately lead to the oppression of minorities. A third principle examines social justice and elimination of oppression (Hernandez, 2016). The purpose of social justice is to empower underrepresented groups. The fourth tenet challenges traditional ideologies (Hernandez, 2016). The last tenet provides an interdisciplinary perspective reviewing affirmative action, where most of the recipients benefitting from hiring policies were White women (Landson-Billings, 1999). These five tenets generated a common framework with multiple perspectives including minorities to restructure a society plagued by oppression.

Crenshaw (1991) states that: Race, gender, and other identity categories are most often treated in mainstream liberal discourse as vestiges of bias or domination-- that is, as intrinsically negative frameworks in which social power works to exclude or marginalize those who are different from the majority. (p. 1242)
Employment challenges among underrepresented populations convey a need to explore practices and standards of hiring policies. An examination of the search and selection processes for NCCC presidents partly contributed to an understanding of the involvement of race within steps of each of the three colleges’ practices through a CRT lens. In addition to race, there have been consistent discussions on gender equality, specifically within employment contexts and the historical power structures which have restricted women in furthering their career aspirations.

**Sociological feminism.** Feminist sociology encompasses characteristics and their relationships to power within social structures. The most common characteristic is gender; however, additional features include race, sexual orientation, nationality, and social economic status. Sociological feminism specifically focuses on the oppression of women within a patriarchal society. Equal pay, equal rights, reproductive rights, and equal advancement in occupations are some of the focuses of the women’s movement or sociological feminism.

Feminism is an evolving contemporary concept in the United States. The sociological study of feminism breaks down the: “(1) research on gender-related attitudes and feminist ideologies; (2) social-psychological research on feminist self-identification; and (3) social movement research on feminism and the women’s movement,” (Hanois, 2012, p. 823). Functioning under distinct circumstances, feminism under sociology and exercised within different contexts through gendered beliefs, individuality, and social movement is a dynamic relationship (Hanois, 2012). The sociological feminist perspective as a complex framework, invokes numerous structures of inequality. Singular theories of feminism do not accurately paint the picture of inequality and the need for social movement. African American women who seek opportunities for advancement experience a different social climate unlike other women of color.
Hence, the emergence of sociological feminism, which continues to expand and include additional ideologies and identities relevant to the large scale population of women. As a result of evolving theories and the emergence of movements, the framework of sociological feminism incorporated into the tenets of CRT resulted in the decision to choose CRF for this study’s theoretical framework.

**Critical race feminism.** CRF is a transparent view of the direct issues and oppression women of color experience within structures of power. CRF is a movement centered on the plight of women of color and an awareness for others to understand the discrimination and resistance women of color experience within American society. “Critical race feminism focuses on the lives of women of color who face multiple forms of discrimination, due to the intersections of race, class, and gender within a system of White male patriarchy and racist oppression” (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010, p. 20). CRF focuses on not only the implications of race in any context, but also offers a view of gender, specifically females and within the education field.

Researchers have explored the possibilities of applying CRF in the theoretical framework of education, such as higher education institutions (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010). “Nationally, women college presidents are highest in Associate’s colleges (36%),” compared to four year institutions, however, the statistics of minority female presidents within NCCC’s is small. The strengths of CRF were a direct correlation to the problem of practice and research question in examining search and selection processes and the meaning of diversity, specifically gender and race when seeking a new president. There is evidence that supports the confusion and apprehension of promoting women from different cultural backgrounds. The hesitation in
promotion is largely due to double jeopardy, as women of color are positioned in dual identities, facing racism and sexism.

Women of color who desire advancement to leadership opportunities often struggle with attaining promotion because of dual identities, whereas the struggles of individuals with one predominant identity are not as severe as is the case for women of color. “White women and Black men benefited from at least one predominant identity that is congruent with the leadership role (i.e., being White or male) and therefore were not evaluated as harshly as Black women whose race and gender aligned succinctly with failure,” (Rosette, A & Livingston, R, 2012, p.1165). Contrary to the experiences women of color encounter when seeking leadership roles, White women and Black men receive much less judgement when pursuing leadership roles. Therefore, there was an urgency to review the importance of diversity within search and selection methods in NCCC’s. A review of hiring processes uncovered past perspectives and future endeavors to diversify leadership.

Research Purpose/Question

The goal of this research was to explore the integration of diversity and inclusion statements with a specific focus on gender and race into written documents in the search and selection processes of three NCCC presidents. The examination of the search and selection processes is a significant prelude to gaining more insight into historical, cultural and organizational structures. This research analyzed documents included within each of the three colleges’ president search processes against previous and current North Carolina Association of Community College Trustees search and selection practices supported by the NC State Board of
Community Colleges. Documents from reputable organizations and documents from other state systems on hiring community college presidents were examined. In addition to an analysis of search and selection processes, this research viewed the gender and race composition from the three colleges’ search committees, boards of trustees, and the final candidate domains to provide additional insight into the statistics of NCCC landscape of leadership and persons influential in the hiring process. The following question guided this research:

- What is the importance of gender and race when understanding higher education leadership recruitment at the community college level?

Positionality Statement

My work in higher education began at a for profit college, the University of Phoenix, where I was employed as an Academic Counselor. I knew I wanted to continue counseling in a traditional college setting so I continued my education abroad in Brisbane, Australia. While living abroad, I witnessed a multitude of cultures and ethnicities at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in the student population and staff. I completed my practicum in Counseling at QUT to graduate from The University of Queensland, thrilled to continue in the new profession working with and servicing diverse populations, similar to my practicum and living experiences. After moving back to North Carolina, I started working at Vance Granville Community College as a Counselor and there I also noticed the diversity within the staff and the student population. My supervisor was a Latino male, and a few of my colleagues were a mixture of Black and White women. During my tenure at VGCC, I witnessed what I and some others consider a historical event in NCCC history when Dr. Stelfanie Williams, an African-American
woman, was hired to be a NCCC president, the first African-American woman to serve in that role. I was inspired, yet at the same time, was hit with the reality that in the over 50 years of the NC community college system’s existence, only one minority female is leading a college.

In my time at Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) I have met at least three African American women who have expressed interest in pursuing a president position at a higher education institution. These same women have also expressed in separate conversations that they understand the challenges they will face as Black women in climbing the ladder, pointing out how they are one of few African American women in their departments. My interest in this topic stems from conversations with women who look like me and who are interested in moving through the pipeline to the presidency.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

This dissertation examined the presidential search and selection process at three North Carolina community colleges (NCCCs), all of which had completed such a process shortly before December, 2016. The focus of this study was to analyze the presidential search and selection process established by the North Carolina Association of Community College Trustees (NCACCT) and its influence over those three community college president searches. In addition to the NCACCT manuals, an analysis was done on presidential search and selection processes from several other state community college systems and national organizations. Those national organizations included the Aspen Institute, the American Association of Community College Trustees, the American Association of University Professors, and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. Documents from those organizations and the NCACCT were analyzed for similarities and differences with the search and selection processes at the three NCCCs. This literature review addresses the following: (a) the historical context of community colleges in the United States; (b) community college leadership trends, particularly the emerging movement towards increasing diversity in their leadership; and (c) community college leadership search and selection process.

History and Evolution of Community Colleges

No transfer pathway to four-year colleges and universities existed before America’s invention of the community college. Junior colleges became a bridge and an entry point for high school graduates to transition to four-year schools. Junior colleges also became a staple in communities, meeting the needs of residents and businesses as a distinct and responsive segment of higher education (Phillipe & Gonzalez Sullivan, 2005). Community colleges developed a
democratic mission as they expanded (Mellow, 2000). This democratic idea resulted in initiatives that contributed to what was known as more than just a community college, but as the people’s college. The first Morrill Act, enacted in 1862, emphasized courses in mechanical arts and agriculture, and expanded access to students previously excluded from higher education opportunities (AACC, 2016). The second Morrill Act, in 1890, expanded public education to minorities by refusing to provide funding to states where public colleges denied entrance to minorities (AACC, 2016).

**Junior colleges.** The philosophical and institutional foundations of the community college began with the development of the junior college. Dating back to before the early 20th century, junior colleges rose to prominence due to the need for trained workers, and a need for social equality that would seemingly be improved with avenues to higher education (Cohen, 1985). Junior colleges were established either in high schools, in facilities on university campuses, or on facilities near campuses. The earliest examples of junior colleges housed on university campuses include Monticello College (1835), Susquehanna University (1858), and Lewis Institute of Chicago (1896) (Beach & Norton, 2011, p. 5). The increasing number of secondary schools supported the growth of junior colleges, and during this same time American universities were experiencing a reform movement (Karabel & Brint, 1985; Cohen, 1985). In the second half of the 19th century, American university presidents Henry Tappan of the University of Michigan, Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia University, David Starr Jordan of Stanford University, William Folwell of the University of Minnesota, and William Rainey Harper of the University of Chicago were among those who questioned “the first two years of college as an unnecessary part of university-level instruction,” (Karabel & Brint, 1985, p. 23; Neufeldt, 1982).
These university presidents believed high schools covered the same curriculum that was taught during the first two years of college (Karabel & Brint, 1985). These beliefs drove reconstituting universities as training and research centers (Karabel & Brint, 1985). Harper contributed to the discussion on the reconstitution of universities through his comments that the last two years of university were when students truly obtained college level work (Karabel & Brint, 1985). To this end, he and Joliet High School Principal J. Stanley Brown established Joliet Junior College, the first stand-alone junior college in the United States (Brint & Karabel, 1985). Through their personal relationship and Harper’s agreement to allow Joliet Junior College graduates receive “advanced standing at the University of Chicago,” Joliet Junior College opened its doors to students in 1901 (Brint & Karabel, 1985, p. 25). Harper believed in the geographic and economic democratization of higher education (Neufeldt, 1982). Deserving youth unable to enroll in distant universities would be able to start their college journey at a junior college close to home (Neufeldt, 1982).

According to Brint and Karabel (1985), the establishment of junior colleges was a way to divert students from the university to the upward expanding high school, rather than a form of higher education democratization. However, Alexis Langue’s ideas on the diverse goals of the junior college were partly recognized through the addition of semiprofessional and occupational programs being offered at junior colleges (Neufeldt, 1982). At the start of the junior college, occupational and semiprofessional, or vocational, programs were not as important as the liberal arts curriculum that would help students transfer to senior institutions (Brint & Karabel, 1985). Vocational courses were branded as dummy courses and the institutions that offered them also had to offer the traditional curriculum of the first two years of university in order to survive.
(Brint & Karabel, 1985). However, junior colleges’ efforts to offer comparable two-year college work for students were later diminished by critics who commented on their less than stellar reputation (Brint & Karabel, 1985). Junior colleges did not have a comprehensive outline to follow until the American Association of Junior Colleges (AAJC) was established in 1920 after discussions and meetings among junior college presidents about the role and organization of junior colleges (Brint & Karabel, 1985).

The early 20th century marked the spread of junior colleges all over the United States, coupled with the continuous increase in high school enrollment and graduation. Junior colleges were an accessible solution to training a more skilled workforce and were also presented to the community as a more affordable institution than four-year colleges. Between 1910 and 1940, junior colleges were expanding across the nation, offering programs for students who would transfer to senior institutions and also occupational programs for entry-level positions (Cohen, 1985). The rate of expansion of junior colleges was exponential. In 1910, there were 25 junior colleges, and by 1927 there were already 325 colleges with 35,360 enrolled students (Beach and Norton, 2011, p. 7). Junior colleges existed in all regions of the United States. In the aftermath of World War II and the Korean War, junior colleges experienced a new surge of growth as veterans eagerly used their G.I. Bill benefits to fund education (Trainor, 2015). Veterans not only took advantage of junior colleges, but baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) were also taking advantage of the open-door admissions policy, under which junior colleges did not require the mechanical or standardized tests for placement into college courses or other requirements four-year institutions typically required for entrance (Trainor, 2015). Higher
education thus became possible for all students. With the increase of student enrollment and foundational changes supporting the organization of junior colleges, two-year colleges expanded.

A new name: Community college. The Truman Commission issued a higher education report in 1947 that suggested breaking down of barriers for students seeking education after high school who were not able to attend four-year institutions (Vaughan, 1985). The report recommended an expansion of community colleges and providing tuition-free education to students (Vaughan, 1985) The Truman Commission argued that the benefits of two-year postsecondary schooling for serving community needs merited giving junior colleges a new name: community college (Beach & Norton, 2012). The new name reflected the “intimate relationship with their surrounding regions” (Trainor, 2015, para. 11).

During the 1950s and 1960s the “true concept of the community college” was recognized as adult education, community service, and terminal education all found a place in two-year colleges (Neufeldt, 1982, p. 174). By the 1960s, many minorities and women, “two populations traditionally excluded from many higher education institutions,” were enrolling in community colleges (Harbour, 2015, p. 30). By 1970, there were 1,091 community colleges located across the United States (Beach and Norton, 2011, p.7). The 21st century brought changes to two-year colleges. Community colleges transformed into institutions serving all people regardless of skill or education, providing a multitude of programs including job skill training and pathways to four-year institutions. At the same time, they offered flexible class schedules for professionals balancing career and school at a lower cost than four-year institutions (Phillipe and Gonzalez Sullivan, 2005). Under the leadership of their presidents, the purpose of community colleges evolved into efforts to support people seeking employment opportunities and promotion. Leaders
of community colleges were regarded as the founding fathers or pioneers of this new form of higher education.

**Community College Leadership**

The responsibilities and skills needed by community college leaders have evolved over the years due to globalization, changes in student diversity, the progression of technology, and demands for accountability. The pioneer founders of junior colleges led unique higher education institutions that were separate from traditional four-year colleges. The second generation of presidents was labeled as managers who served colleges through “periods of rapid growth and abundant resources” (Sullivan, 2004, p. 35). The third generation of presidents was regarded as collaborators who made higher education accessible (Sullivan, 2004). Millennial presidents are adapting to shifting demographic trends, funding, and expectations of the community and policymakers (McArdle, 2013). Community college leaders in the current millennium are unlike their predecessors and face a host of different challenges.

**Founders and managers.** The early generations of community college presidents shared common traits. “They were primarily White males, married, in their 50s, and had risen through the academic ranks” (Sullivan, 2004, p. 35). “Community colleges with roots in secondary schools usually were managed by former instructors who had become first part-time and then full-time administrators” (Cohen, Brawer & Krisker, 2013, p. 136). Many of these presidents held terminal degrees and some had served in World War II or the Korean War (Sullivan, 2004). Prior to the 1970s, presidents were the decision makers at their institutions (Cohen, Brawer & Krisker, 2013). Due to the laid-back approach of community colleges’ governing boards toward the decisions made for the college, the presidents “assumed a paternalistic, superior attitude
toward teachers” (Cohen, Brawer, and Krisker, 2013, p. 136). In the 1970s, the president’s influence was lessened as governing boards took more control over the operations of the college (Cohen, Brawer, and Krisker, 2013). In the 1980s, when the governing boards continued to control community colleges, the typical profile of the president remained the same.

The American Council on Education’s (ACE) first study on college presidents, in 1986, reviewed the typical demographic profile of a college leader (Cook, 2012). The average college president was a white male with a doctorate, between 50 and 60 years old, and had served as a leader for at least six years (Cook, 2012). By the 1990s, slight changes, such as a decrease in age range and inclusion of women had occurred in the demographic profile of the typical community college president (Sullivan, 2004). Additionally, the role of president changed as administrators remodeled the structure of community colleges (Sullivan, 2004).

**Collaborators.** Common traits shared by third generation community college presidents included their backgrounds, many of them being from the mid-40s to mid-50s in age and coming from a lower-middle class upbringing (Sullivan, 2001). “Most significantly, many became involved in social action groups—the civil rights, antiwar, or women’s movements—during or after college” (Sullivan, 2001, p. 562). Their involvement in these groups allowed this generation of presidents to engage in the traditional model of community college leadership training (Sullivan, 2001). However, whereas their predecessors had earned Doctorates in Philosophy and English, collaborators earned advanced degrees in higher education administration (Sullivan, 2001).

This third generation of presidents endured many changes through the 1990s including recessions, public distrust, the Internet revolution, a surge in underprepared students, and
demands for accountability (Sullivan, 2001). Further setting this generation of leaders apart from their predecessors were the demographics of presidents, as they collectively became more diverse (Sullivan, 2001). In 1986, 9.8% of community college presidents were women (Sullivan, 2001). This increased to 11% by 1991, and to 28% by 2001 (Cohen, Brawer, & Krisker, 2013). Typically absent in the previous generations of presidents, the proportion of minority presidents climbed from 8.6% in 1986 to 12.3% in 2001 (Sullivan, 2001). Through affirmative action and supportive coalitions, women and people of color where able to gain entrance into a system dominated by the majority (Sullivan, 2001). During this time, the majority of presidents were White men, although women and people of color continued to advance to leadership positions. From leadership diversification to traditional leadership training, community college presidents from the third generation slightly mirrored the millennial presidents who followed them.

