An Exploration of Strategic Planning Perspectives and Processes within Community Colleges Identified as Being Distinctive in Their Strategic Planning Practices

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AN EXPLORATION OF STRATEGIC PLANNING PERSPECTIVES
AND PROCESSES WITHIN COMMUNITY COLLEGES
IDENTIFIED AS BEING DISTINCTIVE IN THEIR
STRATEGIC PLANNING PRACTICES

by

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Community college leaders face unprecedented change, and some have begun reexamining their institutional strategic planning processes. Yet, studies in higher education strategic planning spend little time examining how community colleges formulate their strategic plans. This mixed-method qualitative study used an expert sampling method to identify three AQIP-accredited community colleges in one Midwestern state that were viewed as leaders in strategic planning. Using their AQIP Systems Portfolios and interviews with their senior leadership, this study examined these colleges' strategic planning perspectives (i.e., the "point of view" that an organization has chosen to use as a basis for formulating their strategic plan) and processes (i.e., the series of actions, changes, or functions to achieve a desired result). This study also examined the extent to which these institutional leaders perceived that their strategic planning process added "value" to their institution.

To examine strategic planning perspectives and processes at these institutions two different theoretical frameworks (i.e., Goodman and Willekens (2001) and Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 strategic perspectives) were used. Goodman and Willekens' research was updated to reflect the AQIP accreditation pathway, and a crosswalk was created to determine which, if any, of Mintzberg et al.'s 10 strategic perspectives were present at

these community colleges.

Key findings revealed both familiar and distinctive elements of strategic planning processes across the institutions under investigation. Instead of the three phases of strategic planning suggested in the literature, these institutions exhibited five phases, adding phases to advance their institutions from strategic planning to strategic thinking.

All participating institutions relied on Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) configuration perspective rather than the positioning perspective indicated as more common in the literature. The institutional leaders interviewed all saw value in planning strategically, and noted it allowed their organizations to align priorities, perceptions, perspectives, processes, and personnel.

Overall, this study revealed no specific recipe for strategic planning within these community colleges, but that successful strategic planning is contextual. It is a function of practices and models customized to fit a college's unique setting (i.e., organization, leaders, and members).

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"People only accept change in necessity and see necessity only in a crisis" (Monnet as cited by Mauldin & Tepper, 2011, p. 5). Patterns of change in the 21st century are unlike anything in human memory, with the rate of change this century projected to be equivalent to 20,000 years of progress. Change requires all facets of society (i.e., government, organizations, and citizens) "to redefine themselves at a faster and faster pace" (Kurzweil & Meyer, 2003, para. 1). As change has swept across countries, industries, and organizations, leaders have attempted to impose stability on the unpredictable through the use of strategic planning (Dalrymple, 2007).

Using strategic planning in a time of change has been well documented (Miles & Snow, 2003; Mintzberg, Lampel, Quinn, & Ghoshal, 2003; Morrill, 2007; Rowley & Sherman, 2001). Strategic planning has allowed leaders to make decisions about an organization's mission, budget, and competitive advantage (Martinez & Wolverton, 2009; Morrill, 2007). Researchers (e.g., Cope, 1987; Herold, 1972) have indicated that institutions with a strategic plan achieved higher performance and were more successful in obtaining external funding.

Change has also impacted our country's postsecondary educational system, shifting from a "system of institutions" to a "postsecondary knowledge system or industry" (Peterson & Dill, 1997, p. 4). Within this postsecondary knowledge industry, community colleges have undergone substantial change. These colleges are usually two-year, publically funded institutions who were "designed to meet community needs" by providing academic transfer preparation, vocational-technical, technical, continuing, and

developmental education as well as community service (Hollinshead, 1936, p. 111).

Every area, both inside and outside such community colleges, has significantly changed over the last decade (Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence, 1998). This transformation has often led to confusion about a college's mission which ". . . inevitably leads to disagreements on priorities . . . and to decision making that is shaped more by opportunities of the day than a clear vision of the organization and its future" (Higher Learning Commission, 2003, p. 3.2-3).

Changes that have impacted community colleges include technological disruptions, market forces, demographic shifts, social changes, economic cycles, political trends, accreditation requirements, and performance funding formulas (Morrill, 2007; Peterson & Dill, 1997). These external factors either position a college to exploit an organizational opportunity or confront an organizational threat.

The internal environment of many colleges has also changed. According to Hutzschenreuter and Kleindienst (2006), changing internal factors have included size, age, structure, as well as organizational culture and performance. To unite the unpredictable external environment with an ever changing internal organizational dynamic, many community college leaders have turned to strategic planning (Cope, 1987; Keller, 1983; Morrill, 2007; Rowley & Sherman, 2001).

The decision to use strategic planning to impose stability on a college's external and internal environment may not be voluntary. In order to become, or sustain institutional level accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission, all public community colleges must evaluate the entire organization to "assesses formal educational activities, governance, administration, financial stability, admissions, resources, student academic

achievement, organizational effectiveness, and relationships with outside constituencies"
(Higher Learning Commission, 2003, p. 1.1-1). The institutional accreditation process
seeks to infuse strategic thinking into organizational processes (Spangehl, 2012). One of
the foundations of institutional accreditation is to certify that community colleges operate
with "integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes
that involve the board, administration, faculty, and students" (Higher Learning
Commission, 2011, para. 1). Additionally, the college must document how structures and
processes support the fulfillment of their mission in a "manner that is consistent, ethical,
and mindful of the needs of its constituencies" (Higher Learning Commission, 2011, p.
3.1-1). Many institutions cite their strategic plan as evidence that they have fulfilled their
intended mission.

Regardless of whether strategic planning is used to meet accreditation requirements
or impose stability on the environment, every community college engages in some type
of planning, yet the concept and practice of how to plan strategically varies greatly
among community colleges (Aleong, 2001). Community colleges appeared to have
distinctive strategic planning perspectives (i.e., the "point of view" that an organization
has chosen to use as a basis for formulating their strategic plan) and processes (i.e., the
series of actions, changes, or functions to achieve a desired result). Marked differences
also exist in whether community college leaders see the strategic planning process as
beneficial to their organizations (Keller, 1983; Martinez & Wolverton, 2009; Mintzberg,
1994). Newman, Couturier, and Scurry (2004) indicated that many college leaders
believe that strategic planning is necessary to ensure that a community college fulfills its
public purpose, provides accountability, and succeeds in the highly competitive higher

education market. Whereas others (i.e., Birnbaum, 2001; Morrill, 2007), have found that many faculty and administrators believe that strategic planning is a threat to shared governance and a huge waste of time. Although Edge (2004), Jackson (2007), and Morrill (2007) have found, that the perceived value of strategic planning to institutional leaders is often a result of how strategic planning has been implemented, they believe a more closer examination is needed to determine the "value" of strategic planning in higher education (Morrill, 2007; Newman et al., 2004).

Research in the area of strategic planning perspectives has been extensive. Ever since Chandler's groundbreaking work in 1962, *Strategy and Structure: Chapters in the History of the American Industrial Enterprise*, prescriptive research in both for-profit and non-profit organizations has flourished. Strategic planning models/perspectives have been advanced by various researchers (e.g., Andrews, 1971; Ansoff, 1965; Bonn & Christodoulou, 1996; Mintzberg, 1978; Porter, 1980). Many of these models were deeply rooted in traditional, prescriptive, long-term planning perspectives that were popular in for-profit business during the 1980s. Ferile (2006), building from the work of Green (1998), indicated that "the public sector has failed to learn and has often recycled corporate planning processes which have shown to be badly flawed" (p. 287). Public enterprises, such as community colleges, have unique features which do not lend themselves well to traditional, rational type perspectives (Bryson, 2011). Despite warnings from researchers, popularized business-type strategic planning perspectives and processes have been prevalent in higher education (Martinez & Wolverton, 2009). As Mintzberg (2007) noted, "there has certainly been a steady stream of calls over the years for universities to engage in strategic management and strategic planning (e.g., Ladd,

1970; Hosmer, 1978; Lutz, 1982; Holdaway & Meekison, 1990). Yet seldom have the fundamental differences in strategy been addressed between universities and corporate organizations which is where most prescriptive practices originated (p. 284).

No matter a college's impetus for engaging in strategic planning, the overall importance of strategic planning in community colleges is well documented (Keller, 1983; Martinez & Wolverton, 2009; Morrill, 2007; Peterson & Dill, 1997). Yet, a central question faced by community college leaders is which strategic planning perspective is best suited for use in community colleges? The choice of strategic planning perspective "is arguably the most important thing a college or university does, enabling all of its core activities. . . It involves a thorough knowledge of the institution's present strengths and weaknesses and the making of choices about the future" (Hahn & Powers, 2010, p. 1).

One of the most comprehensive studies on strategic planning perspectives was completed by Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel (1998). Through a comprehensive review of literature they compiled strategic planning formulation approaches into 10 distinctive points of view (Mintzberg et al., 1998). Although the 10 perspectives framework provides a theoretical model to assess strategic planning formulation in community colleges, it is firmly rooted in for-profit strategic planning literature. Additionally, by itself it does little to explain why community college leaders choose a particular strategic planning perspective, and how the perspective influences the organization's overall strategic planning process.

Indeed, Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 perspectives theoretical framework highlights one of the problems with studying strategic planning in higher education. With the exception of Alfred (2007), Dalrymple (2007), and Martinez and Wolverton (2009),

few studies have examined how institutions of higher education have used planning

perspectives (i.e., the "point of view" that community college leaders use as a basis for

formulating their strategic plans), formulated strategic plans, or examined the benefits to

the organization. Due to the lack of research, many leaders in higher education have

relied on generalized strategic planning studies (i.e., these studies have primarily focused

on for-profit business models that may not be indicative of higher education). The

transference of strategic planning from business to higher education was addressed by the

Higher Learning Commission's (2003) Strategic Planning Criteria (1), which stated that

"a difference exists between an organization that is offering higher education and a

business that is selling a product" (p. 3.2-4).

Rather than focus on a particular facet of strategic planning, most strategic

planning studies are broad and prescriptive. They do not probe into a perspective used, its

implementation, or its success. According to Marshall (2009), paying insufficient

attention to the various scenes and stages of strategic planning creates difficulty gaining

subsequent "buy-in" from the staff whose commitment and efforts are necessary to

deliver change.