**Millennial presidents.** According to ACE, the typical American college or university president is a married White male who is 61 years old, holds a doctorate in education, and has served in his current position for seven years—a profile that has not seen significant change over the previous 25 years. (ACE, 2012, para. 1). While there have been more presidents whose previous occupations were outside higher education, the conventional pathway to the presidency has been consistent since 1986. Chief Academic Officer (CAO) was the most common position held prior to assuming the role of college president in 2011 (Cook, 2012). In addition to being CAOs, the majority of presidents have served as faculty during their careers (Cook, 2012). In 1986, 75% of presidents had held full-time faculty positions during their careers; in 2011, 70% had (Cook, 2012). Along with slight changes in professional pathways, there were also changes in the ethnic/racial minority and gender demographics of presidents.
Women. Community colleges have created a climate of gender diversity at the presidential level. According to June (2007), women are leading more community colleges than any other higher education institutions. In the last 30 years, the majority of community college presidents have been men. However, the percentage of female leaders in community colleges has increased dramatically over the years. In 1986, 8% of community college presidencies were filled by women. This had increased to 29% by 2006 and to 32% by 2010 (Cohen, Brawer &Krisker, 2013). According to the November 2014 AACC data points, women of all races fill 36% of community college presidencies.

The increasing number of women presidents is attributed to several factors. Historically, only extremely qualified, over prepared, and accomplished women were considered for a college president position ( Vaughan, 1989). Cook (2012) attributed the large numbers of women community college presidents to the closure of all-female institutions during the last two decades. Another factor is the inclusive and supportive environment within community colleges, where women are well-represented in faculty and administration (Eddy & Boggs, 2012). While women’s ascension to community college presidencies is a reality, the literature also cite demands made of women in their climb to leadership. While some challenges have dissipated over the years, vestiges of obstacles facing women ascending to leadership positions remain.

There is abundant literature on gender-related behavioral patterns that often set women and men apart. Studies on gender roles and gender bias reveal that “people feel most comfortable with others who are most like them, and they tend to reward these people with favorable evaluations, rewards and opportunities,” (Rhodes, 2006, para. 10). Gender discrimination or gate-keeping techniques have restricted some women from advancing. Arguing that there is a
shortage of qualified women has been a consistent gate-keeping technique (Jackson & Harris, 2007). The glass ceiling has maintained the prevalence of White males at the top of academia (Jackson & Harris, 2007). The pay gap is an additional gate-keeping technique, discouraging qualified women applicants from pursuing demanding positions like community college president.

Valverde (2003) posited that while women experience many of the same challenges in advancing to leadership positions in academe, the opportunity for Whites to retain power proves to be an advantage for White women. This is why ethnic/racial minority women, specifically Black women, are not advancing to community college leadership positions at the same rate as their counterparts.

**Ethnic/racial minorities.** According to June (2007), ethnic/racial minority college leaders made up 8% of the president population in 1986; by 2006, the proportion had increased to 14% before dropping to 13% in 2011 (ACE, 2012). Excluding minority-serving institutions, ethnic/racial minorities make up 9% of the college president population (Morris, 2015). There is limited information on advancement and challenges among Black women presidents of community colleges.

With post-secondary schools accepting underrepresented populations in college classrooms, the doors also widened for women of color (Valverde, 2003). Women of color added value to their institutions and made contributions in the form of new perspectives that had been previously unaccounted for within higher education administration (Valverde, 2003).

The literature often groups higher education roles or leadership roles together in discussions on Black women in academia. Studies also group Black women together with other
ethnic/racial minorities or other women of color when discussing successes. AACC Data Points (2016) presented leadership statistics for Black men and women, concluding that there were more African American women working in community college positions than African American men. Much of the literature describes how Black women self-identify and how this affects their advancement to leadership positions. Both educated and less educated African American women often believe others think of them as unintelligent (Thompson, 2012). Exclusion and doubts regarding their ability and worth are pitfalls hindering some Black women’s success (Thompson, 2012).

Black women and women of color have been grouped together in discussions on challenges during their ascension to or within leadership positions. For women of all races, the ascension to the presidency is riddled with obstacles similar to what women in general experience: the wage gap, gender bias, and also the old boy system that excludes women and women of color from male dominated institutions (Wilson, 1998). Women of color experience racism and sexism, or more specifically the double-edged sword of gendered racism (Bright, 2010). Gendered racism is manifested in the experiences Black women have encountered, including disrespect and disregard by White colleagues (Bright, 2010). Women of color in academic leadership positions have also endured isolation, communication challenges, exclusion, dismissal, condescension, failure to receive credit, and lack of validation or credit (Mainah & Perkins, 2015). Linden (2012) and Mainah and Perkins (2015) concluded that barriers to the success of women of color stem from internal recruitment, pay guidelines, and promotion and systems processes.
Finally, studies often discussed the history of Black women in education, their climb to leadership in higher education, and opportunities for advancement. Opportunities include (a) mentorship, which can contribute to more job offers; (b) having the right attitude, so they can become more aware of the actions and ideologies of the dominant group; and (c) being proactive in their interactions with male co-workers (Jackson & Harris, 2013). Studies on Black women’s advancement to community college presidency are limited. The few studies on Black women presidents in community colleges reveal a profile and pipeline dissimilar to the typical profile of a millennial president.

In 1983, there were seven Black women presidents (Benjamin, Dukes, Gnage & Scott-Skillman, 2010). In 2010, 59 Black women comprised 28% of community college women presidents (Benjamin, Dukes, Gnage & Scott-Skillman, 2010). In 2010, the survey Black Women Community College CEO’s in the 21st Century was conducted and reported by college and university chancellors and presidents who were active in the Presidents’ Round Table of African American Community College CEOs (Benjamin, Dukes, Gnage & Scott-Skillman, 2010). The authors were curious about Black women CEOs or presidents who served in the same role. There were 59 Black women CEOs identified who were sent a survey, which yielded a 56% response rate and revealed a profile similar to the majority.

Black women community college presidents had almost all (95%) earned a doctorate degree and were usually between 51-61 years of age (Benjamin, Dukes, Gnage & Scott-Skillman, 2010). Before becoming a president, their prior position was academic vice president (Benjamin, Dukes, Gnage & Scott-Skillman, 2010). Many of the Black women presidents were first-generation college graduates who moved through faculty ranks and were in their first
The dual identities of Black women are often collectively grouped with women or women of color. Limited literature exists on Black women presidents and community colleges as other related factors (such as leadership styles and advancement at colleges and universities) are more prevalent.

**Diversity in leadership.** The union of leadership and diversity is relevant in higher education literature. Leadership diversity in higher education is important because it is a transformational concept that responds and adjusts to changes within an institution and its connections with surrounding communities (Wolfe and Dilworth, 2015). Synergy between diversity and leadership exists “because diversity promotes change as an emergent agent in the structuring of higher education, while leadership promotes practices that identify diversity as a nested context for achieving balance in the social relations between higher education and society,” (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002, p. 54). It is important to understand the linkages between diversity and leadership through the frameworks institutions align themselves with. Aguirre and Martinez (2002) described two frameworks that higher education institutions often align themselves with in their executive summary on diversity in higher education leadership.

The first framework addresses diversity within the organizational culture. This framework’s focus is on empowering minorities within academia to act as change agents through the processes and committees that establish institutional policies (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002). This framework ultimately leads to restructuring requirements so they offer multicultural views. The second framework involves the organizational culture’s increasing awareness of diversity
matters (Aguierre & Martinez, 2002). This involves more than accepting affirmative action. Discussions on diversity matters promote and embrace inclusive environments through strategic operations, which include reviewing policies and guidelines on hiring.

**Community College Search and Selection Process**

Community college president positions were not advertised until the 1970s. Prior to 2016, the selection of the president was exclusively up to the board of trustees (Tepatti, 2002). Selection followed a confidential discussion among board members, with their decision being announced to the community and campus afterwards (Tepatti, 2002).

Selecting a community college president requires careful planning. Watkins-Hayes (2015) suggested two essential goals in searching for a president: (a) selecting a leader capable of moving the college in the right direction, and (b) creating and executing a selection process that strengthens rather than weakens the health of the institution. Community colleges expect a return on their investment (Campbell, 2009). A search and selection process today is unlike the process in the early years of community colleges. While elements of the hiring process for a community college president have evolved and many higher education institutions have their own unique procedures and practices, the search and selection process is generally comprised of two components, search committees and governing boards.

**Search committees.** As constituencies of the college, search committees often comprise a combination of students, faculty, and staff (Tepatti, 2002). Even by the standards of higher education, presidential search committees are odd concoctions, combining the dynamics of the governing board, the faculty, the administration and staff, and the students in an environment that is, at best, unusual and, at worst, adversarial. (Barden, 2010, p. 1). Search committees are a
mixture of various constituencies, fraught with apprehension and tension if not carefully composed (Barden, 2010). From the late 1970s to the early 1980s, search committees served in an advisory capacity for governing boards (Bromert, 1984).

After the 1980s, search committees assisted other invested parties, such as a college’s governing board, in the selection of a president. Careful selection and training of search committee members is imperative. Barden (2010) proposed galvanizing a unified committee by choosing committee members based on what each member has in common with one another. Barden (2010) proposed selecting a good search committee through open and honest discussions of these key questions:

- How do members of the committee choose to express themselves?
- Who is a talker and who is a listener?
- Who demands attention and who deserves it?
- How successful will the head of the committee be at keeping the conversation productive and focused on the task at hand? (p. 1)

These questions are the starting point in forming a cohesive group of committee members able to take on the task of finding the next president. Barden (2010) suggested that, after the committee is formed, additional questions must be asked of committee members regarding the qualifications of the next president (professional experiences, academic experiences, personal qualities, and other characteristics). In addition to what they are seeking, members must also ask themselves what variables could affect the search. It is important to recognize bias early in forming a search committee, as bias can cloud committee members’ judgment and evaluation of candidates (Leske, 2016). Barden (2010) concluded that the committee typically evolves into a
unified entity through these discussions. The integrity of a successful search process is the responsibility of the search committee and the college’s governing board.

**Governing boards.** A governing board is a group of individuals who make decisions on behalf of a higher education institution (Henderson, 1967). Governing boards have various names, including board of regents, board of control, board of trustees, and board of education (Henderson, 1967). Governance over a community college varies across the nation, with some colleges governed by a state board of education, state board of commission of higher education, a statewide coordinating board, a state governing board, or a board of regents (Cohen, Brawer & Kisker, 2013). Some states, like Arizona and Michigan, do not fall under any of these governing models, while others have overlapping authorities (Cohen, Brawer & Kisker, 2013).

**Composition.** Many institutions are governed by a board of trustees or board of regents. The size of a community college’s board in the 1960s was typically between 7-12 members (Henderson, 1967). Community college boards typically consists of 5-10 members (Cohen, Brawer & Kisker, 2013). Public community college board members may be chosen by election, gubernatorial appointment, legislative selection, or a combination of all three methods (Henderson, 1967). The composition of these boards has received criticism due to the over-representation of the upper socioeconomic segment of society (Henderson, 1967). In the 1960s board members were selected based on their ability to offer monetary contributions to the institution (Henderson, 1967). Women and persons from lower socioeconomic classes were underrepresented on boards as many of the members were wealthy older businessmen (Henderson, 1967). In the 1960s, the majority of board members were White males who were 60 years of age, with a small percentage being White women or “Negros” (Henderson, 1967).
In 1997, the composition of public higher education boards of trustees was 82.7% White, 11.7% African American, and 3.1% Latino (Valverde, 2013). These figures present a homogenous landscape similar to the demographics of community college presidents (Valverde, 2013). Valverde (2013, p. 32) posited that governing boards “either unconsciously or consciously” select presidents with “similar backgrounds and belief systems.” Valverde (2013) concluded that there is a congruence between White male presidents and governing boards composed of predominantly White men and a few White women. In 2009, the composition of governing boards was 82% White and 66% male (Cohen, Brawer & Kisker, 2013).

Responsibilities. Governing boards are influential in the life of the college, as they control the operations of the institution (Moore, 1973). A governing board’s responsibility is to maintain the institution’s integrity, effectiveness, and performance (Snyder, 2016). Governing boards must also ensure compliance with state, local, and federal laws (Association of Governing Boards, 2016). The board always makes decisions collectively (Henderson, 1967). Commonly referred to as trustees because of their trust relationships, governing board responsibilities are to:

- manage the institution in the public interest, to account to official bodies and to the public for actions taken and funds used, to carry out the ethical responsibilities involved in the education of youth, to hold title to and to administer endowment funds, and to execute other specific trust. (Henderson, 1967, p.10)

Trustees’ responsibilities are not for their personal financial gain; but rather for the administration of trust funds (Henderson, 1967). Boards are public corporations that are legally responsible for the institutions they govern (Cohen, Brawer & Kisker, 2013).
The Association of Governing Boards (AGB) and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) are two organizations that apprise board members of college affairs and other administrative responsibilities (Cohen, Brawer & Kisker, 2013). The ACCT represents more than 6,500 appointed and elected trustees serving over 1,200 two-year institutions in the United States (ACCT, 2016). This non-profit academic organization provides an avenue of communication to Congress, the Presidential administration, and the Department of Education (ACCT, 2016). The ACCT supports two-year college trustees through conferences, publications, seminars, and institutes (ACCT, 2016). The mission of the board of trustees as stated by the AACT is:

To foster the principles and practices of exemplary governance while promoting high quality and affordable higher education, cutting-edge workforce and development training, student success, and the opportunity for all individuals to achieve economic self-sufficiency and security.

The ACCT promotes six values: boardsmanship, advocacy, student success, innovation, diversity, and service. Among these, diversity and student success speak directly to the community college mission of advocacy for students in their promotion of contemporary policies and services, support for students, and commitment to diversity through inclusion, support and respect.

The ACCT and AGB offer publications and conferences emphasizing the importance of monitoring public affairs and fiscal responsibilities (Cohen, Brawer & Kisker, 2013). Governing boards are accountable for their own growth through professional development (Snyder, 2016). The AGB has supported university and college governing boards through professional
advancement since 1921. The AGB (2016) is a national organization whose mission is to preserve and strengthen institutional governance through advocacy, research, and support services. The AGB (2016) provides services and resources to enhance the effectiveness of state systems’ institutions. Some state systems (including North Carolina and Florida) have published manuals to advise trustees of their responsibilities as public corporations, including the selection of a president (Cohen, Brawer & Kisker, 2013).

Role in selecting a president. Governing boards are legally responsible for selecting the president, who will be the face of the college and the governing board’s source of information on college operations (Tepatti, 2002). Prior to the 1970s, presidents were informally selected based on their inclusion in the old boy network (Bromert, 1984). However, the governing board’s responsibility to select a president is now much more complex and formal. The ACCT established four areas of a presidential search that governing boards are responsible for, including (a) institution analysis and president profile development, (b) candidate recruitment, (c) candidate evaluation, and (d) selecting the president. The ACCT advocates for two-year colleges “by helping boards identify and select the best CEOs to lead their colleges on behalf of their communities,” (ACCT, 2016, para. 3). The ACCT can assess the board’s capacity to perform a search and help with a new president’s smooth transition to the college (ACCT, 2016). An alternative route for the college president search and selection process involves the employment of higher education search firms or consultants.

Search firms. Twelve percent of colleges employed a consultant for presidential searches between the late 1960s and early 1980s (Cook, 2012). In 2006, 31% of college presidents were hired in part through the efforts of a search firm or individuals conducting presidential searches.
(Weisman & Vaughan, 2007). The use of search firms has increased, as 39% of community college presidents were hired with the help of search firms from 2003-2006, compared to 26% hired that way 14 or more years ago (Weisman & Vaughan, 2007). The share that used a search consultant between 2007 and 2011 was 80 percent (Cook, 2012).

**History of search firms.** Search firms were traditionally used by businesses and corporations. Headhunters or executive search firms originated in 1926 when Thorndike Deland established a business charging New York department stores $200 to find expert buyers (Garrison, 2005). Executive search services became a rapidly growing business after the Second World War, when McKinsey and Booz Allen consultants saw a need to establish search services as an individual business (Garrison, 2005). There was a conflict between proposing management change and offering search services for a fee (Garrison, 2005). In 1951, McKinsey left the search consulting business and H. Wardwell Howell, who headed McKinsey during that time, founded Ward Howell (Garrison, 2005). Ward Howell “became one of the biggest global search firms (until 1998 when its American division was acquired and the rest of the company rebranded itself as Signium),” (Garrison, 2005, p. 6). Handy Associates, also associated with McKinsey, went on to establish its own search services (Garrison, 2005). Booz Allen Hamilton, which conducted searches until the late 1970s, was instrumental in guiding many top search consultants (Garrison, 2005). After breaking away from consultancies such as Booz Allen and McKinsey, several management search firms launched, including “Boyden (1946), Heidrick & Struggles (1953), Spencer Stuart (1956), and Amrop Hever (1967)” (Garrison, 2005, p. 6). Large accounting firms also began entering the headhunting business. KPMG and PricewaterhouseCoopers were the result of a merger between Russell Reynolds and Coopers &
Lybrand; both firms which had roots in accounting (Garrison, 2005). The only management consultant firm also conducting searches in the United States was A.T. Kearney (Garrison, 2005). Although it is not documented when search firms began offering their services in higher education, they eventually maneuvered into uncharted territory, supporting college search efforts.

**Higher education search firms.** Search firms started offering their services to large elite universities, and later to small colleges (Pulley, 2005). Arden argued that headhunters or search firms may not be the best choice for help in selecting a college president. At the time, little was known about search firms seeking candidates for higher education leadership positions. Arden (1991) contended that there were only resources, suggestions, and anecdotes for hiring a search firm, but no research or analytical material on search firms existed then. The use of search firms in the current century has increased and higher education institutions are selecting search firms capable of identifying viable presidential candidates.

An institution’s decision to hire a search firm is just as important as selecting the president of a college. The AGB endorses using a search firm or consultant and emphasizes the importance of this task to governing boards (Pulley, 2005). Pulley (2005) compiled a list of pointers for governing boards regarding search firms or consultants:

1. Request advice from peer institutions on their use of a search firm (what went well, what they would have done differently).
2. Compile a list of at least five search firms to conduct interviews and request proposals.
3. Check references and conduct a second round of interviews with possible candidates.
4. Have a list of questions prepared for consultants to answer before settling on the consultant.

5. Discuss a timeline for the search, to ensure their ideas do not allow for the process to drag on or go too quickly.

6. Gather the fees and expenses in writing.

7. Inquire about the search (who will lead, searches they have conducted in the past, plans for dealing with laws, and how the pool of candidates is created).

The use of a search firm during the college president search process is valuable; and with the support of a unified search committee and a governing board free of personal agendas, institutions can be successful in identifying and selecting presidents who are good fits for the institution.

Summary

When viewing the historical and evolutionary landscape of community colleges, discernable changes include the structural shifts (from operating on high school campuses to being free-standing institutions), the evolving purpose and mission of community colleges, and the diversity of student and administrative demographics. The cultural transformation across community college campuses has guided many discussions on diversifying the presidency. But changes in leadership have been slight compared to the major shifts in student populations across community college campuses.

The February 2016 AACC fast facts suggested that in fall 2014 White students were for the first time outnumbered by minority students, making up 49% of students enrolled for credit. Hispanics accounted for 22%, Blacks 14%, and Asian/Pacific Islanders 6%. Also, the same fast
facts showed women made up 57% of the student population. The diversity of the student population has led to increased diversity in staff, faculty, and leadership. However, there is still progress to be made. AACC Data points (May 2016) showed that minorities comprised only a quarter of instructional staff at community colleges in 2013. Nationally, minorities made up a small percent of the faculty and community college presidents. This also held for minority female representation.

The search and selection process is connected to the topic of diversifying the community college presidency. Research on NCCCs comes at a time when many presidents have retired or will retire, and the question of how those vacancies will be filled requires an answer.

There were several president vacancies at NCCCs at the time of this study; presumably there will be more over the next decade. The question is: how are qualified candidates identified and what qualifications are most important? Diversity has been discussed for years within higher education, particularly community colleges. Despite major progress nationally with hiring community college presidents, the search and selection process demands more attention. This study examined the search and selection processes at three North Carolina Community Colleges.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter details the method used to conduct this study. It includes: (a) the research question, (b) an overview of this study’s approach, (c) a description of the data collection process, and (d) analysis of the data.

Research Methodology

Limited research has been done on the search and selection processes for community college presidents. The purpose of this study was to review the search and selection processes completed by 2016 at three North Carolina Community Colleges (NCCCs), with a specific focus on the representation of diversity statements as a component within these processes. A qualitative case study analyzing documents used during the search and selection processes at three NCCCs was completed. The three colleges are Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC), a large urban institution with six campuses, located in Charlotte, North Carolina; Asheville Buncombe Technical Community College (AB Tech), a college located in the mountainous region of North Carolina with six sites; and South Piedmont Community College (SPCC), a small college located in rural parts of North Carolina with two campuses and two centers. In addition to analyzing the processes at each school, the gender and racial composition of the boards of trustees (BOTs), search and selection committees, and final candidate domains were examined to illuminate the inclusion of Black women within the search and selection processes and final candidate domains. This study focused on NCCC hiring processes using criteria outlined in several sources including: (a) three editions of North Carolina Association of Community College Trustees manuals; (b) the Aspen Institute guidelines for search and selecting a president; (c) recommendations from the Association for Community College Trustees
(ACCT) search process; (d) the search and selection processes from the CPCC, AB Tech, and SPCC websites; and (e) search and selection processes from 7 two-year college systems. NCACCT manuals and NCCC president search and selection processes for the three colleges were gathered from the public domain. Gathered data was mostly qualitative but included some quantitative data, including search and selection committees, race and gender composition of BOTs, and final candidate figures for the three colleges.

Case Study Method

(The case study method is popular in the education field, as it contributes to the knowledge of phenomena, in this case diversity in community college president hiring (Yin, 2009). Case studies allow researchers to examine complex processes, such as search and selection processes, while maintaining holistic and essential features of organizational processes (Yin, 2009). A single case or multiple cases can be studied to answer a research question. Multiple cases such as professions, classes, or community colleges can be examined depending on what a researcher wants to investigate (Gillham, 2010). Yin (2004) described two reasons to use the case study method: (a) when research focuses on “either a descriptive question (what happened?) or an explanatory question (how or why did something happen?);” and (b) to get a comprehensive or authentic understanding of a situation and to bring attention to a specific situation (p. 2).

Yin (2004) posited that researchers can examine a holistic case on one phenomenon (the presence of diversity statements in an NCCC’s search and selection process) and data can be retrieved from subsets of the entire population (colleges within the NCCC system). Multiple, smaller cases within a case study strengthen a study’s findings when “deliberate and contrasting
comparisons” are chosen (Yin, 2004, p. 6). Stake (1995) highlighted three kinds of case study approaches: *intrinsic* is based on an interest in a particular case, *instrumental* is used to understand more than the phenomenon, and *collective* is studying multiple cases to understand phenomena. This study takes the collective approach in using multiple sites (three community colleges) to understand the search and selection processes used in a subset of 58 NCCC search and selection processes, using multiple types of evidence.

Multiple types of linked evidence are relevant, which supports the case study approach. However, there are limitations to the case study approach. Yin (2009) discussed one common concern regarding the case study approach: the lack of information used for generalization. In response to this concern, Yin (2009) posited that a case study, whether single or multiple, is not representative of a sample, as the goal is to broaden and generalize a theory. Another complaint about case studies is the causal relationship between a specific treatment and a specific effect in experiments; Yin (2009) concluded it is not possible to address matters with this approach. Rather, case studies could serve as complements to future experiments (Yin, 2009). Although weaknesses exist within the case study approach, the strengths of this method override its weaknesses.

For this study, three community colleges in the NCCC system that have all recently concluded the search and selection process for a new president were chosen after a search on all 58 colleges using *president search* in each community college’s website search field. Inclusion criteria included NCCCs that completed the hiring process for a new president by December 2016, and having detailed information on the search available.
All three college websites were thoroughly searched and examined carefully for presidential search information, including profiles outlining desired and required qualifications and characteristics, timeline, search committee, whether a consultant or search firm was used, board search liaison, and final candidate domain. CPCC, AB Tech, and SPCC were chosen because of the details each site provided on its hiring process and because of the geographical and historical context of each college. Each college is representative of one of the three major areas of North Carolina, mountains, city, and rural. Also, these colleges range from some of the oldest existing community colleges to the newest.

**Central Piedmont Community College.** Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) is one of the largest community colleges in North Carolina. With more than six campuses, CPCC is a leader in workforce development, serving close to 70,000 students around Charlotte, NC (CPCC, 2017). Opening its doors in 1963, CPCC is one of the first community colleges established in the state. CPCC offers over 300 diploma, degree, and certificate programs, in addition to corporate and continuing education courses and college and career readiness programs (CPCC, 2017). CPCC has experienced transition, with four presidents since 1963: Richard Hagemeyer (1963-1986); Ruth Shaw (1986-1992); Tony Zeiss (1992-2016) and the new president, Kandi Deitemeyer, who began her tenure in January, 2017. CPCC was selected for this study for three reasons (a) its history in the NCCC system as one of the first community colleges in North Carolina, (b) CPCC is in a metropolitan area, and (c) CPCC is one of the largest community colleges in the system.

**Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College.** AB Tech is one of 58 colleges in North Carolina, serving close to 30,000 students each year (AB Tech, 2017). AB Tech is located
in the mountainous region of Asheville, NC, with additional campuses in Madison and Buncombe counties (AB Tech, 2017). AB Tech was originally named the Asheville Industrial Education Center in 1958, and then was changed by the General Assembly to Asheville-Buncombe Technical Institute in 1964, when the North Carolina Community College System was established (AB Tech, 2017). In 1979, the BOT approved a name change to Asheville-Buncombe Technical College, and in 1987 the final name change to Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College was approved by the BOT and endorsed by the Buncombe County Commission (AB Tech, 2017). Although one of the system’s oldest community colleges, AB Tech did not start offering associates degree programs until 1988. AB Tech has had six presidents, including Tom Simpson (1958-1975); Harvey Haynes (1975-1990); K. Ray Bailey (1990-207); Betty White (2008-2009); Hank Dunn (2010-2014); and the current president, Dennis King, hired in 2014. AB Tech and CPCC were both established in the early days of the NCCC system. AB Tech is almost as large as CPCC in student population, with a long history in the NCCC system.

South Piedmont Community College. As the newest community college in the North Carolina system, SPCC, established in 1999, started out as two institutions. South Piedmont Community College (SPCC) was established in 1999 by the General Assembly (SPCC, 2017). Although new to the system, SPCC has a rich history, with roots tracing back to 1962. Originally the Ansonville Industrial Education Center, the college’s name was changed to Anson Technical Institute after the appointment of a BOT in 1967 (SPCC, 2017). With the support of funds and land, and the increase in enrollment that was experienced, the BOT changed its name to Anson Technical College (SPCC, 2017). In 1987, there was another name change, to Anson Community
College (SPCC, 2017). With CPCC voluntarily withdrawing services to Union County, Union Technical Education Consortium began serving students in 1981 (SPCC, 2017). In 1999, based upon recommendations to abolish Anson Community College and Union Technical Education Center, a bill was signed to create SPCC (SPCC, 2017). SPCC has campuses in Anson and Union counties, and serves over 7,000 students. SPCC’s historical account of documents reveals a short timeline of presidents, starting with the fourth president of Anson Community College, and first president of SPCC, Donald Alteri (1993-2003); John McKay (2003-2011); Stan Sidor (2011-2017) and the new president, Maria Pharr, who began her service in 2017.

**North Carolina community college choices.** These three colleges are relevant and representative of the history of NCCC, from the oldest colleges to the newest, serving metropolitan and rural areas. CPCC, SPCC, and AB Tech are also representative of the range of college sizes in North Carolina, from the largest to the smallest student populations. The decision to choose these three colleges was based on document analysis, and yielded variation in geography, campus size, and years established (Yin, 2004). Comparative data from these three colleges were chosen as confirmatory cases used to analyze findings (Yin, 2004).

**Document Analysis Method**

Collection and analysis of documents was the dominant focus of this study. Bowen (2009) defined document analysis as a systematic procedure to review and evaluate printed and electronic documents, which includes manuals, meeting minutes, and summaries of president profiles, the primary focus of this study. Document analysis was useful for reviewing diversity terms and statements in the documents for the search and selection processes for three NCCC presidents, as an analysis of content yielded data which could be organized into major categories.
Krippendorff (1980, p. xxii) explained that content analysis is a methodology that is more than reading and interpreting, because for a researcher it is necessary to “explicate what we are doing and describe how we drive our judgments, so that others--especially our critics--can replicate our results.” Content analysis is often used when a researcher is unable to directly observe phenomena of importance (Krippendorff, 1980). “Content is not the whole issue; rather, the issue is what can be legitimately inferred from available texts” (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 10). Content analysts use this method for three reasons:

- “The shift in interest from small collections of printed messages to systems and then to electronic texts and images circulating in the environment of content analysis is tied less to the nature of textual data than to the increasingly complex worlds that produce and are sustained by these data” (Krippendorff, 1980, p. xx). There are a plethora of media that manufacture data, and limiting oneself to a small collection could impede a researcher’s ability to gather all of the evidence needed to prove a hypothesis or answer a research question.

- In an effort to gather immense quantities of data, researchers can come together to analyze content (Krippendorff, 1980). In addition to assembling data, researchers act as teams, where responsibilities are distributed to compose research too great for one person to manage.

- “Electronically available data” requires a different research technique, with computer aided assistance (Krippendorff, 1980, p. xxi). “Such aid converts large bodies of electronic text into representations if not answers to research questions that content analysts need to understand,” (Krippendorff, 1980, p. xxi).
This study engaged Krippendorff’s first reason to use document analysis as a method to review content. Lee (2004) concluded that even novice researchers can appreciate reviewing documents for more than just content analysis. Content analysis has origins in literary theory, social science, and critical scholarship (Krippendorff, 1980). Thus, the methodology of content analysis is often identified as interpretive. Characteristics include a thorough reading of text, interpretation of texts, and an interactive-hermeneutic approach (Krippendorff, 1980). The interpretive paradigm is a practical approach when seeking an understanding or making sense of others’ understanding of phenomena (Savenye and Robinson, 2005). The researcher was able to explore the similarities and differences within the search and selection processes to hire community college presidents at three NCCCs through document analysis.

Document analysis was conducted on (a) diversity statements within manuals, (b) search and selection processes at other state community colleges and systems, and (c) reputable organizations’ recommendations on conducting a search for a community college president. An analysis of documents was completed to compare recommendations and processes against the three NCCC president search and selection processes for similarities, differences, and best practices. This study considered the relationship between all documents in terms of language and principles, examining how this could affect the selection of Black women presidents. The language that was included in each college’s documents was reviewed in an effort to determine whether and how the documents would affect attempts to diversify the presidential searches. Researchers gain much understanding when examining the synergy between documents, including other agents, be they persons or not, rather than questioning the content and meaning of documents during the initial phase of analysis (Lee, 2004).
Document analysis has several limitations, including insufficient detail or documents that lack details needed to answer a research question; restricted access to documents that could be pertinent to a study; and biased selectivity, which impacts the alignment of documents relevant to a larger context (the community college system) as well as the smaller context (three community colleges out of 58) (Bowen, 2009). Bowen (2009) concluded that the advantages of document analysis outweigh the limitations. Document analysis is an efficient method for the collection of data, due to the availability, “lack of obtrusiveness and reactivity,” coverage, exactness, and stability of documents (Bowen, 2009, p. 31). Given the nature of this study on the search and selection processes, the methods were appropriate for obtaining written evidence of statements on diversity and inclusion within these processes.

**Research Rationale**

Minority women presidents, specifically African American women presidents, are scarce in North Carolina community colleges. There is only one African American woman leading a North Carolina community college. Studies have reviewed the pipeline to the presidency, leadership styles, gender roles and gender bias in hiring, affirmative action practices in hiring, and historical perspectives on community college and/or college hiring as they relate to diversity. This study examined the search and selection processes at North Carolina community colleges with a specific focus on gender and race.

It was appropriate to view documents relevant to gender and race. When examining hiring processes, it was also appropriate to view practices at comparable community colleges in North Carolina. Documents from the colleges in the case study, documents from other state community colleges and systems, and reputable organizations’ recommendations provided a
collection of community college search and selection processes sufficient to understanding the phenomenon. Four year institutions were not considered in this study because their governance and leadership adds a component to the hiring practices that requires its own research.

A researcher should use a qualitative method when seeking to understand a phenomenon. Qualitative research has been called “an umbrella term to refer to several research strategies that share certain characteristics” (Bogden and Biklen, 1998, p. 2). Part of this research’s purpose was to recount the themes and data from text. The use of a qualitative case study approach is grounded in the social purpose of contributing to the voices of others, particularly future minority leaders who seek to move up in leadership, specifically to a community college presidency.

The underpinnings of document analysis began with Bernard Berelson, who defined this quantitative technique as a method to determine the appearance of variables such as words and themes within texts, in order to quantify them in an objective approach (Berelson, 1952). Harold D. Laswell was also important in the development of content analysis as a quantitative method. In 1937, Laswell applied this method through his work on psychoanalytical interviews (Hardy & Bryman, 2009). Through Laswell’s direction on document analysis and his argument for a quantitative approach in politics, document analysis became a popular quantitative methodology (Hardy & Bryman, 2009). Document analysis, as explained by Kassarjan (1977), “must be objective, systematic, and quantitative (p. 9). Objectivity requires “the investigator to use his judgment in making decisions about his data” (Kassarjan, 1977, p. 9). Concluding results should be similar when conducted by different researchers at different times using the same procedures and data (Kassarjan, 1977). The first definition of systemization “is meant to eliminate partial or
biased analysis in which only those elements in the content which fit the analyst's thesis are selected” (Kassarjan, 1977, p. 9). The second meaning of systemization suggests that findings must be relevant to the selected theory (Kassarjan, 1977). Lastly, quantification measures the appearance or omission of a category (Kassarjan, 1977).