Of those studies devoted to higher education strategic planning, most found the

"positioning" perspective identified by Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel (1998), to be

the most popular (Keller, 1983; Martinez & Wolverton, 2009). The positioning

perspective is one in which strategy is analytical, and "is reduced to generic [industry]

positions selected through formalized analyses of industry situations" (Mintzberg et al.,

2003, p. 23). The positioning perspective is very different from the other perspectives

offered by Mintzberg et al. (1998), such as the learning perspective that views strategy as

emergent, or the configuration perspective that views strategy as a transformational process engendering not one distinct view, but a multitude of views depending on the needs of the organization (Mintzberg et al., 2003).

The dominance of the positioning perspective in higher education strategic planning research may be due to the perspective's historical influence on for profit organizations (Mintzberg et al., 1998). The lack of information about alternative perspectives coupled with few studies specific to higher educational has led some researchers to suggest that community college leaders may have simply "copied" traditional for-profit planning perspectives without regard to whether these perspectives "fit" a community college setting (Grahovac & Miller, 2009; Larry & Inge, 2007). Some have chastised community college planners for simply replicating popular for-profit perspectives without examining whether an alternative perspective would be better suited to the college setting (Mintzberg et al., 2003; Morrill, 2007).

As community college leaders attempt to determine which perspective is best suited for use in formulating their strategic planning, they find that existing studies on strategic planning processes are broad-based in nature and spend little time analyzing each of the distinct phases of the strategic planning process (Ron & Peter, 2006). There are numerous studies which address various facets of strategic planning (e.g., Bonn & Christodoulou, 1996; Chandler, 1962); but the literature has not specifically addressed the formulation process which is where all strategic planning originates.

Overall, little is known about how, or why, community college leaders choose a particular strategic planning perspective to formulate their strategic plan. Higher education strategic planning processes are viewed through an accreditation lens that fails

to address how, or why, an institution does what it does. Lastly, there is very little information as to whether college leaders see value in strategic planning. Therefore, my study seeks to identify "distinctive" community colleges with respect to strategic planning processes and perspectives. For the purpose of my study, distinctive community colleges are those colleges who were identified as leaders in strategic planning, are AQIP (Academic Quality Improvement Program) institutionally accredited, and who are located in Michigan. After an expert identified five such distinctive community colleges, I probed into the perspectives that they used and the processes they employed to develop their strategic plans. I also examined the extent to which these distinctive institutional leaders perceived that their strategic planning process added "value" to their institution.

Problem Statement

Historically, planning in community colleges was more akin to time based, incremental, long-range planning (Peterson, 1997). Long range planning relied heavily on financial projections that did little to prepare the organization for the future, unless the future would be the same as the past (Taleb, 2007). Accreditation cycles or the calendar year often drove strategic planning efforts (Higher Learning Commission, 2003). However, as continual changes confronted higher education, these long-range planners spent most of their time reacting to problems and crises, rather than proactively planning for the future (Lenington, 1996; Morrill, 2007; Peterson, 1997).

To alleviate the "management by crisis" paradigm, many community college leaders used strategic planning to situate their institutions to confront and manage change (Cope, 1987). Through strategic planning and the subsequent development of a competitive advantage (i.e., a vision-driven, strategic framework that allows the college

to compete for resources in the present and the future), colleges were able to interpret their present situation, and strive to fulfill a vision of what they hoped to become (Cope, 1987).

Although strategic planning is widely used by community college leaders, literature has not adequately addressed why leaders chose a particular strategic planning perspective on which to base their strategic planning efforts, how these perspectives influence strategic planning processes, or the extent to which strategic planning benefits an organization. Little is known about how distinctive community colleges have leveraged their strategic planning process to not only meet accreditation requirements, but to add "value" to their institution. With the vast changes that have affected community colleges, examining strategic planning in community colleges is essential. According to Kerr and Darroch (2004):

> The old idea of planning . . . has been largely discredited. The new form of strategic planning is still in its infancy, still struggling to walk steadily and speak clearly. According to management professor Carl Adams, planning is at a crossroads. The theory is in a state of disorder and the practice is rediscovering old insights, refining present constructs, and trying out new twists. (p. 100)

Despite the important role strategic planning has played in community colleges, little research has aided community college leaders' understanding of how such strategic plans were formulated (Birnbaum, 2001). By using a knowledgeable external individual to identify community college leaders that are utilizing a distinctive approach to strategic planning processes (i.e., distinctive community colleges), and investigating these colleges' strategic planning documents and their leaders' planning perspectives, it may be

possible to provide insight into a college's choice of perspective. It may also be possible to determine whether such community colleges have simply "copied" the popular positioning perspective or have employed one of the other perspectives identified by Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel (1998). By probing more deeply into strategic planning perspectives and processes, I could add new information to the literature.

Research Questions

My study explored both the strategic planning perspectives and processes of distinctive community colleges. More specifically, this study examined:

1. Within community colleges, identified as distinct with reference to their strategic planning formulation, what strategic planning processes and perspectives were being utilized?

2. To what extent do the strategic planning processes of such community colleges align with Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 strategic perspectives?

3. To what extent do leaders in such community colleges perceive that their strategic planning perspective and planning process added "value" to their institution?

Methodological Summary

My study used two strands of qualitative research methods (i.e., an archival review and semi-structured interviews). From the 14 Michigan community colleges that were AQIP accredited I used an expert sampling method to select five distinctive community colleges. Once these community colleges were identified I asked each College's president, and chief academic officer (i.e., CAO) and director of institutional planning (i.e., DIR) to participate in the study.

The first strand of my study relied on Goodman and Willekens' (2001) assertion that an institution's accreditation documentation (i.e., AQIP Systems portfolios) could provide insight into a community college's strategic planning processes. Although Goodman and Willekens (2001) referenced North Central Accreditation (NCA) criteria, their findings could be applied to an institutions' Higher Learning Commission AQIP Systems portfolio (see Appendix A). These documents are available on each community college's web site in accordance with Section 209 of Public Act 201 of 2012 (a requirement that important documents must be posted on a public web site to ensure transparency of community college affairs).

After each institution's Systems portfolio was analyzed according to the Goodman and Willekens' Institutional Accreditation/Strategic planning process matrix, a second theoretical lens (i.e., Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 strategic perspectives) was used to explore which, if any, of Mintzberg et al.'s 10 perspectives were depicted in the institution's Systems portfolio. By broadening Mintzberg et al. 10 perspectives framework into overarching themes, a crosswalk, or lens could be constructed that helped determine if, and to what extent, an institution's leaders appeared to rely on any of Mintzberg et al.'s 10 perspectives (see Appendix B). Following exploration of each institution's Systems portfolio, I probed on any strategic planning perspectives uncovered during the archival review during the second phase of my study (i.e., semi-structured interviews).

The second strand of my study used one-to-one semi-structured interviews with no less than three leaders (i.e., president, academic vice president, and institutional planning director) from each community college to probe more deeply into any strategic planning

perspectives and processes that emerge during the initial phase of my study.

Following the archival review and interviews, I analyzed all data to determine what these distinctive community colleges were doing with respect to strategic planning. Additionally, I examined data to determine if strategic planning perspectives utilized in these community colleges aligned with any of Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 strategic planning perspectives. Lastly, I assessed the data to determine the extent to which these community college leaders' perceived that their strategic planning process added "value" to their institution.

Conceptual Frame

As indicated by Figure 1, the conceptual frame for my study began with the 10 perspectives compilation by Mintzberg et al. (1998). These researchers conducted a review of strategic planning literature spanning more than 50 years. They categorized the major aspects of the strategy-formation process into 10 strategic planning perspectives, each with a unique assessment on strategic planning (Mintzberg et al., 1998). The goal of their research was to ". . . determine whether the 10 perspectives were fundamentally different processes of strategy formulation, or different parts of the same process" (Mintzberg et al., 2003, p. 22).
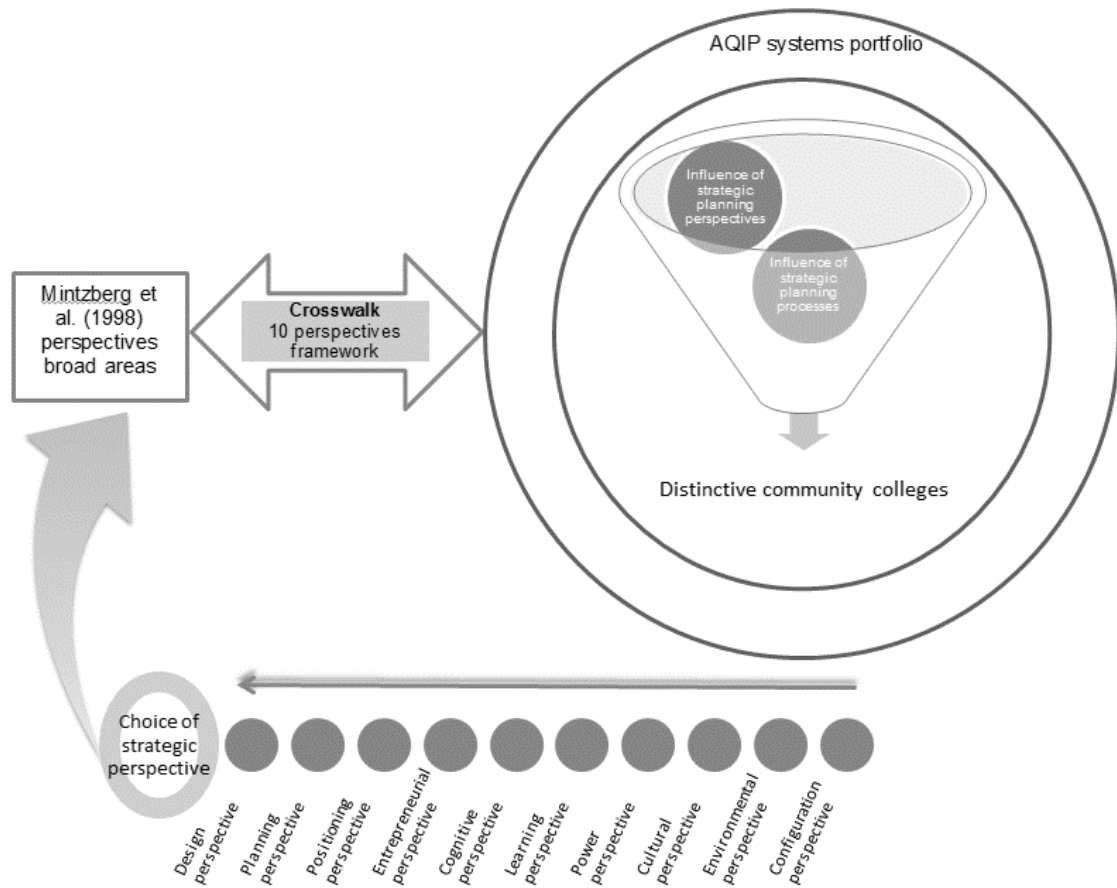
Figure 1. Concept map underlying research design.

Mintzberg et al. (1998) divided the 10 perspectives into three that were prescriptive (i.e.,

focused on how strategies should be formulated), and six that were descriptive (i.e.,

focused on how strategies form), and one that was both prescriptive and descriptive. The

three prescriptive perspectives (i.e., design, planning, and positioning), viewed corporate

strategy as an exercise in ". . . deductive reasoning for the general administration of the

firm based on Fayol's forecasting, planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and

controlling" (Calori, 1998, p. 285). These three perspectives prescribed an ideal, rational,

strategic process that organizational leaders could use to formulate strategy. The design,

planning, and positioning perspectives concentrated on the organization, and the

organization's relationship with the environment.

The six descriptive perspectives (i.e., entrepreneurial, cognitive, learning, power, cultural, and environmental), considered strategy as ". . .specific aspects of the processes of strategy formation . . .and how strategies actually do, in fact, get made" (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 6). Each of these perspectives took a slightly different approach to exploring the relationships that existed between, and within, the organization and individuals.

The last perspective, configuration, was a culmination of all of the prior perspectives. This perspective utilized many of the provisions of earlier perspectives and categorized them into distinct phases that could be used to describe the life cycle of an organization (Miller, 1986; Mintzberg et al., 1998).

Although the 10 perspectives framework was based on strategic planning in for-profit organizations, it has been applied to higher education (Mintzberg, 2007). However, the institutions that researchers studied were predominantly universities based outside the United States.

My study utilized the 10 perspectives framework as a lens to examine distinctive community college leaders' strategic perspectives. Although strategic planning in community colleges was different than that of for-profit organizations, researchers have indicated that the 10 perspectives framework could be used to delve into community college leaders' strategic planning perspectives (Alfred, 2007; Martinez & Wolverton, 2009; Mintzberg, 2007; Rowley & Sherman, 2001). Because the first phase of my study used an institution's Systems portfolio to explore both strategic planning perspectives and processes, I broadened Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 perspectives framework into perspective categories that corresponded with accreditation materials (see Appendix B).

Mintzberg (2007) stated, that there is a benefit to studying strategic planning in community colleges, "not the least [of which] is a way to open up perspectives in the field of strategic management" (p. 309).

In addition to exploring which, if any, of Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 perspectives were used by leaders of distinctive community colleges, my study probed more deeply into those internal and external factors that influenced strategic planning perspectives and processes. One of the major factors that influenced higher education strategic planning was institutional accreditation.

Researchers (i.e., Keller, 1983; Rowley et al., 1998) indicate that one of the primary reasons community colleges engage in strategic planning is to meet accreditation requirements. Moreover, the institution's strategic plan may be cited as part of the "body of evidence" that is needed to meet accreditation requirements (Higher Learning Commission, 2003, p. 6.2-1). Because accreditation and strategic planning are both concerned with "systems and processes" (Commission, 2003, p. 6.2-1), they appear closely related (Goodman & Willekens, 2001). According to the Higher Learning Higher Learning Commission (2003) the goal of the AQIP accreditation process is as follows:

> The AQIP process is to ensure that every organization be lucid and direct about what it is trying to accomplish, and clear about identifying those for whom it is expending its energies and capital . . . every organization needs a system that can precisely decipher the shifting needs of its target students and stakeholders. (Higher Learning Commission, 2003, p. 6.2-1)

When compared to the definition of strategic planning by Hax & Majluf (1986), the relationship between strategic planning and accreditation is more well-defined. Hax and

Majluf stated that:

> Strategy is a coherent, unifying, and integrative pattern of decisions; a method of
> establishing an organizational purpose and is used as a coherent unifying, integrated
> blueprint that determines and reveals the organizational purpose . . . . it [strategic
> planning] defines the nature of the economic and non-economic contributions it
> intends to make to its stakeholders. (p. 6)

Given the similarity between accreditation goals and strategic planning, how an institution responds to the nine AQIP criteria (i.e., helping students learn, accomplishing other distinctive objectives, understanding students' and other stakeholders' needs, valuing people, leading and communicating, supporting institutional operations, measuring effectiveness, planning continuous improvement, and building collaborative relationships) provided information about a college's strategic planning process (Goodman & Willekens, 2001). As an institution responds to AQIP's criteria including questions about processes, results, and improvements, they are describing their strategic planning process. According to the Higher Learning Commission, the nine AQIP categories, when viewed together, "are comprehensive, covering all of the key processes and goals found in any higher education organization" (Higher Learning Commission, 2003, p. 6.2-2). Therefore, an institution's Systems portfolio may be a rendition of the college's strategic planning process.

Likewise, a college's responses to AQIP's criteria questions may provide insight into the institution's strategic planning perspective. By aligning the AQIP Criteria process, results and improvements questions with the 10 perspectives framework by Mintzberg et al. (1998), it may be possible to determine which, if any, of the 10

perspectives the institution's leadership may have used to formulate their strategic plan. This preliminary information could provide a line of inquiry and points for clarification during the second phase of my study.

Although archival data has long been used to examine strategic planning perspectives and processes, it is only a starting point (Mintzberg, 2007). Because my study examined tangible processes which were based on intangible perspectives, "the use of multiple worldviews, or paradigms (i.e., beliefs and values), rather than the typical association of certain paradigms" was necessary (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011, p. 13).

To explore why distinctive community colleges "do what they do," and whether they perceive a benefit to strategic planning, a phenomenological line of inquiry was included in my study. The phenomenological line of inquiry asked community college leaders to explain their strategic planning processes, if they utilized a particular strategic planning perspective, and to what extent these perspectives influenced their strategic planning formulation processes. Lastly, community college leaders were asked to discuss the perceived "value" of their strategic planning perspectives and processes. Through this phenomenological approach I sought to ". . . identify the 'essence' of human experiences concerning a phenomenon [strategic planning formulation], as described by participants in my study" (Atkinson, 2002, p. 15).

Significance of the Study

My study seeks to advance the literature in higher educational leadership, by enriching the research on strategic planning in higher education and provide insight into the processes and perspectives used by distinctive community colleges. My study provided a relevant resource for community colleges planners as they engaged or

evaluated their own strategic planning processes. Specifically, my investigation sparked awareness of alternative strategic planning perspectives and processes among community college leaders. My study sought to elicit reflection among community college leaders as to whether their chosen strategic planning perspectives and processes were the most effective for their environment and their organization. My study directly responded to Goodstein's (1993) challenge that "although all organizations have strategy, the strategy is often implicit and has not been thoughtfully examined" (p. 325).

My study supplements current literature in higher educational strategic planning. Although somewhat dated, the field of management science related to strategic planning is rich in both theory and research. However, existing theory and research has been broad-based in nature and has spent little time analyzing the selection of strategic planning perspectives and subsequent processes (Ron & Peter, 2006). The frame of reference for most strategic planning research has been for-profit businesses models (Peterson, 1997). Research on strategic planning in community colleges is in its infancy, with a vast amount of information that researchers have yet to discover. Therefore, my study advances the strategic planning literature by determining what perspectives and processes distinctive community colleges are using, and to what extent these perspectives and processes have added "value" to their institution.

Limitations and Delimitations

My study attempts to provide a better understanding of strategic planning formulation in distinctive community colleges. However, my study was delimited due to its geographic boundaries and its sample selection. It was not my intent to infer that the results were generalizable beyond the participants in my study. While I expect that my

research would be helpful to planners, it was exploratory in nature and yields areas for further study.

My study was limited by the case study method that was designed to capture ideologies and perceptions at a particular point in time (Yin, 2012). Consequently, the reliability of my study was limited because attitudes and ideologies change over time.

Lastly, my study was limited by various extraneous variables including, but not limited to, the honesty of the respondents' interviewees, the validity and reliability of the participants, the naturalistic setting in which data was gathered, the level of bias on the part of the researcher, and the level of communication between the interviewer and interviewee (Creswell, 2003).

Chapter I Closing

My study sought to identify distinctive community colleges with respect to strategic planning, and probe into the perspectives that they use, and the processes they employ, to formulate strategic plans. My intent was also to examine the extent to which these institutions perceive that their strategic planning processes have added "value" to their institution.

Strategic planning is an important stabilization tool to confront the ever-changing higher educational landscape. The study of strategic planning formulation is particularly important not only to the future of higher education but also to the future of America. "Management's concern and management's responsibility are everything that affects the performance of the institution and it's results - whether inside or outside, whether under the institutions control or totally beyond it" (Drucker, 2004, p. 94).

The remainder of my dissertation will include a review of the related literature

(Chapter II), a discussion regarding the methodology used (Chapter III), the research findings (Chapter IV), and conclusions, observations, and a discussion of future research opportunities (Chapter V).

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

"The field of strategic management has grown quickly since its formal inception in the late 1970s and is now quite broad and diverse" (Ketchen, Boyd, & Bergh, 2008, p. 644). The published work varies ". . .from abstract analytical to popularly prescriptive books" (Foo, 2007, p. 155). According to Rumelt, Schendel, and Teece (1994), "the complexity of the subject matter of strategy, the historical pathway of eclecticism, of theory and method, and the field's roots in multiple disciplines and in practice, have all created a rich body of theory and practice" (Pettigrew, Thomas, & Whittington, 2001, p. 11). The field of strategic planning is a relatively young discipline in comparison to the hard sciences (Pettigrew et al., 2001; Pfeffer, 1993). Even within management science, strategic planning is a relatively new phenomenon.