Ahuvia (2001) broke down the two traditional types of document analysis, manifest and latent. Manifest content analysis looks at the distinct interpretation of text and latent content analysis views the understated interpretations of text (Ahuvia, 2001).

The manifest content of texts is sometimes analyzed in an enumerative way by listing, counting and categorizing the words within a text, while a rather old tradition that has found new life seeks to analyze cases either as individual entities or as conjunctions of logical relations (Hardy and Bryman, 2009, p. 530)

This circles back to additional opportunities for using document analysis, as explained by Berelson (1952). Berelson (1952) clarified that content analysis was a method for revealing differentials in the content of information, detecting misleading information, and determining the motives, aims, or conversational trends of variable entities including individuals and institutions.

Qualitative methods are “considered to be interpretive and descriptive studies in which students and settings are not usually manipulated by the researcher” (Savenye & Robinson, 2005, p. 67). This research used an interpretive approach, uncovering data from text. The approach used to uncover data was carried out with the addition of a document analysis worksheet. Collected data was comprised of documents related to the search and selection processes of NCCC presidents, general search and selection process recommendations for college presidents, and suggestions made by well-known organizations. A careful review of historical and current
files was conducted, which included manuals, processes, tools, and reports related to community college president search and selection or higher education leadership hiring and also suggested processes and statements on diversity and inclusion that had been written in regards to the consideration of hiring community college presidents. Documents were found through a Google Search or Northeastern University Library search using the terms *Aspen Institute, hiring guidelines, community college president hiring guidelines, community college president hiring processes, higher education leadership hiring guidelines, North Carolina Community College hiring,* and *North Carolina Association of Community College Trustees manuals.* A search for manuals or processes was completed for each U.S. state. All documents gathered were electronic.

The document analysis worksheet was used to extract the following information: (a) document type, (b) document author, (c) document date, (d) document origin, (e) what is the document about, and (f) the document’s intended audience. To make sense of documents, the following features were the focus: (a) a summary of the document, (b) purpose or intent of the document, (c) the document author’s connection to NCCC or diversity related topics, (d) what the evidence from the document implies as it relates to diversity in search and selection processes, and (e) evidence from the document.

The researcher contacted the three colleges used in this study to obtain the search committees’ gender and racial composition and to ask whether a search firm was used during the search and selection process. Through electronic communication, each college was informed of the topic and purpose of study to ensure there was no misleading information during the collection of data. Board search liaisons at each college were contacted to provide information
not found on the website. The following introduction, brief purpose of study, and request for information was emailed to each liaison:

I’m pursuing a doctorate at Northeastern University and my study involves a document review of the directions/instructions provided for the search committee and/or search firm to follow in the hiring process of a new president/CEO.

Is it possible for your college to provide the directions that are or will be given to the search firm and/or the selection committee that will be reviewed as part of finalizing the pool of candidates for the board to choose from?

When necessary, and only if this information was or would have been available to the public, additional emails were sent to the board search liaisons requesting additional information on the search committee and BOT gender and race. The information gathered from the liaisons was necessary for the collection of data.

**Data Collection**

Giorgi (1975) emphasized quality over quantity. Data collection is a staged process to ensure the assemblage of authentic language from participants and the interpretation of data. This qualitative study sought to answer this research question: What is the importance of gender and race when understanding higher education leadership recruitment at the community college level? The data collection process helped to answer this question.

The primary collection of data was through the public domain. In addition to NCACCT manuals and the three NCCC president search and selection processes, the following sources were reviewed for information: history of presidents at 58 NCCCs (tenure, race, and gender); NCACCT documents; articles on search and hiring processes at NCCCs; articles on searching
and hiring at NCCCs; recommendations from other community college systems; and reports, guidelines; and strategies on hiring college presidents from reputable national organizations.

To keep the researcher organized in reviewing the numerous documents collected, and to ensure data collected was relevant to the purpose of this study, documents gathered through online search were stored in folders on the researcher’s personal computer. Documents were placed into folders based on their relevance to the study (e.g., NCACCT, other community college system search and selection process, national organization search and selection recommendations). After all documents relevant to the study were collected, the following implementation plan was executed for analysis: (a) name each document; (b) identify themes and categories; (c) go through documents a second time to identify themes common to all gathered documents; (d) upload all notes onto a personal, password protected computer. The following staged process was completed for the analysis.

Stage 1: Review of presidential history at 58 NCCCs. NCCC presidential history is the backdrop for this study. Therefore, each college was researched to reveal the gender and race of the presidents of all 58 colleges during the last 20 years (Appendix A). While some colleges had presidential history on their school website, the majority of colleges required a thorough Google search in which the name of the last president of the college and retirement was entered in the search field. All 58 NCCCs were organized by college and decade and each row included the president’s name, dates served, gender, and race. The initial intent was to include the last 20 years of presidency for each NCCC; however, the researcher decided to include as much data as possible in order to create a graph representative of the entire history of the NCCCs. The
intention of this process was to support the premise outlined in the literature review’s history and presidential pipeline, affirming the typical presidential profile.

**Stage 2: Content analysis of search and selection process.** The second stage consisted of an analysis of the search and selection processes, including the timeline (if available). All three colleges’ hiring processes were thoroughly examined to review the specific order of events and statements used throughout the process. This is particularly important as this information was used to analyze the occurrence of key words such as *diversity*, *diverse*, *inclusive*, *inclusion*, *minority*, and *culture* when describing the mixed student, faculty, and staff populations at community college campuses. This data was used to review how each college used diversity related terms and the importance of this based on the occurrence and use of key words and statements.

Information regarding the search and selection committees was obtained from the board search liaisons for SPCC and CPCC following an email requesting the gender and race of selection committee members. AB Tech listed the names of the search committee members and their business or former occupation on their website. After viewing the names of the search committee members, the researcher searched for them on the college site and conducted an internet search for LinkedIn profiles, business pages, and news articles with their pictures, paying careful attention to match the position and/or school with the name before assigning gender and race to the individual.

The gender and racial compositions of BOT and final candidate domains was obtained from each college’s website. The final candidates’ pictures were posted for each college on the president search page and the BOT members’ pictures were collected through a Google search to
view gender and race. Search and selection committee members, BOT members, and final candidate domains were reviewed for race and gender in order to discover the diversity of people involved in the search and selection processes at each college along with the diversity among the candidates considered.

**Stage 3: Review documents.** The researcher read through documents related to the research question on search and selection processes and guidelines. The researcher looked for links to the research question and data gathered from Stages 1 and 2. Data were categorized, compared, and contrasted using the data analysis worksheet for each document. The researcher was able to review initial findings without including personal interpretations, as the focus of research was just extracting data relevant to the process. The second part of extraction was directly pulling statements that included keywords on diversity and inclusion. The researcher was able to remain objective throughout this process.

**Data Analysis**

In phenomenological research, “the researcher has to select a method for data analysis congruent with the philosophical underpinnings of the study” (Flood, 2010, p. 11). There is no traditional approach for analyzing data (Clark, 1999). However, stages in this process create an interpretative trail to follow, a story to tell. The initial stage included selecting the context of the sites explored in this research, followed by building a step by step guide of the search and selection process common throughout all the analyzed documents, plainly displaying similarities and differences. Each step concluded with the researcher’s understanding of text and themes from documents using an interpretive content analysis approach.
In addition to content analysis of data related to the research question, the researcher also employed a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis seeks to recognize patterns with data and search for emerging themes (Bowen, 2009). Predefined codes can be used (Bowen, 2009) and were presented as a search and selection timeline. Interpretations of specific words or themes from texts are not exclusive of the entire text. Content can be viewed as separate, but also whole, when developing themes. The process of data analysis included a search for connected themes associated with the research question. Kassarjan (1977) asserted that the “theme is among the most useful units of content analysis because issues, values, beliefs, and attitudes are usually discussed in this form” (p.12).

**Trustworthiness**

In a case study, the researcher is the research instrument, prone to encountering closed-mindedness and making prejudgments on topics and issues (Gillham, 2010). Prejudgments and close-mindedness can get in the way of presenting the true picture or findings of research, ultimately jeopardizing trustworthiness (Gillham, 2010). Using a case study approach is about telling a story regardless of whether the data supports prejudgments or not. Rich insight can be gained from storytelling, and presenting only the facts is important in storytelling. To ensure trustworthiness, and to present data in a fair manner, Shento (2004) recommended several methods for ensuring credibility.

Shento’s (2004) first method includes the adoption of a data analysis method previously used in comparative studies. The case study approach is often used to compare documents, including processes and guidelines. The second method involves developing familiarity with organizations participating in the study (Shento, 2004). Demands made of gatekeepers of
information should be kept to a minimum, so as not to generate suspicion. Communication regarding search and selection guidelines and gender and racial composition were requested of colleges, and responses were received within several days. This eliminated the possibility of any suspicion that may have resulted from delayed responses (Shento, 2004). The three colleges chosen presented a range of student populations and areas of North Carolina. Shento (2004) revealed that conclusions made on representative samples apply to a larger group in collective case studies. The last method used for trustworthiness was triangulation. A variety of methods such as interviews and observations can be used to support data (Shento, 2004). However, supporting data from documents can be useful in verifying details from the collective case study of three community college search and selection processes, using comparable documents from the larger viewpoint of state and national search and selection processes and recommendations (Shento, 2004).
Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter presents the results from the document analysis. The data collected were analyzed and reported under sections similar to the search and selection processes common among the three North Carolina Community Colleges (NCCC) used for this study. Conclusions and discussion on the findings are presented in the following chapter.

Introduction

This study reviewed the search and selection processes of three NCCC, Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC), Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College (AB Tech), and South Piedmont Community College (SPCC). All three college’s hiring process began with a discussion on the search and selection process and concluded with the selection of a new president. A document analysis was used to assess the inclusion and consideration of gender and race within each college’s search and selection process, in the search committees, board of trustees (BOT), and in the final candidate domains. Subsequent sections are outlined in the format used in the search and selection process for a NCCC president search. Additional information in each section of the process, includes sections on recommendations and best practices from The Aspen Institute, The Association of Governing Boards, the Association of Community College Trustees, the North Carolina Association of Community College Trustees, the American Association of University Professors, and search and selection processes of other state community college systems.
Discussion/Meeting on President Search and Selection Process

**AB tech.** The board of trustees (BOT) convened on December 16th, 2013 to discuss the selection process for a new college president. Executive Vice President/CFO of the North Carolina Community College System, Ms. Jennifer Haygood discussed what the president search process comprised of, the roles and criteria (AB Tech, 2013). Emphasis on the priority and importance of the hiring process was discussed in the board meeting (AB Tech, 2013). The State Board makes the final decision on the selection of the next president; however, the selection process is local, with Haygood serving as the colleges’ State contact during the entire process (AB Tech, 2013). The BOT sets the search and selection timeline; however, the typical process takes nine months and the decision to use a search firm or local source is made by the BOT (AB Tech, 2013). The state does not set the requirements for conducting the selection process. Therefore, the BOT makes the decision on advertising, search, reviewing applications, and composing a final candidate pool (AB Tech, 2013). The final candidate pool includes three to five candidates, from which the BOT must choose from. (AB Tech, 2013). Finalist names are sent to Haygood to initiate a State vetting process which takes close to two weeks (AB Tech, 2013). The vetting process is the same for any candidate already employed at AB Tech. After the conclusion of the vetting process, candidates are assessed by the State’s Personnel Committee (AB Tech, 2013). A report on findings is sent to the BOT Chair (AB Tech, 2013). The BOT selects the final candidate and talks over employment terms with the candidate (AB Tech, 2013). Haygood urged the BOT to think through the search process and the important qualities of a president, as “honesty and integrity” are essential qualities of a president (AB Tech, 2013). Haygood offered final thoughts on the selection of a new president:
Competence in developing a team, the ability to inspire others and develop a shared vision of where the College will go. Ms. Haywood cautioned the Board to be aware of appearance versus substance, and to dig deep on all candidates, (para. 12).

Haygoods’ concluding remarks stressed the importance of acquiring complete support from the community in choosing the next president, to help ensure success for the person to assume this role (AB Tech, 2013). Haygood added that she is available for questions throughout the entire process and will check in periodically with the BOT (AB Tech, 2013).

Don Locke, former member of the board of trustees, introduced and recommended the committee follow specific steps for the Presidential search process (Appendix B) (AB Tech, 2013). Locke was nominated and confirmed as the Chair of the Presidential Search and Selection Committee. Locke who passed away in June 2016, was known as an advocate of diversity, previously serving as director of Diversity and Multiculturalism at UNC Asheville (UNCA), until his retirement in 2007 (Ball, 2016). “Locke was passionate about breaking down barriers, especially around race and diversity,” (Ball, 2016, para 11). Others in the community, including Chair of BOT at AB Tech, Joe Brumit and current president of AB Tech, Dennis King, remember him for his commitment to engaging others in conversations of diversity (Ball, 2016). Brumit stressed the importance of campus involvement in the search, after he was asked about the inclusion of college employees’ involvement (AB Tech, 2013). Brumits’ recommendation of the search committee member’s passed, and he named Dr. Dennis King interim president (AB Tech, 2013).

Information from public forums was used to draft the position description (AB Tech, 2014).

**CPCC.** On April 21st, 2016, it was reported in the CPCC Office of Community Relations Communicator that the board of trustees would appoint members of the search committee, during the May BOT meeting (CPCC, personal communication, April 21, 2016). The search committee was composed of 14 individuals.
Table 2: Gender and Race of Search Committee for CPCC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender and Race</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHITE MALES</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITE FEMALES</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLACK MALES</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLACK FEMALES</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>HISPANIC FEMALES</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNKNOWN</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first president search committee meeting was held on June 8th, 2016, where Ralph Pitts discussed the roles during the selection process (June 8th, 2016 agenda). Donny Hunter, President and CEO of the North Carolina Association of Community College Trustees (NCACCT), discussed the search process including (1) review of the president search committee work plan to reduce the number of applicants; (2) application review process and timeline; (3) process to reduce the number of applications to 12-14 applicants for discussion at the June 21st meeting; (4) initial reference checks and DVD interviews; and (5) a system to select six finalists, to be completed during the July 19th meeting (June 8th, 2016 agenda). Donny Hunter initiated a review of the current candidates (June 8th, 2016 agenda). The last item on the agenda concluded with a schedule of future meetings by Ralph Pitts (June 8th, 2016 agenda).

**SPCC.** On April 26th, 2016, a draft of the calendar of events for the president search was discussed in the May 11th, 2016 bot meeting. The first event started on June 20th, 2016, with the
addition of optional forums, establishing a president profile, and concluding with a November 18th affirmation of the next SPCC president (May 11 BOT meeting).

During the May 31st meeting, Hunter revealed that the State Board of Community Colleges no longer required the submission of three candidates for final vetting (May 31st, Board meeting). The Board can submit one name for the recommendation of a president to the State Board of Community Colleges, if they are confident in their selection (May 31st Board Meeting). Hunter informed the Board that he may get to the know candidates quite well due to his involvement in the search process, and because of this, he will not give any advice if requested (May 31st Board Meeting). Hunter advised that while he may become acquainted with the candidates through the search process, he is unable to help determine the best candidate due to his lack of knowledge of the college and community needs (May 31st Board Meeting). When asked about involving the spouses of candidates in the selection process, Hunter did not recommend spouse involvement; however, he did suggest having dinner with final candidates (May 31st Board Meeting). Final candidate’s spouses may be invited to the dinner. It was recommended in lieu of a forum, the process should include external comments from constituents to be collected, and Hunter suggested a means to provide external input (May 31st Board meeting). Dates for the president search did allow flexibility, and it was suggested by Hunter that dates be adjusted if needed, so as not to waste time during the screening process and for other search events (May 31st Board Meeting).

On August 1st, 2016, the first President Search Committee meeting was to be held where the roles and responsibilities of the committee would be discussed (May 31st, Board Meeting).
Table 3: Gender and Race of Search Committee for SPCC

Gender and Race of Search Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender/Race</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>White Female</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Female</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic Female</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the committee’s tasks; logistics, instructions, screening procedures, and suggestions would be provided (May 31st, 2016 Board Meeting).

**North Carolina association of community college trustees.** In 1996, the board chairman of a community college bot would meet with the systems office president to discuss the search process (Dowdy, 1996). The state board of community colleges worked with the board of trustees of individual community colleges to discuss the search process (Dowdy, 1996). The bot established a search committee, and the systems president or designee met with the search committee to discuss legal and procedural matters (Dowdy, 1996).

The bot decides whether the college will conduct its own search or employ a consulting service (Dowdy, 2007). The State board of community colleges delegated full authority to community college bot to select a president (Dowdy, 2007). The state board wanted to work closely with the local boards to express views throughout the search process (Dowdy, 2007). The
bot established a search committee and the systems president or designee met with the search committee to discuss legal and procedural matters (Dowdy, 2007).

“The total accountability and responsibility in both the hiring and the performance of the president belongs solely to the local board” (NCACCT, n.d., para. 2). “Therefore, there should be no outside intervention in the process of hiring a local president unless specifically requested by the local board. This includes trying to push the local board toward hiring a particular candidate or not hiring a particular candidate” (NCACCT, n.d., para. 3).

**What other systems/schools are doing.** In the county of Cook and state of Illinois, the chancellor (serves as the Chief Administrator Officer of the District), selects members for the president search committee, to support the chancellor in the appointment of college presidents (Illinois Board of Trustees, BOT bylaws, 2011). The committee may include, but is not limited to faculty, staff, students, and community representatives (Illinois BOT bylaws, 2011). The chancellor appoints the chairperson of the search committee to oversee the process and submit the final candidate list to the bot (Illinois BOT bylaws, 2011).

The Colorado Community College system board can fill a vacant president position with current board members, unless otherwise directed to conduct a search or fill the position with another direct appointment (Colorado board for community colleges, 2005). The system president and the board of trustees will work together on deciding which option to fill a president vacancy (Colorado board for community colleges, 2005). The system president selects the members of the search committee, and in the process, will consider various factors affecting the college and the community (Colorado board for community colleges, 2005). The system
The Tennessee Board of Regents Chancellor appoints an advisory committee in the search for a new president (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2011). The chancellor consults with the board of regent’s chairman and vice-chairman to appoint three to six board of regent’s members, two faculty members (including the chairman of the faculty assemble or designee), two student body representatives (including the SGA president), one alumni representative, one support employee, one administrator, one representative from the college business community, and one community member (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2011). “The membership of the committee will have other-race representation (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2011, para. 2).

The Commissioner of the Technical College System of Georgia develops the search process for a college president (Technical College System of Georgia, 2010). The commissioner and the chair of the local College Board of directors appoints a search committee (Technical College System of Georgia, 2010). The search committee is provided an orientation on the search process by the commissioner (Technical College System of Georgia, 2010).

Community colleges associated with the Community College League of California take two to four weeks to design the president search process, four to six week to assess needs and cultivate a job description, and two to four weeks to appoint a search committee (Community College League of California CCLC, n.d.). An institutional review is completed to decide on what characteristics are needed from a president to lead a college, and the types of candidates that can be attracted based on the college’s needs, shortcomings, and opportunities (CCLC, n.d.).
A list of sample questions is provided for the board to review when completing an institutional review (CCLC, n.d.).

In selecting a search committee, the group of individuals is typically comprised of 10-14 constituents including, “faculty, administrators, classified staff, students and representatives from the community” (CCLC, n.d., p. 10). Criteria for skills and knowledge to serve on the search committee may be set by the board and includes the needs and demands of the position and district (CCLC, n.d.). The chair of the committee is either selected by the committee or appointed by the board (CCLC, n.d.). Search committees may receive training on their roles and responsibilities and may be required to sign a memo of understanding regarding their roles (CCLC, n.d.).

The Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) of the City University of New York has an affirmative action policy to ensure non-discrimination and equal opportunity for qualified candidates, “without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, marital status, partnership status, disability, genetic information, alienage, citizenship, military or veteran status, pregnancy, status as a victim of domestic violence/stalking/sex offenses, unemployment status, or any other legally prohibited basis in accordance with federal, state and city laws” (BMCC Affirmative Action Policy and Search Committee Guidelines, 2016, para. 1).

BMCC search committees must be representative of various populations and every member must understand the affirmative action policy and plan. There are five to nine members on the search committee. “The search committee should provide broad representation. Wherever
possible, women and minorities should be given opportunities to serve on search committees” (BMCC Affirmative Action Policy and Search Committee Guidelines, 2016, para. 14).

**Recommendations and best practices.** Muriel Poston from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) recommends the following in selecting search committee members:

1. Administrators should not be involved in the search committee as they represent the outgoing president and there should be more than one faculty member on the committee, because of their significant role on college campuses.

2. A trustee should serve as chair for the committee to act as a joint representative for the governing board and search committee. In cases where there are two committees, one being the board; the trustee chairs the board committee and a senior faculty member chairs the search committee.

3. Each group of constituents (faculty, staff, students, community) should select members to serve on the committee. This acknowledges respective roles of these groups.

4. The size of the committee ranges from nine to twenty but will vary based on the size of the institution. If there are two committees, the size is smaller.

5. The board formulates the charge of the committee. The board sets the criteria of the search including membership of committee, leadership qualities statement, whether the search is regional or national, and expectations when using a search consultant, recommended number of candidates for board to make a final decision, and date the board expects nominee recommendations.
When decisions are made on the search process, it is important to keep the college community abreast of the search process (Poston, 2016). Confidentiality in certain aspects of the search are important. The list of candidates should not be disclosed until the final pool of applicants have been narrowed down to a reasonable number for the board to choose from (Poston, 2016).

The Aspen Institute (2014) suggests prior to initiating the search process, the board of trustees should come to a consensus on specific goals for the college, so the search process can commence with these goals in mind. The bot and the search committee should come together to ensure they are aligning strategic hiring priorities to student success and access, confirm institutional goals, and define the qualities and characteristics they are searching for in a new president (The Aspen Institute, 2014). The Association of Governing Boards (ABG) outlined key initial steps in conducting a presidential search in higher education. “Review important aspects of the institution” (AGB, 2016, para. 2). The institution should have a strategic direction, programs, finances, personnel, and curricula (AGB, 2016). If not, the bot must work to establish and review this information, as this would serve as their knowledge base to develop and conduct a search (AGB, 2016). Assigning leadership roles is completed when the chair of the board of trustees appoints a search committee chair and selects search committee members (AGB, 2016). The board chair and committee chair work closely together to ensure a smooth process (AGB, 2016).
Decision to use a Search Firm or Consultant

**AB tech.** The search and selection process did not include the services of a search firm or consultant. The presidential search committee drafted the job description, advertised the position, and prepared a report with input from the community and campus on desirable characteristics for the next president to provide the board of trustees (AB Tech, 2014).

**CPCC.** On February 4, 2016, following the announcement of CPCC’s third president Dr. Tony Zeiss retirement plans, the CPCC Office of Community Relations Communicator reported that Ralph A. Pitts, former CPCC bot member (joined in 1998 and chairman from 2004-2014), would serve as chair for the search committee in the search for a new president (CPCC, 2016). The search was presented as, “an NCACCT Assisted Search” in a job search announcement in The Chronicle of Higher Education (CPCC President Search Job Announcement, Chronicle Vitae, 2016).

**SPCC.** On April 12th, 2016, bot Secretary John Hendley provided an update on the presidential search process. Within the report, the names of organizations and representatives of search consultants with operations in NC was presented. Organizations and names included (1) Dr. Narcissa Polonio from the Association of Community College Trustees; (ACCT) (2) Gold Hill Associates; (3) Dr. Donny Hunter from NCACCT; (4) Dr. Sid Adkins from Conway and Greenwood; (5) Dr. J Parker Chesson from JPC Associates, Inc.; (6) Charles E. Lew and Kenneth Dr. Carrick, Jr. from Coleman Lew and Associates; and (7) Jay Hartford from Hockaday-Hartford. Four of the seven search consultants provided their fees and expenses on April 7th, 2016 and this was reported in the bot April 12th meeting:
(1) ACCT- $35,000 plus expenses
(2) David Gomez and Associates- $36,369
(3) NCACCT- $21,964 plus expenses
(4) Conway and Greenwood- $60,000 plus expenses
(5) Coleman Lew and Associates- $43,000 plus expenses
(6) KBIC Higher Education Practice- $43,643 plus expenses

As reported in the April 12th board of trustees meeting, the search committee reviewed and scored the bids (BOT meeting April 12). The search update reported that Dr. Donny Hunter from NCACCT provided the lowest bid and gives a 15% discount to NCACCT members, which SPCC is a member of (BOT meeting April 12). The bid scoring process of the search consultants was assisted by the Coordinator of Purchasing and Equipment, Anthony Barbour. Barbour assisted in the scoring process where he documented actions to provide information to the State Purchasing Agency, but did not participate in the actual scoring of each search consultant (BOT meeting April 12).

The April 12th, 2016 minutes included the decision to choose Dr. Donny Hunter’s firm, to assist in the presidential search process, as SPCC was successful in the past with his services and his fees were more reasonable than the other bids (April 12th BOT). During this meeting a comment was made that transparency is needed during the search process (April, 12 BOT). May 11th, 2016 BOT executive committee meeting minutes, documented that NCACCT President and CEO Dr. Donny Hunter would conduct the search for the next SPCC president.
During the May 31, 2016 meeting, it was presented that Dr. Donny Hunter from NCACCT agreed to conduct the search for the next SPCC president (May 31 BOT meeting). The meeting also included a discussion on Hunter’s timeline of the search and selection process. Hunter advised the bot that the calendar for the search and selection process should be used and asked the bot to review the timeline, which was revised.

**What other schools are doing.** The board of the hiring colleges decides whether a search consultant will be used for the president search process. CCLC provides a list of pros and cons of hiring a consultant and the recruitment and selection process for a consultant. Because the timeline of the search and selection process has been established for California community colleges, a clear timeline needs to be established when choosing a consultant.

**Recommendations and best practices.** If a search consultant or firm is to be used, it is one of the first tasks of search committees to decide on, unless the governing board has already made the decision (Poston, 2016). The search consultant’s role should be clearly defined (Poston, 2016). Search committees or boards should interview the firms or consultants to determine if it is a match (Poston, 2016).

An issue in a magazine, targeting board members of California community colleges in the *Community College League of California* recommends using an outside consultant in the presidential search process to objectively facilitate the process (Neves-Perman and Zasueta, 1999). Neves-Perman and Zasueta (1999) believe outside consultants are useful in providing an outside opinion that could be overlooked by individuals who are too invested in the process.
Jamie Ferrare is a founding managing principal and senior vice president of AGB search. A search firm dedicated to recruiting leaders for higher education organizations. Jamie provided the steps of a presidential search process through video for the Association of Governing Boards. His process started with a pre-search study where the consultant would meet with the committee to identify key personnel on the campus who the consultant should speak to (Ferrare, n.d.). This is to learn about the college, the college needs, and the qualities, the college is seeking in the next president (Ferrare, n.d.). The consultant learns a lot about the search from the study and working with the search committee (Ferrare, n.d.). AGB (2016) advises that hiring search firms can be a major task and may be regulated by law in some states.

The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (2016) advises on the following when vetting search firms: (1) read search firms literature carefully; (2) evaluate the needs of the college and compare against the experiences of the firm; (3) review consultants experiences at other institutions; (4) conduct phone interviews with three to five consultants and request proposals; (5) discuss consultant’s experience, search model, timeline and selection process; (6) obtain all fees and estimates for search; (7) conduct in-person interviews, check references and narrow list to two to three firms.

Draft of President Profile

**AB tech.** The presidential profile included language with key diversity terms. A statement on the demonstration of leadership in *diversity*, advocating for an environment which appreciates and values *differences was included in the profile* (AB Tech, n.d.).
**CPCC.** The final copy of the president profile was drafted on April 9\textsuperscript{th}, 2016 and included key diversity terms under the desired traits and characteristics. The following statement referencing diversity terms include:

(1) “A leader who has demonstrated sensitivity to and an appreciation of *ethnic and cultural diversity* and a record of building consensus and reaching out to various and *diverse stakeholders*.”

**SPCC.** Hunter’s timeline included optional forums to be held on June 20\textsuperscript{th}, 2016. These forums were for SPCC members to make comments relevant to the search (May 31\textsuperscript{st} Board Meeting). Afterwards the bot would receive a survey to gather information significant in creating the presidential profile (May 31\textsuperscript{st} Board Meeting).

Two open forums were held with one in Union County on the Old Charlotte Highway Campus on July 20\textsuperscript{th}, 2016 and the other in Anson County in L.L. Polk Campus on July 21\textsuperscript{st}, 2016. These two forums allowed SPCC employees, alumni, donors, business partners, and community residents to participate in a discussion regarding the future president of SPCC (SPCC, 2016). The search committee attended the forms to hear the opinions of all constituents. There were no key diversity terms identified in the president profile when referencing students or campus employees.

**North Carolina association of community college trustees.** “Should the board elect to use a consultant to assist with the search, that consultant should suggest a process, guide the board through the search, recruit, conduct back-ground and reference checks, but like” other
entities, “should not push the board toward a candidate or away from a candidate beyond his/her official reports,” (NCACCT manual, n.d., para. 3)

**What other systems/schools are doing.** If the decision to conduct a search is decided by the system president, the Colorado Community College system president creates the announcement for the position and receives the applications (Colorado board for community colleges, 2005).

The Community College League of California provides questions for the board of hiring community colleges to consider, to draft an announcement and craft a profile for the president position (CCLC, n.d.). When drafting the president profile, the college’s needs, priorities, and expectations for achievement are defined to draft the description of the president sought by the bot (CCLC, n.d.).

**Recommendations and best practices.** An analysis of the institution should be completed, defining current conditions and programs the institution is experiencing (Poston, 2016). The analysis helps determine the qualities needed in the next president (Poston, 2016). This analysis also helps draft the statement of leadership criteria which will provide the required principal qualities (Poston, 2016).

A pre-search study leads to crafting a president profile (Ferrare, n.d.). It is also an advertising document to recruit the right candidates (Ferrare, n.d.). An ACCT search consultant works with the search committee of the college to gather information through forums and interviews with the bot and search committee (ACCT, n.d.). The consultant collects issues, concerns, and priorities which is used to create the candidate profile (ACCT, n.d.).
Applications

**AB tech.** No information.

**CPCC.** The announcement and draft of the president profile was posted in The Chronicle of Higher Education on April 13th, 2016 with a deadline for applicants to apply by May 31, 2016. On May 18, 2016, former president Dr. Tony Zeiss discussed the president search among other topics, and when asked to share his thoughts on the president search, he expressed the following:

We don’t need a change agent. We’re doing very well. We’ve got all our goals set. We’re working on meeting our goals. We’ve got a great board. The faculty, the staff, everybody is in sync on where we’re going. We’re also focused on whatever is new that’s going to help education be more accessible, be more successful and be more affordable for all of our students.

Zeiss went on to explain the type of president CPCC needs:

We need someone who is going to come in, preferably someone who already has a track record as a community college president, who can come in take a look at these new 10-year plans and just stay the course, move forward and take it to higher levels of achievement. Hopefully, they will full subscribe to our two litmus questions, which I’ve asked our faculty, staff, and board to consider before we change anything: ‘Is this good for our students?’ and ‘Is this good for our community?’

**SPCC.** Part of the March 31st search and selection timeline for the next president included the suggestion to start running ads on June 22nd, 2016. Application materials were to be placed on the SPCC president search website on June 21st, 2016. The ad for an SPCC president was to be run in the Community College Times, The Chronicle of Higher Education,
and the SPCC website; with recruitment lasting for three weeks (May 31st Board Meeting). Hunter did not recommend advertising in places other than these three websites (May 31st Board Meeting). Hunter suggested the assistance of staff members and the Executive Director of Marketing/Public Information Office Michael McCallister to make sure ads for the position are placed by the date (May 31st Board Meeting).

The Board retained the applications they received and were welcomed to read through the applications; however, the Board was also welcomed to have Hunter read through the applications if preferred (May 31st Board Meeting).

**What other systems/schools are doing.** The Colorado Community College system search committee reviews applications abiding by college and system procedures for a president.

The advisory committee assists the chancellor in reviewing applications (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2011). The chancellor’s office handles the advertisement of the president position, publishing in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* as well as other national associations and higher education systems (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2011). Advisory committee members and others interested in the college are encouraged to nominate individuals for the president position (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2011). “Contact will be made with potential other-race and women candidates,” (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2011, para. 4). Applications and nominations are sent to the Chancellors office and are acknowledged with a letter from the chancellor’s office (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2011). “Applicants will be requested, but not required, to identify themselves by race and gender” (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2011, para. 5). Applicants who do not meet minimum
criteria are eliminated (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2011). The advisory committee receives qualified applicants' resumes to share with other board members upon request (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2011). The advisory committee provides input on the applications in a discussion with the chancellor to help reduce the number to better qualified applicants (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2011). The chancellor screens the applicant pool in consultation with the advisory committee (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2011). The search committee screens candidates (Technical College System of Georgia, 2010).

Individual colleges in the Community College League of California decide on the criteria for advertisements and target groups for the search for president (CCLC, n.d.). Boards can decide on how long the college will advertise the position and can do so even after the process for selected candidates begins, to increase the quality of the application pool (CCLC, n.d.). “Boards may wish to affirm their commitment to equal opportunity and set parameters that require recruitment and selection practices to be quite inclusive and open. Diverse pools of applicants ensure that search committees and boards have the opportunity to identify semifinalists and finalists who represent the richness of California’s population,” (CCLC, n.d., p. 10). Advertising is not limited to publications in higher education, as the boards can recruit applicants in business and government, if they choose to (CCLC, n.d.).