Although relatively new, there is a vast amount of literature written on strategic planning. According to Simpson (1998), the literary work on strategic planning could fill every room in Buckingham Palace. Therefore, my review of literature focused on three specific areas of strategic planning. These areas included (a) establishing a definition of strategic planning as it pertains to my study, (b) chronicling the history of strategic planning research, and (c) identifying those factors that influence community college strategic planning processes and perspectives. The third area, factors that influence community college strategic planning processes and perspectives, was focused into four sections according to process phenomenon (i.e., elements of strategic planning, systems of institutional accreditation, and forces effecting strategic planning), and perspective phenomenon (i.e., Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's 10 perspectives framework).

Introduction

The first section of this chapter establishes, for the purposes of my study, a definition of strategic planning. This is important because there is no one accepted definition of strategic planning (Oliver, 2001). Several studies (e.g., Alfred, 2007; Calori, 1998; Ocasio & Joseph, 2008) indicated that developing a consistent definition of strategic planning is important because organizations may be engaged in sub classifications of strategic planning including operational planning (i.e., day-to-day planning done by low-level managers), tactical planning (i.e., longer range planning that breaks down the strategic plan into divisional plans), and departmental level planning (i.e., longer range planning specific to departments within the institution) without labeling these activities as such. According to Aleong (2001), "conventional planning tends to be [an] inside out [mind-set] while strategic planning is an outside-in mind set" (p. 9). Therefore, establishing a clear definition of strategic planning is important to my study because it allows me to determine if the processes and perspectives under investigation are strategic in nature and not some other type of planning (Oliver, 2001).

The second section of this chapter presents a chronological outline of strategic planning research, discusses the two factions of strategic planning research, and considers the current state of research. An in-depth review of the history of strategic planning is important to my study because "in order to comprehend why things are as they are today, we have to look at their origin" (The History Project, 2012, para. 1). This history provides a basis for the methodology used in my study. Additionally, this history is important because certain processes and perspectives have become standardized practices among institutional leaders. By understanding where these processes and perspectives

originated from, community college leaders may question or consider whether these de

rigeur steps (i.e., SWOT, environmental scanning, etc.) are undertaken because they

actually enhance the value of strategic planning formulation, or because they have a

preeminent place in strategic planning research (Morrill, 2010). According to Morrill

(2010), strategic planning in higher education has become "stale and perfunctory, or

ridged and cumbersome" (p. 58). He, and others (e.g., Dalrymple, 2007; Ferile, 2006;

Mintzberg, 2007) believe that the vast changes in higher education have prompted the

need to take ". . . a fresh look at the possibilities for using the process of strategy in

higher education" (Morrill, 2010, p. 58).

The remaining sections of Chapter II are divided according to the principle

themes under investigation namely, strategic planning processes and strategic planning

perspectives. The essence of strategic planning formulation resides equally in strategic

planning processes and perspectives. To examine strategic planning processes without

examining the underlying perspectives that leaders' rely upon to select those processes, is

to only tell half of the story of strategic planning formulation.

Based on literature reviews, the third section of this chapter identifies the

processes that are common to many community college strategic planning practices. This

is important to my study because the subjects under investigation are distinctive

community colleges who may or may not be using typical strategic planning processes.

The fourth section of this chapter describes those elements that influence strategic

planning processes in community colleges. One of the primary forces affecting strategic

planning in higher education is institutional accreditation. Because institutional

accreditation is such a significant driver of strategic planning, a specific section, later in

this chapter, discusses this phenomenon. Understanding the factors that influence community college strategic planning is important because much of strategic planning formulation is a product of a community college's internal and external environments (Kalina, 2006; Morrison, 1992; Pitkethly, 2006; Smith-Ring, 2000; Tan). It is important to be able to recognize those factors that influence the community college leader's perspectives and subsequently, their strategic planning processes.

The fifth section discusses the impact of institutional accreditation on strategic planning. This section presents a brief history of accreditation and an overview of the various "pathways" to institutional accreditation as endorsed by the Higher Learning Commission. Because my study focuses solely on AQIP accredited institutions, this section describes the similarities between institutional strategic planning and institutional accreditation (i.e., AQIP). Additionally, this section examines research that suggests there is a direct link between AQIP institutional accreditation and strategic planning (Goodman & Willekens, 2001).

The sixth section of this chapter focuses more on the perspectives of strategic planning (i.e., the "Point of view" that community college leaders use as a basis for formulating their strategic plans). This section presents Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's 10 strategic perspectives as it provided one of the theoretical frameworks for my study. Understanding the 10 perspectives is important to my study because there is "no one single school of strategic thought. There are countless ways to set direction, implement goals and analyze results" (Aleong, 2001, p. 17). This section includes an overview of these perspectives, the premises of each perspective, as well as the critiques and contributions of the 10 perspectives.

A Definition of Strategic Planning

Establishing a definition of strategic planning as it pertains to my study is important because the term, "strategic planning" has many definitions in the literature. Nag, Hambrick, and Chen (2007) stated that the very definition of strategic planning is "ambiguous and highly contestable" (p. 936). Researchers (e.g., Cope, 1987; Jackson, 2007; Keller, 1983; Lenington, 1996; Morrill, 2007; Watson, 2000) agreed that defining strategic planning is difficult.

According to Mintzberg (1994) and later, Ocasio and Joseph (2008), organizations have often misused the term "strategy." Indeed,

> they do anything and modify it with the term 'strategic' but there is an important
> distinction: "strategic issues are those that deal with the organization's
> relationship to the environment and affect most of the organization. Thus, all
> strategic issues are important but not all important issues are strategic" (Norris &
> Poulton, 1984, p. 14). Hax and Majluf (1986) overcame the difficulty of defining
> strategy by separating the concept of strategy from the process of strategy
> formation. . . .The process of strategy formation is contingent on a firm's
> particular situation and can be described in terms of the wide variety of forms it
> takes in different organizations, it depends on the firm's strategic objectives, its
> management style, its organizational culture, and its administrative structure. (p.
> 99)

In their quest to define strategy, Haz and Majluf (1986) categorized peer reviewed strategic planning articles into six themes. These themes captured how leading strategic planning scholars were defining strategy. Their findings not only provided a "normative

model that had validity for all firms" it also clearly differentiated the "concept of strategy" from the "process of strategy" (p. 99).

By delineating "strategy as a concept" from "strategy as a process," Hax and Majluf (1986) not only placated the two factions of strategic planning research (i.e., strategy- as-practice and strategy-as-theory), they also provided a rich ground for comparative studies (i.e., Mintzberg et al., 1998). My study relied on the Hax and Majulf categories to define strategy. This definition was then used to analyze strategic planning processes and perspectives.

According to the categorical themes established by Hax and Majulf (1986), strategic planning:

- establishes the organizational purpose;

- defines the competitive domain;

- provides a coherent, unifying, and integrated blueprint for the organization;

- offers the organization a response to external opportunities and threats, as well as, internal strengths and weaknesses;

- furnishes the organization with a central vehicle for achieving a competitive advantage; and

- provides a motivating force for stakeholders (Hax & Majluf, 1986).

Definitional Theme 1: Establishing the Organizational Purpose

The first theme presented by Hax and Majluf (1986) depicted strategy as "a means of establishing the organizational purpose, in terms of its long-term objectives, action programs, and resource allocation properties" (p. 2). This theme drew from various researchers (e.g., Ansoff, 1965; Chaffee, 1985; Chandler, 1962; Cope, 1987; Keller, 1983; Rumelt, 1974).

According to prescriptive authors (i.e., Goodstein et al., 1993), establishing an organization's purpose meant the process of strategic planning often started with crafting a value statement and mission statement. While the value statement identified the responsibility to stakeholders, the mission statement "guided members of an organization to envision its future and develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve the future" (Goodstein et al., 1993, p. 60).

Mission statements and value statements are important to my study because they provide insight into which strategic planning perspectives leaders have used to formulate strategy. Although mission statements and value statements are a byproduct of strategic planning, their content, (i.e., what is included and excluded) related to a leader's choice of strategic planning perspective. According to Morphew and Hartley (2006), the mission and vision statements often reflected the organization's ideological perspectives on strategic planning. Likewise, when I probed into distinctive community colleges' strategic planning processes, the mission and vision statements provided insight into many of the institution's actions, changes, or functions (Lipton, 2004).

In higher education, the vision statement "serves to clarify the purposes, directions, and aspirations of the organization as a whole" (Tromp & Ruben, 2004, p. 39). According to Dougherty and Townsend (2006) the mission of a community college is often "framed in overly strong dualisms" (p. 5). These dualisms can lead to long-term incompatibility and conflict within the institution. Because community colleges serve various stakeholders who often have conflicted goals, many colleges craft mission statements designed to placate all stakeholders (Morrill, 2010). These "comprehensive mission statements [end up] invalidating the purpose of the statement" (Goodstein et al.,

1993, p. 185). The conflicting missions result in "contradictory missions that tend to internally divide community colleges almost from their inception, and will likely continue to do so" (Dougherty & Townsend, 2006, p. 10). The paradoxical nature of community college mission and vision statements is important to my study because although these statements give insight into the leader's strategic perspectives and processes, they may not be entirely representative of what an organization does in reality (Birnbaum, 2001; Lipton, 2004; Morrill, 2010).

Definitional Theme 2: Definition of Competitive Domain

The second theme presented by Hax and Majluf (1986) defined strategy as the "competitive domain of the firm" (p. 3). Strategy defined in this manner, means that strategy focuses primarily on identifying industries and competitors. The focus on industries and competitors is rooted in Porter's (1980) competitive forces theory (i.e., the positioning perspective) which is the most widely recognized theory for the formulation of strategy in for-profit businesses (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2008).

Many community college planners using strategy to identify industries, and competitors believe that strategy means a "better way to define their competitive position in the marketplace in terms of the niche that their particular college or university falls in" (Rowley & Sherman, 2001, p. 85). To possess a competitive position, community colleges must be able to compete on one or more of the following attributes: cost, convenience, form of program delivery, quality, innovation, systems and technology, networks with other institutions, administration and governance, culture, reputation, resources, and distinctiveness (Alfred, 2007).

Definitional Theme 3: Coherent, Unifying, and Integrated Blueprint

The third theme presented by Hax and Majulf (1986), defined strategy as a "coherent, unifying, and integrated blueprint of the organization as a whole" (p. 3). Other authors that supported this definition included Glueck (1976), March and Olsen (1976), and Mintzberg et al. (1998). This definitional theme of strategy was also furthered by Watson (2000), who stated that managing strategy "is only through an interlocking series of sub-strategies, policies, and arrangements" (p. 88).

In community colleges, strategy as a "coherent, unifying, and integrated blueprint" often means that the college will undertake some type of strategic business modeling (Goodstein et al., 1993; Hax & Majluf, 1986). "Strategic Business modeling defines the vision of the ideal future in tangible, measurable tools" (Goodstein et al., 1993, p. 7). The tools that are used in strategic business modeling may include performance audits (i.e., an audit of how well the college is achieving its current strategy), gap analysis (i.e., analyzing how large the gap is between the desired and current state), and action planning (i.e., specific actions designed to close the performance gaps). Each of these tools was designed to create detailed performance indicators designed to provide evidence-based accountability. This evidence-based accountability is often required for institutional accreditation. Another reason for using strategic business modeling is that many states tie strategic business modeling outcomes with institutional funding (Dowd & Tong, 2007).

Although strategic business modeling was very appealing to accrediting bodies, many researchers (i.e., Morrill, 2010; Pettigrew, Thomas, & Whittington, 2002; Whittington, 2001), believed that strategy was more practical than theoretical. They

subsequently chastised the rigidity of strategic planning that were based on measurable indices. Strategic planning took on a life of its own through the elaborate programing of events centered "around rigid goals, actions, and timetables. Yet the detailed plans were often out of date before they were completed, let alone implemented" (Morrill, 2010, p. 58).

Definitional Theme 4: Response to External Opportunities and Threats

The fourth theme presented by Hax and Majluf (1986), was strategy as a "response to external opportunities and threats, and internal strengths and weaknesses" (p. 3). In this theme, strategy was seen as a management function designed to achieve a set of goals in dynamic environments (Cope, 1987). Other authors who supported this definition included Argyris (1993) and Steiner and Meiner (1977). Some authors (i.e., Alfred, 2007; Morrill, 2010) furthered this definitional theme by indicating that the strategist was not necessarily passive in dealing with the external environment but could also ". . . continuously and actively adapt the organization to meet the demands of the changing environment" (Hax & Majluf, 1986, p. 4).

For community college strategic planning, strategy as a response to external opportunity and threats, and internal strengths and weaknesses "shared three critical concerns about the external world on which planning must focus: the nature of an institution's relevant environment, how that environment was changing, and the relationship of the institution to that changing environment" (Peterson & Dill, 1997, p. 1). Evaluating external and internal environments was often accomplished through the "standard practice" of environmental scanning (Goodstein et al., 1993; Morrill, 2010).

Planners could accomplish environmental scanning in various ways. Researchers

(i.e., Bryson, 1995; Dooris, Kelley, & Trainer, 2002; Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence, 1997; Sevier, 2000) stated that whichever system an institution used to monitor their external environment, the groupings were "simply a device used to focus on the characteristics of change and to think systematically about them" (Morrill, 2010, p. 158). To systematically monitor a college's macro environment, some college leaders used a PEEST scan (i.e., a practice of monitoring the political, economic, educational, social, and technological macro environmental trends), or more formal tools including SWOT analysis (i.e., an acronym for strengths and weaknesses which are internal to the organization, and opportunities and threats which are external to an organization) (Morrill, 2010). Alternatively, some institutional planners used TOWS (i.e., an acronym for threats, opportunities, weaknesses and strengths). Although both SWOT and TOWS examined the same internal and external environments, the primary difference between them was on area of emphasis. SWOT emphasized the internal environment where TOWS emphasized the external environment. "Virtually every self-study [i.e., institutional accreditation Systems portfolio] would identify a number of strengths and opportunities for improvement (similar to strengths and weaknesses in a SWOT analysis) . . . A well-designed self-study would evaluate these strengths and opportunities in the context of anticipated trends in the environment" (Goodman & Willekens, 2001, p. 289). An understanding of the macro environment is important to strategy because a community college ". . . must know where it stands in relationship to alternative providers of the same industry" (Alfred, 2007, p. 54).

Definitional Theme 5: Central Vehicle for Achieving Competitive Advantage

The fifth theme presented by Hax and Majluf (1986), defined strategy as a "central vehicle for achieving [a] competitive advantage" (p. 4). According to Flint (2000), a "competitive advantage" is one of the most used and least understood phrases in strategic planning. This definitional theme was advanced by Porter (1980) who portrayed strategy as a ". . . comprehensive framework of analytical techniques [designed] to help a firm analyze its industry as a whole and predict the industry's future evolution, to understand its competitors in its own position, and to translate this analysis into a competitive strategy for a particular business" (Porter, 1980, p. xxii). After the work of Porter, "the phrase [competitive advantage] spread throughout management, marketing, economic, and human resource publications and served as a component of the titles of many 'how to do it' [strategic planning] books" (Flint, 2000, p. 121). However, according to Flint although the phrase is widely used, few scholars have been able to clearly define a "competitive advantage" (Flint, 2000).

Integrating the work of Porter (2008) into community college strategic planning meant that each community college must possess a unique position in the market relative to their competitors (Rowley & Sherman, 2001). Porter argued that organizations who were "stuck in the middle" (i.e., lack a distinctive strategy) were destined to fail. "Organizations could not survive if they tried to be "all things to all people," because very few organizations would have the resources necessary to outperform their competitors in all market segments" (Rowley & Sherman, 2001, p. 86). Rather than "being stuck in the middle," these organizations could create a competitive advantage by being a low-cost producer, or by differentiating themselves through specialized

experiences or marketing (Porter, 1980).

Porter's (1980) distinctive strategy is contrary to the multipurpose missions of community colleges. Critics of Porter (i.e., March, 1991; Mintzberg, 2007; Pettigrew et al., 2002) argue that the rate of change has made it impossible to develop and sustain a competitive advantage (Goett, 1999). The most that organizations can hope for "is to develop enough flexibility so that they can seize opportunities for a temporary advantage when these opportunities arise" (Goett, 1999, para. 3).

"Like the competitive strategies of Porter, Miles and Snow's (2003) strategic approaches have also been applied to higher education" (Rowley & Sherman, 2001, p. 95). According to Miles, Snow, Meyer, and Coleman (1978), colleges could pursue one of four competitive strategies (i.e., defenders, prospectors, analyzers, and reactors). Defenders were highly expert organizations who possessed narrow product-market domains. Defenders were primarily concerned with improving the efficiency of their existing operations (Miles & Snow, 2003). Prospectors were organizations that were continually searching for opportunities and were the disruptors in the industry. Prospectors were continually innovating which many times came at the expense of efficiency (Miles & Snow, 2003). Analyzers were organizations that were "stuck in the middle" between rapidly changing and relatively stable environments. In those areas where environments were rapidly changing, analyzers would quickly adopt the new innovation, but in areas where the environment was stable, they would maintain "formalized structures and processes" (Miles & Snow, 2003, p. 29). The last strategy, reactors, were organizations where "top managers frequently perceived change and uncertainty occurring in their organizational environments but were unable to respond

effectively" (Miles & Snow, 2003, p. 29). Due to the inconsistency in the reactors, these organizations failed to position themselves for change and would only adopt change when forced to do so by environmental pressures (Miles & Snow, 2003).

Of the first three strategies, "each type had its own unique way of relating to its chosen market (s), and each had a particular configuration of technology, structure, and process that was consistent with its market strategy" (Miles et al., 1978, p. 550). The fourth strategic position, the reactor, represented either a lack of strategy or failure that resulted from incongruences between strategy, technology, structure, and process (see Miles et al., 1978).

Definitional Theme 6: Motivating Force for Stakeholders

The final theme presented by Hax and Majulf (1986), was strategy defined as a ". . . motivating force for stakeholders" (p. 5). Hax and Majulf defined stakeholder as anyone who "directly, or indirectly, receive the benefits or cost derived from the actions of the firm" (p. 5).

Scholars (i.e., Andrews, 1980; Campbell & Alexander, 1997; Chaffee, 1985) highlighted the importance of stakeholders in the definition of strategy. Goodstein (1993) also integrated stakeholders into his definition of strategic planning indicating, "strategy was a way of defining the economic and non-economic contribution the organization will make to its stakeholders" (p. 3). Campbell and Alexander discussed the contributions to stakeholders by differentiating between active stakeholders (i.e., shareholders, customers, employees, and suppliers) whose primary goal is economic avarice and inactive stakeholders (i.e., communities, nonprofit groups, etc.) whose goals are altruistic. "A company can only afford to deliver sufficient value to its direct and indirect stakeholders

if it has [a] competitive advantage" (Campbell & Alexander, 1997, para. 14).

For community colleges defining strategy as, "a motivating force for stakeholders" meant that the institution had to create value for its "direct (i.e., students, faculty, staff, administrators) and indirect (i.e., community, legislators, accrediting bodies) stakeholders" (Casadesus-Masanell & Ricart, 2010, p. 196). For community colleges, creating value often took the form of business models. There is no agreement in the literature as to what constituted a superior business model (Casadesus-Masanell & Ricart, 2010). However, authors (i.e., Casadesus-Masanell & Ricart, 2010; Christensen, Johnson, & Kagermann, 2008) agreed that most business models were comprised of the customer value proposition (i.e., how the organization creates value for their customers), the profit formula (i.e., how the organization profits by delivering the customer value), key resources (i.e., define the most important assets to achieving customer value proposition and profitability), and key processes (i.e., the most important business rules or competencies).

My study uses the definition by Hax and Majluf (1986) which defined strategy as "the fundamental framework for an organization to assert its vital continuity, while, at the same time, forcefully facilitating its adaptation to a changing environment" (Hax & Majluf, 1986, p. 7) . More specifically, my study defines strategy as

the purposeful management of change toward the achievement of competitive advantage . . . a formal recognition that the recipients of the firm's actions are the wide constituency of its stakeholders . . . [with] . . . the ultimate objective of addressing stakeholders benefits while providing a base for establishing the host of transactions and social contracts linking the firm to its stakeholders" (Hax &

Majluf, 1986, p. 8)

Strategy is an "elusive subject, full of controversy, lacking a strong disciplinary support that invades any possible attempt to define it" (Hax & Majluf, 1986, p. 2). The lexicon of strategic planning is imprecise which leads to many controversies surrounding research in strategic planning (Mintzberg et al., 1998). However, the thematic definition of strategy by Hax and Majluf (1986) not only integrates what leading researchers have identified as the essential constructs of strategy, but their definitional themes draw together many aspects of strategy that pertain to my study. Underlying the definitional themes are the related perspectives that institutions follow when formulating strategy, and the processes that community college leaders use to formulate their strategic plans. Additionally, Hax and Majulf (1988) viewed the process of strategy formation (i.e., strategy processes) as different from the concept of strategy (i.e., strategic perspectives). In fact, the entire field of strategic research can be divided into strategy-as-theory (i.e., perspectives) and strategy-as-practice (i.e., processes) (Mintzberg, 1994). The separation of these two phenomenon is important to my study because the purpose of my study is to explore what distinctive community colleges do in terms of strategic planning (i.e., their processes), and examine which, if any, perspectives these college's used as a basis to craft strategy (i.e., their perspectives).