BMCC in New York requires that advertising must provide an opportunity for women and “protected classes (Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Hispanic or Latino, Puerto Rican, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, and Italian American), have the opportunity to apply for positions for which they are qualified for,” (BMCC Affirmative Action Policy and Search Committee Guidelines, 2016, para. 4). “Recruiting by
contacting organizations serving minority groups, women, persons with disabilities, and veterans,” (BMCC Affirmative Action Policy and Search Committee Guidelines, 2016, para. 5).

“Prior to conducting the search, the chief diversity officer will examine relevant data from the Affirmative Action Plan including underutilization, overall representation and hiring patterns to determine the level of outreach that is appropriate,” (Affirmative Action Policy and Search Committee Guidelines, 2016, para. 10).

**Recommendations and best practices.** For AAUP, the search firm (if one is used) can find candidates for committees to review (Poston, 2016). Advertisements are ran in national journals (Poston, 2016).

The Aspen Institute (2014) suggests recruiting candidates using job language announcement

The pre-search study is useful in receiving applications that are specific to the campus needs and attributes the college is seeking in the next president (Ferrare, n.d.).

**Association of Community College Trustees.** With the assistance of the chair of the search committee, a web page is created consisting of the timeline, progress reports of the search, application procedures, and president profile. The web page serves as an area to keep the community informed of the search process (ACCT, 2016). Recruitment includes personal outreach to prominent leaders, mailings to national and regional sources, a web listing on ACCT’s home page and other areas on the internet, national advertisements (recommendation: *The Chronicle of Higher Education, Community College Week, Community College Times, the AACC Times, Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education, Diverse Issues in Higher Education,*
and Asian Week) (ACCT, 2016). ACCT (2016) also recommends posting on higheredjobs.com and insidehighered.com. ACCT (2016) relationships with American Indian Higher Education Consortium, the National Council on Black American Affairs, the National Community College Hispanic Council, the American Association of Women in Community Colleges, and the American Council on Education, Office of Equity and Office of Women in Higher Education are included in their recruitment strategies. ACCT (2016) also recruits at national meetings, including ACCT’s National Congress and the National Legislative Summit in Washington.

**Search Committee Selects Semi-Finalists for Interviews**

**AB tech.** On April 14th, 2014, Locke reported that eight semi-finalists were selected out of twenty-eight applicants within the application period, January to March (AB Tech, 2017). On May 1st, 2014, Locke reported that seven semi-finalists were selected and will be narrowed to four finalists (AB Tech, 2017).

**CPCC.** A representative from the search process detailed that the search committee signed into a portal to review 41 applicants and to rank their preferred candidates (CPCC, personal communication, November 18, 2016). Following the search committees’ choices, the pool of applicants was narrowed down to 12 applicants (CPCC, personal communication, November 18, 2016). A DVD of all 12 candidates were received and the search committee had to rank their top five (CPCC, personal communication, November 18, 2016).

**SPCC.** On August 15th, the President Search Committee met for the second time where members had to select the top 10-12 candidates (May 31st Meeting). DVD’s would be requested from the candidates and they could record the video as many times as they like (May 31st
Meeting). DVD’s were due by August 29th. Candidates answered several questions to which there was no specific answer the committee was looking for (May 31st Board Meeting). On September 1st, 2016, committee members received consolidated DVD’s of semi-finalists (May 31st Board Meeting). During the meeting, committee members received information on eliminated candidates as a result of preliminary reference checks (May 31st Board Meeting).

**What other systems/schools are doing.** The Colorado Community College system returns applications to the system president for initial interviews based on recommendations (CCCS, 2005). Following initial interviews and reference checks, the system president consults with the search committee in identifying semi-finalists to invite to second interviews and open forums with college campus constituents (CCCS, 2005).

Community college boards in California can establish their own ideal number of finalists (CCLC, n.d.). The common number of finalists are three to eight (CCLC, n.d.). “Boards also often retain the right to consider one or more semi-finalists whose names may not have been forwarded to the board, and that right should be clearly established and communicated to the search committee at the beginning of the process,” (CCLC, n.d., p. 9). Candidates are not ranked by the search committee as only comments regarding their opinions about the semi-finalists are submitted to the board for consideration (CCLC, n.d.). A system has been created for the search committee to assess candidates against the criteria from the job announcement (CCLC, n.d.). The list of candidates is narrowed down to identify semi-finalists (CCLC, n.d.).

Semi-finalists are given access to, “strategic plans, financial reports, accreditation reports, minutes of board meetings and key college committees, personnel policies and collective
bargaining contracts, student newspapers, and other appropriate information.” (CCLC, n.d., p. 14). Through these documents candidates can learn about the challenges and opportunities of the institution (CCLC, n.d.).

BMCC in New York: “Prior to “charging” the search committee, the chief diversity officer will examine the applicant pool to determine if additional outreach efforts are warranted,” (BMCC Affirmative Action Policy and Search Committee Guidelines, 2016, para. 11). The search committee provides a list of qualified applicants to the chief diversity officer to review, “and certify the applicant pool,” (BMCC Affirmative Action Policy and Search Committee Guidelines, 2016, para. 12).

**Recommendations and best practices.** For AAUP, there are three stages to screening candidates. The list is reduced to fifteen to twenty-five candidates and then reduced to eight to ten candidates and finally to several candidates the search committee will give to the board for the final selection (Poston, 2016).

From AGB: Preliminary interviews are conducted after the list shortens to candidates that the search committee conducts and they find two to three candidates that should come to the campus (Ferrare, n.d.).

“ACCT proposes that the Search Committee invite the eight to ten most highly qualified candidates for a preliminary confidential interview and, following the interviews, recommend the final candidates to the Board for their consideration,” (ACCT, 2016, para. 8). Fairness and equity is maintained as ACCT assists search committees in selecting candidates (ACCT, 2016). “ACCT proposes that the Board schedule one-day to two-day candidate visits to the College.
These visits would include formal interviews with the Board and an interaction in a social setting (optional) with the candidate and his or her spouse,” (ACCT, 2016, para. 11).

Search Committee Selects Finalists for BOT Review

AB tech. Four finalists were selected for bot review, and included Dr. Paul Koehnke, Dean of Central Campus at Central Piedmont Community College; Dr. Dennis King, Interim President at AB Tech; Dr. Thomas Wright, Vice President of Finance and Administration of Cleveland State Community College in Cleveland, Tennessee; and Dr. Teresa Smith, Vice President of Administrative Services and Chief Financial Officer of Tallahassee Community College in Tallahassee, Florida.

CPCC. The search committee held another meeting to discuss the candidates and to narrow down the pool of applicants to five (CPCC, personal communication, November 18, 2016). On August 8th, 2016, the CPCC Office of Community Relations Communicator announced that invitations have been sent to the five finalists to interview for the president position (CPCC, personal communication, August 8, 2016). In addition to the finalist’s interviews with the bot, finalists were to visit CPCC campuses to attend open forums where faculty and staff were to review the question and answer sessions each candidate participated in (CPCC, personal communication, August 8, 2016).

SPCC. On September 12th, the President Search Committee selected 4-6 finalists (May 31st Board Meeting). Hunter’s email address was provided to the committee for members to send their comments on the candidates (May 31st Board Meeting). Afterwards, Hunter assembled the comments by candidate for the Board to review (May 31st, Board Meeting).
During the November 14th Board meeting, it was reported that finalists would be announced during the week.

**North Carolina association of community college trustees.** The search committee and bot selected no less than three applicants but no more than seven as finalists (Dowdy, 1996; Dowdy, 2007). Finalist’s applications are sent to the State board (Dowdy, 1996; Dowdy, 2007). The state board reviews finalist applications to make comments about the applicants to the search committee and bot (Dowdy, 1996; Dowdy, 2007).

**What other systems/schools are doing.** Three finalists are selected by the chancellor (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2011). The advisory committee assists the chancellor in interviewing final candidates and participates in campus meetings with the candidates (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2011).

The search committee provides three unranked finalist names to the commissioner (Technical College System of Georgia, 2010).

**Recommendations and best practices.** AAUP: Interviewing may be a two-staged process where (1) off campus interviews are conducted with semi-finalists and (2) open campus visits are completed by finalists to visit with different constituents specifically students and faculty (Poston, 2016).

**Final Candidates Visit College to Participate in Open Forums**

**AB tech.**
One of four finalists, Dr. Paul Koehnke was employed at CPCC for over 17 years (Warren, 2014). “He also has worked as a corporate training manager in the banking industry and in real estate over the course of his career,” (Warren, 2014, para 5). Koehnke participated in a public campus forum on June 2nd, 2014 where he addressed approximately 70 community leaders and college personnel at UNC Asheville’s Sherrill Center (Warren, 2014). One of the thirteen questions Koehnke addressed pertained to inclusiveness, to which Koehnke responded with a diversity situation:

Inclusiveness: Give an instance or definition of diversity – where you dealt with a diversity situation.

Works with Minority Male Mentoring Program, a program for African American males. He is a past board member for Time Out Youth which supports LBGT youth. He is very in tune to that. Issue with transgender student at CPCC: A student went into women’s restroom and was confronted by security. Issue went downhill from there. Student obtained legal advice etc. The
institution is working through that, met with Time Out Youth, and got a committee together to
deal with transgender issues. He worked on getting policy changed.

(AB Tech, 2014 Campus Forum; Koehnke, 2014)

On June 3rd, 2014 Koehnke participated in a community forum where approximately 13
people including Trustees, an AB-Tech adjunct faculty member, one reporter, and one member
of the public were in attendance (AB Tech Community Forum, 2014). Following Koehnkes’
comments on his professional background, his knowledge of critical competencies for a
community college president, and what community colleges mean to various constituents; he
addressed questions posed by former UNCA Chancellor Ponder. The first question asked of him
was related to an answer he provided the previous day on diversity:

“How did you deal with an issue with a transgender student involving restrooms?”
There was an incident where a transgender student used the woman’s restroom. There happened
to be a security guard in the restroom and the security guard questioned the student. The
encounter didn’t go well. Security was called, and the student was asked to leave campus. He got
calls from community members with concerns as to how the student was treated. Dr. Koehnke
told the community members that he would look into it – that there are always two sides to every
story. End of story – the College needs to support all students of the College. He has been talking
with LGBT organizations in Charlotte to find out how to better support and serve these students.
That journey continues now and is making progress.


In response to the second question posed regarding familiarity with AB Tech and his first
order of business should he become president, resulted in a response that along with listening,
On June 11\textsuperscript{th}, 2014, the second finalist Dr. Dennis King answered questions at the campus forum after addressing the attendees with his gratitude towards the bot with their request of making him the interim president at AB Tech, his enjoyment during his time as interim and his interest in continuing in the role (AB Tech Campus Forum, 2014). The last question during the forum posed to King addressed his ability to help raise diversity at the campus among faculty and staff:

How can we raise the diversity of faculty and staff? How can we make them more comfortable? One step at a time. We have opened the campus to Building Bridges which is a diversity and inclusion program. We held the first Stand Against Racism conference on campus. The College hosts local high school grads to celebrate that they have graduated. One program after another is being instituted. For example, we had a LBGT naming issue. A female student didn’t want to use her female name in our system. The College accommodated her need by using her preferred name in public facing media (such as email, etc.). Pisgah Legal got involved to help her legally change her name. We need to ask what we can do to help individuals. We now have eleven single stall unisex restrooms make the College more invitational. (AB Tech, 2014 Campus Forum; King, 2014)

During the community forum on June 12\textsuperscript{th}, 2014 King discussed his background including his time in the service, then moving to engineering and then to becoming Dean of Students at Jensun Beach (AB Tech Campus Forum, 2014). He moved his way up to Vice
Presidency at the college and eventually to VP at AB Tech in 1992 (AB Tech Campus Forum, 2014). He ended his comments with the importance of community colleges. Again, the final question of King’s forum focused on the topic of diversity, specifically within faculty and staff to mirror the diversity of the community:

The workforce should mirror the racial diversity of the community. What are we doing as a College to ensure that our faculty and staff are diverse?

It is a goal and is in the College’s Strategic Plan. We are more diverse in the demographics of the student body than in the faculty and staff. We have more work to do in the faculty area. It’s a difficult problem, part of it is tied up in salaries, and part of it is tied up in the community. We don’t have the vibrant and diverse community in Asheville like Atlanta does. We do try and we are making progress. We are doing well with the students and fairly well with staff. Faculty diversity can be improved.

(AB Tech, 2014; King, 2014)

Dr. Thomas Wright was the third finalist who shared with the audience, his long-time career in higher education, moving from working in housing and residence life to his position as a VP in Business and Finance at Cleveland State Community College (AB Tech Campus Forum, 2014). When asked to address his role between the College and the College Foundation, his first few statements highlighted diversity:

As an employee of any college, we are all recruiters. We are all foundation, diversity, and retention officers. It has to be a passion among all of us.

(Wright, 2014)
Wright was asked a question addressing his experiences with diversity, specifically where he has experienced issues with diversity and inclusiveness:

In terms of inclusiveness, you’ve encountered diversity issues. Share something that did not go well and tell us about it.

We live as a diverse family so it is drastically important. At ASU, we had cases where white people won’t talk to black people. We’ve had cases in the residence halls where people didn’t want to live with each other, etc. Most of time it was the parent’s issue and not the students. My wife was the Director of Multicultural Affairs. We worked with the live-in staff. We implemented procedure and policy allowing partners to live and work on campus. Diversity continues to evolve. We can’t assume we have our finger on the pulse but we need to be in tune with it.

(AB Tech Campus Forum, 2014; Wright, 2014).

Final candidate Dr. Teresa Smith was not addressed with any questions related to working with diverse populations or handling diverse population issues during the June 18th, 2014 campus forum or June 19th community forum. Smith did describe her professional background in community colleges, previously serving in numerous positions at the community college level, including her start in the classroom beginning in 1987, making her way to Vice President of Administrative Services and Chief Financial Officer at Tallahassee Community College (AB Tech Campus Forum, 2014).

CPCC. On August 8th, 2016, the CPCC Office of Community Relations Communicator released the finalist’s names for president.
On August 19th, 2016, the CPCC Office of Community Relations Communicator announced that campus forums of the five finalists would be available to view live on CPCC’s central campus, Pease Auditorium, each day the candidate is presenting, via livestream through the CPCC’s digital media page (CPCC Communicator personal communication, 2016). The option to view a recorded forum for each candidate was available through CPCC digital media site as well. Following each forum, CPCC faculty and staff could share their feedback on each candidate (CPCC Communicator personal communication, 2016). The survey for candidates included the below questions, where employees ranked the candidates from 1-5 (5= outstanding) in the below areas:

1. Overall, how would you evaluate this candidate's qualifications and ability to meet, if not exceed the expectations for this position.
2. Please take a moment to rate the items below and evaluate each on the scale provided based on your participation in the candidate forum.
3. Ability to be decisive
4. Ability to encourage and develop faculty and staff
5. Ability to integrate business and academic goals/objectives
6. Commitment to diversity and inclusion
7. Commitment to student success
8. Demonstrated personal achievement
9. External leadership
10. Leadership and vision
11. Management of a complex institution
12. Passion for community colleges
13. Additional comments:

None of the forum questions included elements of diversity or inclusion. The below includes information on the candidates and fragments of their answers in support of student access, the campus, college, and community.

On August 22nd, Dr. Kandi W. Deitemeyer presented at the campus forum. Deitemeyer was the former president of College of Albemarle, located in Elizabeth City, NC for six years (CPCC, 2016). She previously held a position as a vice president of academic programs at Davidson County Community College in NC (CPCC, 2016). Deitemeyer provided some information on her professional background discussing her movement up from an Academic Advisor at a community college in Florida. Deitemeyer also revealed details of her personal background. Deitemeyer discussed the importance of listening to people on the campus, meeting with employees on her campus and remaining active in the community, but also her love for
students. Deitemeyer mentioned a couple times that she would be an advocate and a champion for the college and community.

On August, 23rd, Dr. Angeline D. Godwin presented at the campus forum, where she discussed her background and interest in the position. Godwin is the president of Patrick Henry Community College in Martinsville, VA, where she started serving in 2012 (CPCC, 2016). Godwin has a Juris Doctorate and a PhD in English (CPCC, 2016). She was formerly a president at Ashland Community and Technical College in Ashland, KY (CPCC, 2016). Godwin discussed the importance of faculty and keeping her finger on the pulse to stay in tune with faculty and students. When introducing herself, Godwin mentioned she was a first-generation community college student, as neither of her parents went beyond high school. She also discussed the importance of the construction projects happening at CPCC and ensuring that those projects would be executed effectively based on the college’s needs. She discussed the heart of student success and about the importance of reaching students beyond the classrooms. Godwin stressed listening as a necessary component to building relationships.