The next section discusses the history of strategic planning research. For clarity, this section separates strategy-as-theory (termed "perspectives" in my study) from strategy as process (termed "processes" in my study). This section discusses the chronological evolution of both factions of research because many of these earlier studies have influenced community colleges' strategic planning perspectives and processes. The

section concludes with the current state of strategic planning research.

History of Strategic Planning Research

Research in the field of strategic planning has been plagued by plurality (Calori, 1998; Hutzschenreuter & Kleindienst, 2006; Ramanujam, Venkatraman, & Camillus, 1986). The primary division in strategic planning research has been on emphasis - either "strategy-as-practice" or "strategy-as-theory" (Huff & Reger, 1987; Hutzschenreuter & Kleindienst, 2006; Pettigrew et al., 2002).

Both strategy-as-theory and strategy-as-practice are important to my study. Strategic perspectives (i.e., the "points of view" based on Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 strategic perspectives as defined in my study) are based in strategy-as-theory research. Whereas, strategy processes (i.e., the actions, changes, or functions that a community college leaders use to achieve their strategic plan) are based in strategy-as-process research. According to Mintzberg (2007), "practice is always more complicated and more interesting – than theory" (p. 31).

Researchers cannot overlook the interplay between strategy-as-theory and strategy-as-practice research. Mintzberg (2007), found that many organizations formulate a deliberate strategy utilizing strategic perspectives, but as the strategy is implemented these "intended" strategies are changed and become emergent in nature (Mintzberg, 2007). Therefore, to explore what distinctive community college leaders are doing with respect to strategic planning (i.e., strategic processes), to examine whether these leaders utilize Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 strategic perspectives (i.e., strategic perspectives), and to discover the perceived "value" of strategic planning, a thorough review of both strategy-as-theory and strategy-as-practice research is necessary.

Strategy-as-theory is the oldest and most prominent stream in strategic planning research. Strategy-as-theory deals with theoretical developments from various social science disciplines to explain how organizations create, and subsequently sustain, a competitive advantage. The literature divides strategy-as-theory research into the process and content streams. According to Huff and Reger (1987), the barriers between process and content research have existed since Chandler (1962), Ansoff (1965), and Andrews (1971) first proposed a distinction between the two types of research (Fahey & Christensen, 1986; Rajagopalan, Rasheed, & Datta, 1993). Researchers (i.e., Huff & Reger, 1987; Mintzberg & Lampel, 1999; Pettigrew et al., 2002), believed that this division has hindered both the theoretical and applied practice of strategic planning. However, some researchers, (i.e., Bowman, Singh, & Thomas, 2002) believed the division between these two streams has actually allowed the field of strategic management to stay "honest and alive" (p. 9). As time passes, the plurality between process and content research has started to erode (Huff & Reger, 1987; Hutzschenreuter & Kleindienst, 2006; Pettigrew et al., 2002; Whipp, 1996).

The second major category of strategic planning research, strategy-as-practice, grew from the process approach of strategy-as-theory (Golsorkhi, Rouleau, Seidl, & Vaara, 2010). Although a relatively new sub discipline, strategy-as-practice appealed to several staunch proponents of process research (i.e., Mintzberg, 1978; Mintzberg & Waters, 1989; Pettigrew, 1992). These researchers sought to explore those factors that influenced strategy in a practical setting. There were other individuals (i.e., Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992; Gioia, Thomas, Clark, & Chittipeddi, 1994; Golsorkhi et al., 2010; Huff & Reger, 1987; Knights & Morgan, 1991) whose attempts to broaden and invigorate

traditional strategic management was seen as the roots of the strategy-as-practice movement. In fact, Golsorkhi et al. (2010) viewed strategy-as-practice as an "alternative to mainstream strategy research. . . [and as a]. . direct response to the dominance of the micro-economic approach and methodological preoccupation on statistical analysis" (p. 1).

Pettigrew et al. (2002) further divided strategy-as-theory research by "level of analysis, disciplinary frame of reference, and research theme" (p. 3). The subthemes of specialization indicated how much strategy-as-practice developed among strategic planning researchers. Figure 2, represents the current state of strategy as theory research.
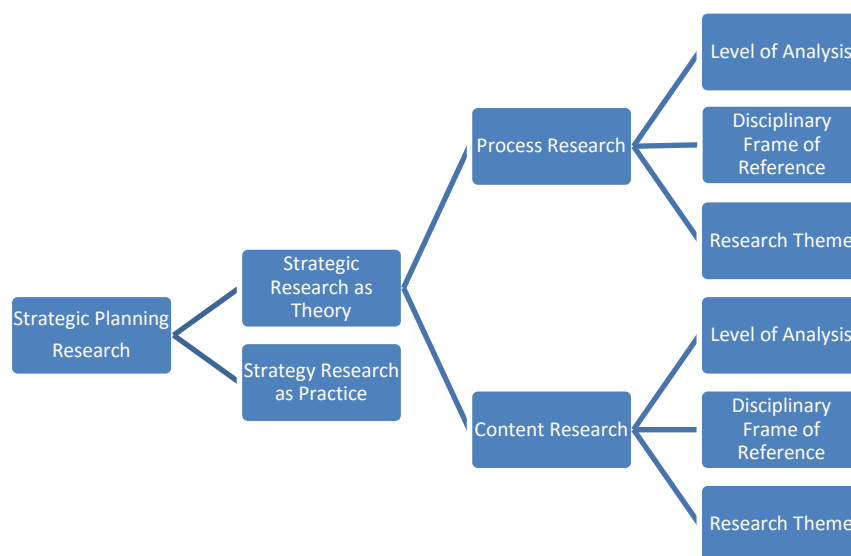
Figure 2. Current state of strategic planning research.

To appreciate the current state of strategic planning research it is necessary to look at how both streams of research have evolved.

Evolution of Strategy-as-Theory Research

Strategic planning dates back to 400 BC, and a review of every article since that time is well beyond the scope of my study (Cope, 1987). Therefore, this section uses

Hoskisson's (1999) chronological framework to organize the evolution of strategy-as-theory research. Throughout each decade, I analyzed both the historical and theoretical published works that have advanced strategic planning research and influenced perspective choice. Although some of the reviews are dated, each is important to my study because they offer a historical point of reference. Integrated into the historical account is a synthesis of the major reviews of strategic planning research (see Dess, Ireland, & Hitt, 1990; Fahey & Christensen, 1986; Huff & Reger, 1987; Hutzschenreuter & Kleindienst, 2006; Ketchen et al., 2008; Rajagopalan et al., 1993; Ramanujam et al., 1986; Ramos-Rodriguez & Riuiz-Navarro, 2004; Short, Ketchen, & Palmer, 2002; Van de ven, 1992). Additionally, this analysis summarizes some of the major theoretical ideologies that continue to influence today's strategic planning researchers (Bowman et al., 2002).

Era 1: 1960s to 1970s. Somewhat like strategic planning itself, ". . . the birth of strategic management in the 1960s took place against the back ground of tremendous ferment in organizational theory" (Rumelt, Schendel, & Teece, 1991, p. 15). "The discipline of strategic management traces its origin to landmark works such as Chandler's *Strategy and Structure* (1962), Ansoff's *Corporate Strategy* (1965) and Andrews' *The Concept of Strategic Management* (1971)" (Huff & Reger, 1987, p. 211). These works stand out not only because they have contributed to the field's prominence but because they have had ". . . an enduring effect due, in part, to their methodological structure" (Ketchen et al., 2008, p. 644).

The first significant contribution to theory development was Chandler's, *Strategy and Structure* (1962). This book laid the foundation for many of Mintzberg, Ahlstrand,

and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives (Grahovac & Miller, 2009; Mintzberg et al., 1998; Tsoukas & Knudsen, 2002). Chandler's work began as an analysis of comparative business history. The original intent of Chandler's research was to explore organizational design. "The initial thought was an examination of the way different enterprises carry out the same activity" (Davies & Walters, 2004, p. I). Using a phenomenological design, Chandler analyzed organizations' internal data (e.g., annual reports, government publications, business correspondence, memoranda, and meeting minutes) and interviewed those individuals who had participated in structural changes. Chandler wanted to determine why a change in organizational strategy was accompanied by a change in organizational design (Davies & Walters, 2004).

Chandler's (1962) mixed method qualitative design, like many others since (i.e., Dalrymple, 2007; Hambright & Diamantes, 2004; Mintzberg, 2007), used an archival review of institutional data coupled with in-depth interviews with key personnel. The literature is rich with examples of strategic planning researchers using this type of research design (i.e., Allen, Helms, Takeda, & White, 2006; Hax & Majluf, 1986; Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006; Mintzberg, 2007; Rodriguea-Diaz, Osorio-Acosta, & Alamo-Vera, 1997). Because strategic planning researchers have relied on this mixed method design, my study also used an archival review to explore the strategic planning processes and then used semi-structured interviews to probe more deeply into the essence of institutional strategic planning perspectives and processes.

Chandler (1962) found that in order to understand structural change one must equally understand internal factors (e.g., organization's history and administrative methodology) and external factors (e.g., the organization's growth pattern and accepted

administrative methodologies). After his initial findings, Chandler broadened the sample, comparing close to 100 of America's largest industrial enterprises between 1908 and 1948. Chandler found that structure follows strategy and that ". . . the most complex type of structures are the result of the concentration of several basic strategies" (Davies & Walters, 2004, p. 14). Chandler not only laid the foundation for later organizational change models (e.g., Lewin, 1947), but he also set the stage for some of Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 strategic perspectives. Additionally, Chandler established the idea that organizations must be responsive to their external environment by monitoring "opportunities and needs created by changing populations, changing national income, and by technological innovation" (Davies & Walters, 2004, p. 5).

Chandler (1962) focused primarily on the relationship between strategy and structure; however, he also uncovered variables that future researchers would utilize as the basis for examining organizational structure (e.g., Armour & Teece, 1978; Miles et al., 1978). According to Howard and Peter (2004), an awareness of both organizational growth (i.e., internal factors) and the ability to identify trends in management (i.e., external factors) is essential for the understanding of strategy.

Chandler (1962), Ansoff (1965), and Andrews (1971), were among the first to propose the distinction between process and content research. Their work has had a significant influence on strategic planning epistemology by "shaping theory and knowledge in strategic planning (Ketchen et al., 2008, p. 644; Mintzberg et al., 1998; Pettigrew et al., 2002). According to both Cope (1981) and Rumelt et al. (1994), "nearly all of the ideas and issues that concern us [strategic planners] today can be found in at least embryonic form in the key writings of the 1960s" (p. 18). The distinction between

process and content ". . . has tended to divide research ever since: researchers study content, or they study process" (Rajagopalan et al., 1993, p. 211).

The historical roots of strategic planning and their subsequent influence on strategic planning research are very important to my study. The works of Ansoff (1965), Chandler (1962), and Andrews (1971) were quickly disseminated by consultants, and a belief arose that there was a "recipe" to successful strategic planning. Some years later, Mintzberg (2007) when studying strategy at McGill University indicated, "if 'industry recipes' have existed to guide action taking the 'industry' of higher education certainly has had its share" (Spender, 1989, as cited in Mintzberg, 2007, p. 303). This may explain why some community college leaders seem to follow a one-size fits all approach to strategic planning (Gioia et al., 1994; Mintzberg, 2007; Mintzberg et al., 1998).

Bowman et al. (2002) described the first strategy scholars as field researchers utilizing cases, histories, and planning systems. Published research during this era was primarily prescriptive, with an emphasis on outcome based approaches (Bowman et al., 2002; Hutzschenreuter & Kleindienst, 2006). Due to the bounded problems and issues that arise when studying strategic planning, early researchers, such as Chandler (1962), used a case study design. As a result, field studies coupled with prescription, dominated strategic planning research during this time (Bowman et al., 2002).

Era 2: 1970s – 1980s. During the late 1960s and early 1970s much "of the literature [pertaining to strategic planning] was descriptive of selected industry practices (bounded) and was strongly prescriptive, never attempting to be analytical or empirical" (Rumelt et al., 1991, p. 20). The critical readers who were not satisfied with traditional strategy-as-theory findings ushered in the second era of strategic planning. These

researchers were more interested with the "exponential, case-based evidence that laid behind the writings [of Chandler (1962), Ansoff (1965), and Andrews (1971)]" (Rumelt et al., 1994, p. 19). As strategic planning research advanced ". . .in the direction of a positive science in the 1970s, a dichotomy developed between those pursuing essentially descriptive studies, of how strategies were formed and implemented (processes) and those seeking to understand the relationship between strategic choice and performance (content)" (Rumelt et al., 1994, pp. 19-20). This dichotomy is particularly important to my study because by exploring what distinctive community colleges are doing with respect to strategic planning (i.e., processes) and by probing on community college strategic perspectives, my study can inform both factions of research.

Another significant development during this time (i.e., 1970s – 1980s) were that researchers, (i.e., Schendel & Hofer, 1979), were crusading for a shift from the traditional "policy" ideology to one with an emphasis on strategic management doctrine. This marked a turning point for strategic planning research. These researchers sought a more analytical and economics-based view of the field of strategy (Pettigrew et al., 2002). This was a significant change, because prior to 1977, the strategy research field was ". . . dominated by qualitative, comprehensive case studies" (Huff & Reger, 1987, p. 227).

By 1979, Schendel and Hatten (1979) had created a "book length manifesto for the new field of strategic management," and founded *The Strategic Management Journal* (SMJ) (Pettigrew et al., 2002, p. 5). The Strategic Management Journal coupled with the Strategic Management Society ushered in a new period of strategic planning research based primarily on quantitative methodology (Pettigrew et al., 2002).

Era 3: 1980s – 1990s. Schendel's platform for "a more scholarly, analytical, positivistic, and quantitative treatment [of data] . . . encouraged the rise of economic theories and econometric models in strategic management. . ." (Pettigrew et al., 2002, p. 5). This historical shift is important to note for my study because it may explain why particular prescriptive processes (i.e., SWOT, PEST, environmental scanning, and key performance indicators (i.e., KPIs)) have become common tools used by community college planners.

The application of econometric models to strategic planning paved the way for researchers to look beyond internal organizational capabilities and explore the external factors that influenced strategic planning processes. One such account was proposed by Porter (1980), in his book, *Competitive Strategy*, which focused on the external environment (Bowman et al., 2002). Porter identified five external forces that would give an organization ". . . a sustainable competitive advantage" (Eisenhardt & Santos, 2002, p. 142).

Once an organization had a competitive advantage, they could develop and defend their market position. Porter (1980) stated that if an organization were to choose one of the following strategies: 1) differentiation; 2) cost leadership; 3) either (1) or (2) that was focused on particular market, the organization would position themselves favorably in their environment (Porter, 1996). Not only was Porter's theme dominant during the 1980s, it continues to be the most widely used prescriptive strategy for analyzing competitors and industries (Bowman et al., 2002). "The work of Michael Porter, based in economic theory, has become the dominant research paradigm, fixed on a dependent variable of overall financial performance, remote from actual activity" (Whittington,

Molloy, Mayer, & Smith, 2006, p. 617).

Porter's (1980) work shifted researchers' focus from internal operations to external environments. Following Porter, the "main determinant of firm performance was characterized and prescribed in terms of industry sector and not in terms of internal goals, structures, dynamics, and leadership of the firm so beloved of the business policy scholars" (Pettigrew et al., 2002, p. 7). Not all researchers were enamored with Porter's Industrial Organization (i.e., IO) economic ideals. Several researchers (e.g., Foss, 1996; Hirsch & Friedman, 1987; Perrow, 1986) criticized the "a priori theorizing of economics. . . and the love economists have for databases rather than seeking direct engagement with phenomena" (Pettigrew et al., 2002, p. 7). Whipp (1996) among others, believed that the IO economic takeover of the field of strategic management was unlikely as there were other related fields, such as psychology, sociology, and organizational development, that were informing strategic planning research to the same degree as industrial economics (Pettigrew et al., 2002).

This duality of perspectives is significant to my study because it suggests that there are two separate, yet equal drivers, in strategic planning. The first driver is the ideology or perspective that leaders rely upon to formulate their strategic plan. In my study these perspectives are termed, "broadened strategic perspectives" and extend from Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives framework. The perspectives driver is prescriptive, deliberate, and influences the leader's approach to strategic planning (Nag et al., 2007).

The second driver that influences a leader's approach to strategic planning is the processes that leaders use to formulate strategy. These "strategic processes" are a direct

outgrowth of context (Peterson, 1997). The process driver is the internal and external organizational context, situation, and the environment that influence the leader's approach to strategic planning (Brews & Purohit, 2007). The second driver demands attention to the internal organization and a thorough analysis of external forces (Cope, 1987). This driver is emergent (Jarzabkowski, 2003). Although both drivers influence strategic planning formulation, either by the perspectives that community college leaders rely upon to formulate strategy, or by the processes that community college leaders use to reach their strategic goals, each do so in very different ways.

The methodological framework during this era (i.e., 1980s – 1990s) still relied on a single case study format or comparative case study, but the integration of "IO and its derivatives incorporated the econometric analysis of surveys and databases. . . with smaller case studies sometimes accompanied by surveys of limited samples of firms" (Pettigrew et al., 2002, p. 6). Industrial economics coupled with resource-based models called for new methodological approaches. Therefore, regression analysis replaced the use of correlations and means comparisons. "The use of multi-varied techniques such as factor and cluster analysis increased quickly, as they enabled researchers to reduce large data sets into groups and types" (Ketchen et al., 2008, p. 645).

In 1987, the criticisms of strategic management research were

>the absence of studies of strategy implementation, and the determinants of firm performance, the overuse of nominal and single-item scales and the lack of attention to construct validity of scales. Longitudinal studies were very rare, comparative and cross-sectional research using surveys and databases was the great preoccupation. (Schwenk & Dalton, 1991, as cited by Pettigrew et al., 2002,

p. 8)

Schwenk and Dalton's (1991) survey of published strategic management research in the six top US academic journals in the years 1986 and 1987 illustrated the state of strategic planning research in the late 1980s. Schwenk and Dalton found:

> more continuity than change in the content and methods of strategic research . . . Some 72% of strategic management research relied on data derived from surveys and archival material. There was a continuing emphasis on performance as a dependent variable, using hard and soft measures of performance. Seventy-five percent of the studies were cross-sectional. Of the 25% of studies which had longitudinal data, only 12% of these analyze the data in time series terms.
> (Pettigrew et al., 2002, p. 8)

Researchers in the late 1980s believed that the field of strategic research had matured. According to Pettigrew et al. (2002), prior to the resource and knowledge based theories of the firm, there was little advancement in either theory or method in strategic research. March (1991) stated, "if strategic management in the mid-1980s was adapting at all it was through low risk exploitation and not through higher risk exploration" (Pettigrew et al., 2002, p. 8).

In the 1980s, US higher education was just beginning to adopt strategic planning in order to deal with the changing external environment and the demands for greater accountability (Cope, 1987; Keller, 1983; Peterson & Dill, 1997) In 1985, Chaffee published "her groundbreaking analysis of business strategy and its relationship to higher education" (Peterson & Dill, 1997, p. 205). Chaffee examined turnaround strategies in a set of small liberal arts colleges and advocated the use of a linear model of strategy

formation. Chaffee found that by applying a rational analysis to both internal and external conditions institutional leaders could develop an interpretive strategy that could be communicated to both internal and external constituents (Peterson & Dill, 1997). As the 1980's ended there was immense pressure on higher education, from both internal and external constituents to use a formal type of strategic planning (Morrill, 2007).