Dr. Walter A. Tobin, president of Orangeburg- Calhoun Technical College in Orangeburg, SC presented at the campus forum on August, 24th (CPCC, 2016). He has served the college since 2011 and was previously a vice president for academic affairs and chief academic officer at the college (CPCC, 2016). During the campus forum Tobin discussed gaining trust and mutual respect through getting to know the people at the college, to work together. He discussed having conversations with representatives of the community, the college and those who support the college. His responses were centered on building relationships with people.
Dr. Michael L. Ash, president of Southeastern Community College in Burlington, IA attended the campus forum on August 25th and discussed his background and knowledge of community colleges. Ash has been president of Southeastern Community College since 2012 and previously served as an executive assistant for resource development and external affairs for the president at State Fair Community College in Sedalia, Mo (CPCC, 2016). Ash discussed how he was moved into an Advancement position to raise money for a college he was previously employed for because of his potential. He discussed his leadership style as getting to know people, using brown bag lunches and especially talking to students and discussing their personal issues that affect them from coming to CPCC.

The last finalist to present at the campus forum was Dr. Kirk A. Nooks. He is the current president of Metropolitan Community College-Longview in Kansas City, MO, where he has served since 2013 (CPCC, 2016). Nooks was previously a campus dean and the executive liaison for diversity initiatives at Georgia Highlands College (CPCC, 2016). He discussed fulfilling the need of the community based on the history of the community college. He discussed establishing relationships and connections with people on and off campus. He expressed his ideal that people on campus are important, iterating that people come first and that he would be a steward for the college. When asked about CPCC’s unique attributes, he iterated that the next president should build upon what is currently happening at the college. He discussed how the nation will become majority-minority by 2040 and that Charlotte and CPCC have already increased and tipped the scale. He discussed the populations decline in success and that CPCC would need to look at how to get ahead of the curve to push CPCC to a higher level of student success. He mentioned the
Aspen Institute and award winners such as Valencia College, and that CPCC could be at that level.

**SPCC.** The finalists did not attend campus forums. Finalists attended meet and greets where community and college members had the opportunity to meet each candidate on scheduled days with the option of attending during the morning from 10am -11 am at one location or in the afternoon from 3pm-4pm at another location. Meet and greets were held at the Polk Campus or Old Charlotte Highway Campus.

Table 6: Gender and Race of Final Candidate Domain for SPCC

![Gender and Race of Final Candidate Domain](image)

On November 29th, 2016 Dr. Maria Pharr was the first finalist to visit an SPCC campus for a meet and greet, where employees and community members attended. Pharr who previously served as Executive Director of BioNetwork and Life Science Initiatives at the North Carolina Community College Systems Office, has held a variety of positions within the NCCCS, including faculty, staff, and administration (SPCC, 2016). Pharr has also held state-level positions. Pharr’s role at the time was positioned with the North Carolina Community College
Pharr started out working for the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services as a Field Chemist before becoming a Biology Instructor at Craven Community College (SPCC, 2016). Pharr subsequently held positions as a Department Chair, Director of Planning and Assessment, and Dean of Liberal Arts and University Transfer before moving into the position of Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs at Pitt Community College (SPCC, 2016). Pharr holds a Masters and Doctorate in Education from East Carolina University (SPCC, 2016).

Second finalist Dr. Laura Leatherwood attended a meet and greet on November 30th, 2016. Leatherwood is the Vice President of Student Services at Haywood Community College (HCC) in Clyde, NC. Leatherwood has a doctorate in higher education leadership and masters in human resource development (Haywood Community College HCC, 2016). Leatherwood has been employed with HCC since 2000 and prior to her current role was the Executive Director of Institutional Advancement, Foundation and Alumni Relations (HCC, 2016).

Dr. Robert E. Lowdermilk, III was the third finalist to attend a meet and greet on December 1st, 2016. He is the Vice President of Student Development at Rockingham Community College in Wentworth, NC. He has served at the college since 2007. From 1998-2003 he served as President of Wood College in Mathiston, Mississippi (Rockingham Community College RCC, 2014). Lowdermilk has held various executive level positions at Hazard Community College in Jackson, Kentucky including Dean of Institutional Advancement and Vice President for Administration and Assistant to the President (RCC, 2014). Lowdermilk has a Master of Divinity from Duke University and a Doctorate in Ministry from Southeastern
Baptist Theological Seminary (RCC, 2014). In 2014, Lowdermilk was one of the finalists for the president search for Rockingham Community College (RCC, 2014).

Dr. Matthew Meyer is the Associate Vice President for Educational Innovations at the North Carolina Community College Systems Office. He was the fourth finalist to attend a meet and greet on December 5th, 2016. When Meyer was a finalist for the president position, he was the Associate Vice President of STEM Innovations and Strategic Planning at the Systems Office from 2009 – 2016 (LinkedIn, n.d.). Prior to his positions at the Systems Office, Meyer held positions at Ab Tech where he was the Chairperson of Mechanical Engineering Technology. Later, Meyer assumed the role as Dean of Business and Industry Services (LinkedIn, n.d.). Meyer holds a Masters in Bioengineering and a PhD in Community College Leadership (LinkedIn, n.d.).

Final candidate, Dr. John Hauser attended the meet and greet on December 6th, 2016. Former finalist in 2015 for President of Craven Community College, Hauser is the Vice President for Industrial and Workforce Development at Wilkes Community College in Wilkesboro, N.C. He served in this role since 2011 (Wilkes-Journal Patriot, 2015). Previously, Hauser was the dean of the Advanced Industrial and Health Technologies Division. Hauser also served as an engineering instructor. Hauser finished the Future Community College Administrators Institute program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Wilkes-Journal Patriot, 2015). Hauser completed an Associate’s degree from Surry Community College in 1987 (Wilkes-Journal Patriot, 2015). Hauser also has a doctorate in educational leadership. His dissertation focused on the N.C. Community College System critical success factor and the
association with leadership styles practiced by presidents within the system (Wilkes-Journal Patriot, 2015).

What other systems/schools are doing. The Colorado community college system invites semi-finalists to campus forums and a round of interviews for the second time (Colorado board for community colleges, 2005). Following interviews and forums, the search committee submits a report of activities and a recommended list of names of at least three candidates to the system president (Colorado board for community colleges, 2005). Submission of names includes rationale of strengths and weaknesses for each candidate as it relates to the job description (Colorado board for community colleges, 2005).

Interviews are, “scheduled on campus with the advisory committee, and with students, faculty, administration, staff and interested members of the public in accordance with a schedule to be developed by the Office of the Chancellor in consultation with the candidate(s),” (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2011, para. 8). Board remembers receive resumes and schedules for all candidates (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2011). Each candidate receives, “the college catalog, faculty handbook, student handbook, five-year strategic planning document, campus map, information about the city and region, and other appropriate material,” (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2011, para 8). Following interviews and forums, the chancellor consults the advisory committee for input on strengths and weaknesses for each candidate (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2011).

A typical method in the review of semi-finalists in California community colleges includes the search committee interviewing the semi-finalists (CCLC, n.d.). California
community colleges also use other methods including presentation, scenario exercises, and interviews with key constituents at the college (CCLC, n.d.). A list of sample questions and exercises are provided for colleges to filter through for use. Regardless of the evaluation process the institutions uses, it must be the same for all candidates (CCLC, n.d.). The search committee does not use a ranking system to choose final candidates. The search committee will come to a consensus on three to eight final candidates that will be presented to the board of trustees (CCLC, n.d.).

The board of trustees meets with the consultant and search committee to hear all the details on the search process and the candidates chosen (CCLC, n.d.). The search committees rejected candidates may also be considered by the board (CCLC, n.d.). Additional activities are considered, including finalist’s presentations at the campus and “site visits to the candidate’s place of employment,” (CCLC, n.d., p. 17).

**Recommendations and best practices.** AAUP: The final nominees should visit and attend campus forums for each constituent group to interview the candidates (Poston, 2016). Campus visits allow for candidates to gain a true impression of the college and a sense of the culture of the institution (Poston, 2016). Open visits would be the final phase of the selection process where the candidate and campus community determine if it’s a fit (Poston, 2016).

AGB: The two to three candidates selected from preliminary interviews are invited to the college campus to meet the larger community and the bot (Ferrare, n.d.). A deeper background search is completed of the two to three candidates (Ferrare, n.d.).
Candidates participate in open public forums and meet with internal constituent groups,” (ACCT, 2016, para. 11).

**BOT Interviews Final Candidates**

**AB tech.** On June 2nd, 2014, the BOT interviewed Dr. Paul Koehnke. “The Board used a standard set of questions which were answered by the candidate,” (AB Tech, 2014, para 7).

On June 11th, 2014, the bot interviewed Dr. Dennis King. The Board used a standard set of questions which were answered by the candidate (AB Tech, 2014, para 5). On June 16th, 2014, the bot interviewed Dr. Thomas Wright. “The Board used a standard set of questions which were answered by the candidate,” (AB Tech, 2014, para 5). On June 18th, 2014, the bot interviewed Dr. Teresa Smith. “The Board used a standard set of questions which were answered by the candidate,” (AB Tech, 2014, para 5). Another bot member David Wyatt commented that he had concerns regarding the decision to appoint King but would be supportive of the decision (AB Tech, 2014). BOT member Mike Fryar commented that the community is providing positive feedback on King (AB Tech, 2014).

**CPCC.** The same questions are asked of each finalist (CPCC, personal communication, March 12, 2017,).

**SPCC.** From October 17th-21st and 24th, final candidates were interviewed by the Board and meeting with constituents of the college (May 31st Board Meeting).

**What other systems/schools are doing.** The chancellor and bot coordinate final interviews, and the chancellor recommends the next president to the board (Illinois BOT bylaws, 2011).
The Colorado community college system president selects final candidates from the search committee’s recommendations to interview (Colorado board for community colleges, 2005).

The commissioner conducts background checks of the three finalists and personally interviews the candidates (Technical College System of Georgia, 2010). The commissioner is welcome to involve staff from the systems office in interviews (Technical College System of Georgia, 2010). The commissioner submits the name of the selected candidate as a final selection to the State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia (Technical College System of Georgia, 2010).

Recommendations and best practices. ACCT (2016) conducts extensive background checks for colleges which includes a 12-14 page in depth summary report.

BOT Recommendation of Next President

AB tech. On June 30th, 2014, Locke motioned to elect Dennis King as AB Tech’s next president to begin August 1st 2014 (AB Tech, 2014). The bot voted on the motion with eight in favor of and three opposed to King’s appointment (AB Tech, 2014). The motion passed with majority rules.

One of the opposing bot members Richard Hurley, made a statement on his decision in opposition to the motion after reviewing his notes from the interviews and input from several community, staff and faculty forums (AB Tech, 2014). Hurley addressed King’s comments on his wanting to become the next president, where he communicated that under his leadership, new initiatives would not be proposed unless the state requires the college to initiate any (AB Tech,
Regarding Hurley’s top two candidates of choice, the summary of comments included “visionary, global thinker, cutting edge, seeks out best practices and new ideas, promotes diversity, strategic thinker, welcomes fresh approaches, and embraces community involvement,” (AB Tech, 2014 para 13).

**CPCC.** On September 16th, 2016, it was announced through the CPCC Office of Community Relations Communicator that Dr. Kandi Deitemeyer would serve as CPCC’s fourth president beginning January, 2017 (CPCC, 2016). The announcement detailed Deitemeyer’s career and educational paths, including her graduating from Polk Community College with an Associates in Arts (CPCC 6, 2016). She attended University of South Florida and graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in mass communications and public relations, a master of counselor education, and a doctorate in educational leadership (CPCC 6, 2016). Her 24 years in higher education, including her 22 years in NCCC has led Deitemeyer to this point in her career (CPCC, 2016). Retired CPCC president Dr. Tony Zeiss commented on the bot selecting Deitemeyer, adding that he has known Deitemeyer for several years and has confidence in her ability to perform well in this position as an experienced leader (CPCC, 2016). Chairman of CPCC bot, Edwin Dalrymple commented on Deitemeyer’s energy and insightfulness and the board of trustee’s confidence in Deitemeyer’s ability to build upon CPCC’s legacy of leadership, and the college’s role within the community and workforce (Burns, 2016).

**SPCC.** It was suggested that the bot recommend the next president no later than November 7th (May 31st Board Meeting). The board would submit the name to the State Board of Community Colleges along with an announcement of the recommendation (May 31st Board Meeting).
On December 11th, 2016, it was reported in The Enquirer Journal that Dr. Maria Pharr was selected at the next president of SPCC to start on January 2nd, 2017 (Steeves, 2016). The article reported on how Pharr heard about the position from other people who believed she would be a good candidate for the position, and after visiting the campus and community Pharr agreed (Steeves, 2016).

*North Carolina Association of Community College Trustees:* The selection committee and board of trustees together make the recommendation of the next president to the start board (Dowdy, 1996).

**What other systems/schools are doing.** The board of trustees make the final decision on the selection of the next president (Illinois BOT bylaws, 2011).

It is recommended that the board have a list of questions, but also not be restricted to the list and ask questions pertaining to areas of individual concern (CCLC, n.d.). A unanimous decision on the next president is best; however, individual trustees’ recommendations of candidates will be taken into consideration to discuss further (CCLC, n.d.). If there is a strong majority on the decision for a president, then the board will need to move forward (CCLC, n.d.). “If there are differences, the candidate should be informed when offered the position,” (CCLC, n.d., p. 18). The Colorado community college system president consults with the board of trustees to appoint the next president of the college (Colorado board for community colleges, 2005). The Chancellor makes the recommendation of the president to the board (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2011).
**Recommendations and best practices.** The board of trustees are the only ones that can recommend a candidate for president whereas everyone else are considered “recommenders” (Ferrare, n.d.).

**State Board Approves Next President**

**AB Tech.** On August 4th 2014 with the approval of the State Board, Dr. Dennis King was sworn in as the college’s president (AB Tech, 2014).

Table 7: Gender and Race of Board of Trustees for AB Tech

![Graph showing gender and race of board of trustees for AB Tech]

**CPCC.** While there was no information on the swearing in of Dr. Kandi Deitemeyer, on September 16th, the State Board approved the bot selection of Deitemeyer as the next president of CPCC (NC Community Colleges, 2016).
SPCC. It was recommended that the State Board of Community Colleges affirm the selection of the next SPCC president by November 18th (May 31st Board Meeting).
North Carolina association of community college trustees. In 1996, a community college board’s selection of a president was subject to the State Board of Community Colleges (Dowdy, 1996; Dowdy, 2007; NCACCT, n.d.).

Recommendations and best practices. AAUP: The final decision of the next president is chosen based on the recommendations of the committee, and their beliefs on who would be a good fit for the college (Poston, 2016).

Summary

This chapter provided a detailed review of three North Carolina Community College search and selection processes implemented between 2014 and 2016. Where each college (Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College, Central Piedmont Community College, and South Piedmont Community College) has its own unique process of searching for a president, there were many identical components in the process. There were several sections where culture, diversity and inclusion were included in dialogue. Yet there were few areas in the process where race was identified, and gender was not a factor throughout the process, except in demographics. This chapter highlighted the representation of women in the search process and final candidate domain and the scarcity of Black women in the search process and final candidate domain.
Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents conclusions on the search and selection processes at three North Carolina Community Colleges (NCCC) and provides suggestions for research based on the findings. This multiple case study examined the inclusion of gender and race, specifically Black women, in the search and selection processes at three North Carolina Community Colleges: Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College (AB Tech), Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC), and South Piedmont Community College (SPCC). All three colleges concluded their search processes at the end of 2016. The purpose of this study was to answer one research question using the document analysis method: What is the importance of gender and race when understanding higher education leadership recruitment at the community college level?

Findings

Nationally, 36% of all community college presidents are women (AACC, 2016). Within this population, Black women make up 43% community college presidents (AACC, 2016). At the time this study was conducted, there were 37 White males, 13 White females, 5 Black males and 1 Black female positioned as presidents of an NCCC (during the time this research was conducted, College of Albemarle and Martin Community College were searching for new presidents). The first White female became president of a NCCC in 1979. It took another 33 years before a minority female was hired as a NCCC president.

The advancement to the presidency within community colleges is centered on the search and selection process. Unfortunately, the advancement of Black women is a mere trickle in community colleges in North Carolina. This document analysis of three North Carolina community colleges’ president search and selection processes revealed specific components of
the search process relevant to the research question. The analysis also exposed patterns of sameness within each college as well the absence of distinct elements of the community college search process in North Carolina that were present in other community college systems/schools and suggested by reputable organizations.

**Search Committees and Final Candidate Domain**

Each college search process included a group of individuals assembled to form a search committee. It is not known if AB Tech, SPCC, or CPCC had a specific process for assembling a search committee, what questions were asked of members to ensure a cohesive group, and whether search committee members received training. As the three colleges did not disclose the representation of faculty, staff, administration, and students within the search committees, it is unknown how constituents of the college were represented. Findings revealed similarities between the racial and gender composition of the search committees and the final candidate domain, consisting of the selected final nominees for president, before the appointment of a new president.

AB Tech’s and SPCC’s search committees were majority White, and the final candidate domains were all White. CPCC assembled a diverse search committee, and the final candidate domain was diverse. Whether the search committee was diverse or not, Black women were absent from all three colleges’ final candidate domains. Neither AB Tech nor SPCC had an affirmative action or diversity plan to ensure representativeness of the population within their hiring processes. Although the committee chair for the search committee at AB Tech, Don Locke, was an advocate for diversity, the majority of the search committee were White females and there was lack of evidence of diversity within the final candidate domain.
There was no mention of a diversity or affirmative action plan within CPCC’s hiring process; there was, however, diversity in the search committee and final candidate domain. Overall, there was a lack of representativeness on each college’s search committee and final candidate domain, given the exclusion of Black women. The lack of Black women and the absence of an affirmative action or diversity plan contributed to sameness within the search committees and final candidate domains for AB Tech and SPCC.

When assembling a search committee for a president search process, the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) focuses on establishing diversity within the search committee. The inclusion of underrepresented groups within the search committee may contribute to a more diverse applicant pool (Lee, 2014).

The Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) of the City University of New York has a chief diversity officer, who is instrumental in the search and selection processes for all college positions, including the president. The chief diversity officer ensures that the affirmative action plan set by the college provides an opportunity for underrepresented groups to have the same opportunities as other groups to view, apply for, and be considered for positions at the college. NCCC should have an affirmative action plan in place when conducting president searches. A diversity officer or advocate can ensure that implementation of the affirmative action plan occurs within the search process. Lee (2014, p. 21) provided specific questions related to diversity to discuss before recruitment occurs, including:

- What recruiting activities have already located diverse candidates?
- How is diversity defined?
BCMC works to ensure representation within the applicant pool using the affirmative action plan. This helps to increase the pool’s match to the population of the college and community. In addition to representativeness, the plan strongly encourages asking key questions of search committee members and having each member go through training. Barden (2010) proposed questions committee members should answer to have an open and honest discussion as a starting point to form a cohesive group. Literature suggests a small retreat committee members attend as individuals can help them begin the search process as a team with clear objectives and goals (Turpin, 2013).

Georgia’s technical system’s search committee members receive training before serving. The Community College League of California’s (CCLC) suggestions for president searches include the possibility of search committees receiving training on responsibilities and assessing individuals on their skills and ability to serve on a president search committee. Literature suggests that training search committee members allows individuals to understand the task before them and the importance and impact of their decisions in the selection of the next president (Lee, 2014).

Search Firm/Consultant

It is unknown whether any of the three colleges conducted a pre-search study before deciding whether a search firm would be hired to assist in the search process. AB Tech did not hire a search firm and its decision to not use a search firm or consultant was not explained. Its decision to not use a search firm leaves questions about its expertise in casting a wide net when searching for diverse applicants. SPCC was forthcoming with the details on how it searched for a consultant to assist with the search for a new president and the reasons to why the college chose
Donny Hunter’s search firm, the North Carolina Association of Community College Trustees (NCACCT). Hunter’s services had proven to be successful in a prior SPCC search. An additional benefit to the college was the 15% discount. CPCC also chose Hunter’s search firm to assist in their search process for a new president. CPCC’s and SPCC’s decision to use Hunter’s search firm and AB Tech’s decision to conduct its own search did not yield a final candidate pool including individuals from various minority groups, specifically minority women. It is unknown whether the pool of candidates included any women of color prior to the selection of final candidates. However, because announcements were advertised in so few places, it seems there was a lack of concerted effort towards reaching out to a diverse pool of candidates.

“Critics have called into question why a single person has so much influence over the presidential selection process, and have also questioned if it's a level playing field” (McAdams, 2015, para. 3). Hunter’s involvement in the hiring processes of North Carolina community colleges is unusual. With his close ties to the NCCCS office, his affiliation with the North Carolina Association of Community College Trustees, and his prior experience in hiring previous and current presidents, it is not unfair to question his involvement in the process.

A 2013 article in the Raleigh News and Observer noted that Hunter's work as president of the North Carolina Association of Community College Trustees (NCACCT) could put him at an unfair advantage to recruit business for his headhunting business for college presidents. (McAdams, 2015, para. 4)

“NCACCT is comprised of the boards of trustees of community colleges in the state, but they also provide consulting services” (Baird, 2012, para. 4).
Hunter’s close ties to the North Carolina Community College Systems Office (NCCCSO) presented a unique element within the search and selection process for North Carolina community colleges. While Hunter’s firm’s services were used in the search process at Vance-Granville Community College, which resulted in the first Black woman president in North Carolina, the results of hiring another minority woman have yet to be replicated for any other NCCC. A look at best practices when selecting search firms and consultants presents options for leveling the playing field and increasing representativeness among the final candidate domains.

Ferrare from Association of Governing Boards Search (AGB Search) recommended colleges conduct a pre-search study before initiating the search process, even before hiring a search firm. A pre-search study is useful so each constituency of a search committee can view together and agree on the study, which includes qualities sought after in the next president, and institutional needs and challenges, before conducting a search. The pre-search study would specifically identify the needs of the college and assist the search committee in identifying qualified applicants. Additionally, the college would determine whether a search firm or consultant should be used to facilitate the search process.

The Community College League of California (CCLC) recommends institutions choose an outside search firm/consultant in order to have an objective opinion when facilitating the search process. While Hunter’s opinion would be considered objective compared to the members of the community college, it is unclear if Hunter’s opinion was sufficiently impartial or detached from both CPCC and SPCC or within North Carolina to facilitate a process with far-reaching results.
As suggested by the Association of the Governing Boards (AGB Search), colleges should review past experiences of search consultants. This includes looking at the firms’ success rate in recruiting quality candidates and diverse candidates from colleges outside North Carolina. Furthermore, as the consultant is extremely influential in the search process, literature discussed seeking peer institutions’ advice about specific search services, including what went well and what could have been executed differently. The decision to choose a search firm or consultant will greatly affect the application process. Literature states that while there are advantages to having outside opinions and a broad applicant pool through recruitment, there are several disadvantages to using consultants and search firms. Potential hazards when using search firms and consultants include the “consultant’s background, attitude, biases, and conflicts of interests” (Turpin, 2013, p. 34). How much do colleges know about the consultant they hire, their opinions when recruiting candidates of certain backgrounds, and their involvement in other organizations that may influence their recruiting decisions? Is there a possibility that a consultant knows any of the candidates they are recruiting?

President Profile and Applications

SPCC’s process for crafting a presidential profile came from a survey of campus and community constituencies. It is unknown how much influence constituents of SPCC and the college community had in the president profile or how well the survey represented the college and community. If there was an absence of minorities in the survey, that may explain the lack of key diversity terms and the absence of minorities and minority women in the final candidate domain. CPCC and AB Tech did not release information on how profiles for their president searches were created. AB Tech’s president profile is disconnected from the final candidate
domain, as few diversity terms were included, yet the candidates revealed a level of sameness as all candidates were White.

Although CPCC was the only college to recognize the need to hire a leader who appreciates ethnicity and culture, there was an illusion of diversity due to the gender and race of each finalist who has assumed the presidency at the college. CPCC exhibited diversity within the process; however, as findings suggest, based on Zeiss’ comments on the institution’s goal to hire a president to carry out the strategic plan set by the college, CPCC was not seeking a change agent. Literature explained the need for minorities and minority women to act as change agents. There is a possibility that there was lack of consideration of minority women as the next CPCC president as a result of the college’s strategic plan, which was set by the board of trustees and president of the college.

SPCC did not include any language related to diversity, while AB Tech included diversity and differences in its profile for a president. However, it is unclear what key diversity terms in president profiles communicate to an applicant or if the absence of key diversity terms deters potential diverse candidates from applying for a position. Nevertheless, the absence or minimal addition of key diversity terms in president profiles could lead to a dismal pool of minority female applicants. What language is advertised, along with where announcements are posted, leads to a meager response from minority women.

AB Tech did not share where the announcement for its president position was posted. CPCC announced posting the position in one place, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and SPCC announced posting the position in several areas for national views (*The Chronicle of Higher Education, Community College Times*, and the SPCC college website). Findings
discussed Hunter’s recommendation for SPCC to post the position in these three areas only. An explanation was not provided; however, the decision to post the announcement in few areas may have limited exposure and response.

CPCC and SPCC’s announcements in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* would reach more applicants than colleges who opt out of posting to this website. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* is the leading source of information, news, and jobs in higher education. With over 51,000 academic subscribers and 1.9 million site visitors a month, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* is one of the premier areas to post a job in higher education. Both CPCC and SPCC posted generic information regarding the president search, including: (a) invitations and nominations for the position, (b) required and preferred degree qualifications, (c) application procedures, (d) contact information for confidential and general inquiries, and (e) that it is a NCACCT-assisted search. CPCC provided general information about the college. Both SPCC and CPCC included a link to the college website to view the president profile and procedures, which detailed specific qualifications and instructions for applying. Applicants would have to be actively seeking positions posted in a few national higher education organizations, which may have been the case for CPCC and SPCC.

The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) recommends the investment of all community college constituents in drafting the presidential profile. Literature states stakeholders should have input into the position description. Information gathered from stakeholders should be actionable through a sequence of questions, as opposed to being drawn from an open-ended inquiry (Lee, 2014). SPCC followed a process to include constituents of the college to assist with drafting the president profile, yet unfortunately, there was no mention of
keywords (e.g., diversity or ethnicity) as were evident in AB Tech’s and CPCC’s president profiles. The absence or lack of key diversity terms in advertisements or profiles could deter diverse candidates from applying. Research indicates Black applicants prefer and are attracted to organizations that value racial diversity in recruitment information (Coffman, 2015). Recruitment materials should incorporate diversity in order to effectively display an interest in attracting and hiring minority candidates (Coffman, 2015). In addition to the language in the profile, advertising the position in a variety of organizations, publications, and websites is essential in casting a wide net to communicate the vacancy to diverse individuals.

The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) recommends seeking candidates in a way that could possibly yield diverse individuals. ACCT’s relationships with organizations including Black American Affairs and the American Association of Women in Community Colleges offers an immediate opportunity for Black women to apply through ACCT.

**Boards of Trustees**

The search and selection committees and boards of trustee composition for SPCC and AB Tech were majority White male. Even though the board of trustees and search and selection committee for CPCC were more diverse than at SPCC and AB Tech, the boards and committees were still majority White. There was a consistent gender and racial sameness within SPCC and AB Tech’s search committees, boards of trustees, and final candidate domains. There was a deficiency of minority women throughout the hiring process at both SPCC and AB Tech. CPCC included minority women in the search committee and they were present on the board of trustees; however, they were absent from the final candidate domain.
Careful attention should be paid to the gender and racial composition of the governing boards of these three colleges, as the absence or lack of minority women led to sameness. Literature suggests there may be a correlation between the gender and race of the board of trustees and the search and selection committees. The governing boards’ composition and values should exemplify diversity to closely mirror the diversity of student populations (AGB, 2016).

Studies have found a positive correlation between the number of female board members and women in top administrative positions in corporations, and between female board members and women who serve as presidents, provosts, and faculty members at colleges and universities. (Merrill & Schwartz, 2010)

The inclusion of women, better yet women of color, Black women could enhance the diverse candidate pool.

Implications for Practice

It is evident based on findings from all three colleges that diversity is a factor in the recruitment of community college presidents. An examination of gender and race as diversity elements reveals that gender is important in the recruitment and selection of a college president: women were present throughout the hiring process for all three colleges. However, this analysis revealed the absence of, or minimal inclusion of, minority women throughout the entire process, which further validates the principles of the theoretical framework, critical race feminism. Privilege and bias need to be understood based on this framework. The search committees, governing board, and history of presidents depict an absence of underrepresented populations, specifically minorities and minority women. AB Tech and SPCC formed search and selection groups with a majority commonality, resulting in the appointment of a president with the same
racial identity. CPCC assembled diverse groups within each body of constituents throughout the search process, but ultimately maintained a level of sameness in its choice of president.

Structural changes may help to increase the representation of Black women in the applicant pool. Literature discussed the lack of Black women in community college presidencies due to gate-keeping techniques, including pay gaps, gender discrimination, and the glass ceiling. Breaking the glass ceiling for Black women in community college president search and hiring processes begins and ends with the governing board. Literature said the objective of the glass ceiling was to maintain sameness within organizational structures. While two out of three colleges in this study (CPCC and SPCC) appointed a woman president, the additional hurdles identified in literature for Black women are noticeable. This leads to the conclusion that women are advancing in higher education, yet Black women are operating and attempting to advance within a system of oppression, including the additional obstacles of racism, internal recruitment, pay guidelines, and promotion and systems processes.

As governing boards ultimately make the final decision about the hiring of a community college president, structural changes in community college governing boards could be made. For example, community colleges could be grouped regionally, and the state could have one board of directors for each region instead of a board of directors for each community college. “A regional board of directors could offer diverse leadership opportunities that would mirror the population of the communities they serve, thus increasing diversified leadership” (Smith, 2011, p. 59).

**Recommendations for Future Research**

It is recommended that a wide net should be cast in order to have a more diverse pool of candidates.
No recruitment strategy or protocol would be complete without considering how an institution actively networks to identify minority candidates. This is especially important if the pool of recruits from which the institution typically draws does not normally produce minority applicants. (Lee, 2014, p. 23)

As the majority of the candidate pool for all three colleges included White males and females, it is not unreasonable to assume NCCCs have perpetuated a uniform culture in leadership. In these three college president searches, none of the final candidates were Black women. None of the candidates were women of color. It is unknown whether Black women applied to any of these three colleges or if Black women considered any of these colleges for a president position. However, findings have alluded to the possibility of recruiting qualified candidates from national organizations, including minority organizations. It is unknown whether minority women would have applied to any of these vacancies if a wider search and recruitment net was cast.

Previous research has identified the available national minority and minority women’s organizations for colleges to recruit from. Previous research has explored college leadership programs and the enrollment of minorities. Studies have also focused on barriers and opportunities for Black women to advance to leadership positions. Future research should explore the following questions:

- Are qualified minority females applying for president positions at NCCCs?
- If not, are qualified minority females deterred by any elements they have viewed at the college? If so, what?
- Does a presidential pipeline exist in the hiring of NCCC presidents?
If NCCCs are truly interested in diversifying the presidency, boards of trustees and search consultants would consider these three questions. If not, then institutions must examine their overall search and selection processes through which they recruit and evaluate candidates. Future studies are encouraged to consider these three questions, as well as identifying other factors related to recruiting minority women or Black women to serve as community college presidents.

Conclusion

It is evident in the stagnant rates of Black women’s representation in community college president positions (roughly 4 percent) that there are patterns of sameness in the hiring process. The search committees and governing boards need to be reviewed to guarantee diverse representation and perspectives. An examination of hiring practices and processes is needed as well. Reputable national organizations, such as the Aspen Institute, ACCT, AAUP, and AGB, have all provided templates for conducting successful president searches with similar key themes. Future studies are encouraged in order to determine other key factors that are missing from the search process as it relates to the stagnant hiring rates among underrepresented groups.

Summary

Yes, there are Black women in president positions and other positions of authority within community colleges. However, they “may be present, but silent; visible, but not heard; at the table, but not empowered to make meaningful decisions” (Chun & Evans, 2008, p. 32). Discrimination in the workplace is meaningful and connected to hiring decisions. Affirmative action efforts are more than adding a few people of color to the workplace. It is important to engage in meaningful discussions on how people of color, women of color, and Black women in positions of authority can add value to the institution. Community colleges need to “proactively
address institutional culture, policies, practices and workplace behaviors, to eliminate the patterns of exclusion and marginalization” (Chun & Evans, 2008, p. 32). Careful attention should be paid to diversifying candidate pools, because ultimately the student populations are becoming majority-minority. The composition of student populations should be considered when forming groups and developing processes for searching for and selecting a community college president.
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### Appendix A: History of NCCC Presidents

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Dr. Locke presented and recommended the following steps to use for the Presidential search process:

1. **Formation of a Search and Advisory Committee:**
   a) Committee will draft job description, application and advertisements in conjunction with College staff and College attorney.
   b) Committee solicits input from stakeholders, and community and College wide forums.
   c) Committee posts announcements in three national publications and utilizes free association postings.
   d) Committee reviews profile.
   e) Committee presents a final candidate profile based on input from stakeholders and forums.

2. **College Counsel and Law Firm vetting:**
   a) Drafts confidentiality agreement for Trustees and Search Committee to sign.
   b) Conducts background checks, internet searches and provides the Trustees with results.
   c) Works with Board to negotiate final contract.

3. **Full Board participation in the selection process:**
   a) Board has final approval on application and advertisements.
   b) Board develops questions and methodology in conjunction with the search committee for interview process.
   c) Board views candidates videotaped responses to set questions.
   d) Board selects four to six finalists for interviews.
   e) Board members visit the College and campus of finalists.
   f) Board submits three names to the State Board of Community Colleges.

4. **Final interview and selection process:**
   a) Full day spent with each candidate including a morning campus forum, lunch meeting, meeting with the Executive Leadership Team, an afternoon forum with the community, and a full Board interview concluding with dinner with the candidate and spouse/partner.