Era 4: 1990s – 2000. According to Pettigrew (2002), the field of strategic planning during the 1990s could be categorized as an

> over-published world in constant drive for recognition and [finding] a place in the scholarly and consultancy marketplace meant that novelty was prized over careful accumulation of evidence-based knowledge. . . . The past was pushed off-stage by the hard edge of exclusivity of a new paradigm or frame of reference. In time, extreme positions got watered down and some scholars looked for supremacy of unifying paradigms. (Pettigrew et al., 2002, p. 9)

In the quest for a unifying paradigm, the theoretical developments of both the resource and knowledge based theories of a firm's strategy became a focal point for strategic planning researchers. This is important to note for my study because these historical developments gave rise to descriptive strategic planning perspectives, which provided community colleges with additional perspectives on which to base their strategic planning efforts.

The resource-based view of the firm originated from Cambridge-based economist, Penrose in her classic 1959 book, *The Theory of the Growth of the Firm*. However, it was not until Wernefelt (1984) transferred the concept to strategic management that the resource-based view of the firm originated (Pettigrew et al., 2002; Ramos-Rodriguez &

Riuiz-Navarro, 2004). The resource-based view of the firm evolved to address some of

the shortcomings of Porter's (1980) positioning model. The significance of the resource-

based view of the firm was that it shifted the researchers' focus back to the internal

processes of the firm. This new internal focus on the firm resonated among researchers as

it took "a lot of strategists to systematically analyze and understand the internal processes

and routines by which an organization competed in the marketplace" (Venkatraman &

Subramaniam, 2006, p. 464) The resource-based view of the firm was furthered by Grant

(1991) and Barney (1991), but the concept was probably most notably popularized by

Prahalad and Hamel (1994). They transferred the spotlight from the external industry

toward the resources or competencies that were internally developed by the firm

(Pettigrew et al., 2002).

Not only did Wernerfelt's (1984) resource-based view of a firm provide

researchers with a new insight into formulating a competitive advantage, it also

uncovered significant challenges in operationally defining variables (Alfred, 2007;

Ketchen et al., 2008). Other research paradigms such as Williamson's (1985; 1975)

transaction cost economics also proved difficult to operationalize variables. "In both

cases, the constructs could not be directly observed which lead to conclusions that

researchers needed to capture the conditions that led to, or were the result of, evidence of

theory" (Ketchen et al., 2008, p. 646). Pettigrew et al., (2002) pointed out that the field's

historical deductive theorizing continued to hinder opportunities to advance strategic

research. This is important to know for my study because it stresses the importance of

delving into the organization's internal perceptions (i.e., perspectives) that influence

strategic planning processes.

With the resourced-based view of the firm, a knowledge movement swept through strategic planning during the 1990s. Some researchers (i.e., Deeds & Decarolis, 1999; Grant, 1996) saw the knowledge-based view (KBV) of the firm as an ". . . outgrowth of resource-based thinking where the concept of resources is extended to include intangible assets and, specifically, knowledge-based resources" (Eisenhardt & Santos, 2002, p. 139). However, staunch proponents (i.e., Kogut & Zander, 1992; Kogut & Zander, 1996; Spender, 1996) "considered knowledge as the most strategically significant resource of the firm" (Grant, 1996, as cited in Eisenhardt & Santos, 2002, p. 139). These researchers saw the knowledge-based view not only as a process of social construction, but argued that the knowledge-based view provided insight into organizational functioning and was as a theory in and of itself. The determination of whether the knowledge-based view is a stand-alone theory remains in dispute (see Eisenhardt & Santos, 2002). However, the knowledge-based view informs strategic planning to the extent that ". . . knowledge is conceptualized as a resource that can be acquired, transferred, or integrated to achieve a sustained competitive advantage" (Eisenhardt & Santos, 2002, p. 140).

The knowledge-based view suffered the same plight as the resource-based theory in terms operationalizing variables to conform to the deductive research tradition (Pettigrew et al., 2002). Additionally, the knowledge-based view examined the internal workings of the firm focusing more on human capital or the "acquisition, maintenance and utilization of knowledge resources" (Pettigrew et al., 2002, p. 8).

The resource-based view coupled with the knowledge-based view of the firm enhanced the popularity of process research. However, the process approach had significant shortcomings with respect to emerging theoretical concepts. According to

Johnson, Melin, and Whittington (2003), the process approach was deficient because it relied heavily on secondary accounts, did not focus on management, was primarily descriptive, lacked specific links to strategic outcomes, separated process and content research, and avoided generalizable frameworks. Although many shortcomings could be cited, what appeared to be lacking from process research was what Whittington (2001) identified as "the concern with [the] social embeddedness of strategy making" (p. 48). Many strategy-as-theory researchers began advocating for an entirely new way to study strategy. These strategy-as-process researchers sought to examine "strategy practitioners within the organization, systematically connecting organizational changes with extra organizational contexts" (Golsorkhi et al., 2010, p. 1118). Although created from the process sub-classification of strategy-as-theory, strategy-as-practice would eventually grow into a classification just as significant as strategy-as-theory research.

In strategy-as-practice, researchers strived to understand relationships among phenomenon (strategic planning) in actual practice (the organization). According to Golsorkhi et al. (2010), strategy becomes "not something that firms have, but something that people do" (p. 7). Golsorkhi indicated that once researchers see strategy as a function of people and contexts that are continually being created and re-created, strategy could no longer be seen as a stable environment that can be derived theoretically.

Evolution of Strategy-as-Process Research

Historical research in strategy-as-practice is vital to my study because like Whittington (2008), and Golsorkhi (2010), and others (e.g., Jarzabkowski, 2003; Langley, Melin, & Whittington, 2007; Mintzberg, 2007; Orlikowski, 2010), my study explores strategy formulation through people. In order to understand strategy, one must

probe into the perspectives of community colleges, and investigate the inner workings of the organization's strategic processes.

According to Golsorkhi et al. (2010), strategy-as-practice can be divided into three distinct streams, practice as a phenomenon, practice as a perspective, and practice as a philosophy. In practice as a phenomenon the most important concept is a thorough understanding of what happened "in practice" rather than those things that were derived from "theory." This is important to my study because my study investigates what distinctive community colleges are "doing" with respect to strategic planning. The practice as a perspective stream is a grounded practice theory about some aspect of an organization. This is also important to my study because without analyzing the community college's strategic perspectives through Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives framework much of how, and why, the college formulates a strategy would be unknown. The practice as a philosophy stream is holding steadfast to the principle that strategy practice is the basis of organizational reality (Golsorkhi et al., 2010). This is also important to my study because qualitative methodology rests on the concept that through the description of experiences (i.e., leader's accounts of strategy in practice) one can more fully understand the phenomenon in question (Creswell, 2003).

Strategy-as-practice closed most of the gap that existed between theory and the necessity for practical application. However, extending findings beyond particular practitioners and contexts proved more challenging. Studies were bound both historically and contextually, and any subsequent theory was ground in specific conditions. Therefore, some researchers view strategy-as-practice as "less than" academic research. This point is important to my study because like all qualitative studies, the findings of my

study are not generalizable to all community colleges, nor are they indicative of all community college processes or perspectives. Although this is a limitation, my study is exploratory in nature and future studies may overcome this particular limitation by utilizing a more intensive research methodology (i.e., longitudinal studies) (Yin, 2012).

Proponents, such as Mintzberg (1999), have indicated that formalized research that converts the reality of practice to an economic model essentially flattens out the more embedded and circular nature of everyday strategic practices. Mintzberg further indicated that in order for research to be acceptable and publishable it must adopt "discursive practices that conform to the tight demands of the academic community who recognize only propositional forms of knowledge and explicit causal explanations as a legitimate form of knowledge" (Mintzberg & Lampel, 1999, p. 36). In response to "proper" epistemological inquiry, Golsorkhi et al. (2010) indicated that by relying solely on this type of knowledge, academic research [quantitative] misses out on a "wealth of tacit, inarticulate and often inarticulable [sic] understandings of strategy practitioners as they go about their practical affairs. . . the practitioners themselves may be unaware of this tacit knowledge that they possess" (Golsorkhi et al., 2010, p. 848).

Current State of Strategic Planning Research

Until 2000, "few scholars had been prepared to challenge the core beliefs and assumptions of the field whether they were about the concept of knowledge, rules of evidence, levels of analysis, or modes of human action grounded in the field" (Pettigrew et al., 2002, p. 11). Inconsistent findings in research have been reported due to the vast differences in methodology across strategic planning studies (Miller & Cardinal, 1994). One of the most important advancements in the field has been the ability of authors to

organize writing into classification systems so that central tendencies were addressed in those areas deserving both additional focus and attention. Classification systems are also important to my study, because each of the theoretical frameworks that I use in my study are classification based (see Appendix A and B). Pettigrew et al., (2002) appropriately summarized the status of strategic planning research as a field at a significant juncture where there is an appreciation and critical reflection for the past practices and historical ideologies, while at the same time, there is significant room for growth, innovation and creativity.

Bettis (1998) indicated the field of strategic planning has not kept pace with available analytical or methodological tools, nor has it effectively captured the ideas of continuous adaptation so profound in both competition and strategy in the 21st century. However, this appears to be changing as the deductive, rational tradition that has been so deeply rooted in strategic planning research, has given way to a wide range of alterative models. These alternative models have spurred ". . .progress in empirical, theoretical and methodological issues in strategic management research" (Thomas & Pruett, 1993 as cited in Bowman et al., 2002, p. 35). Researchers (i.e., Lowendahl & Revang, 1998) agree that the turn of the century marks an "after modernism" period for strategic planning research. "After modernism" strategic planning research includes a unification of ideologies, an appreciation for alternative methodology, an amalgamation of policy and practice, an incorporation of process and content designs, an escalation of cross-functional studies, and a progression toward strategic management.

The next section uses the three phases of the strategic planning framework proposed by Andrews (2003) and furthered by Dalrymple (2007) to present the

customary strategic planning activities used by community college leaders. Identifying customary strategic planning activities is important to my study because these common activities provide a reference point from which to distinguish between those processes that distinctive community colleges are using and those that are common to other community colleges.

Stages of Strategic Planning Processes in Higher Education

The process of strategic planning is comprised of three distinct stages (i.e., formulation, implementation, and evaluation) (Andrews, 2003; Dalrymple, 2007). To analyze each of these stages is well beyond the scope of my study. Therefore, my study focuses exclusively on the formulation stage of strategic planning. According to Hax and Majluf (1986), there is an enormous amount of variation as to what constitutes strategy formulation. Although there are "certain attributes of the concept of strategy that the firm should adhere to . . . there is no universal formula that would have general validity" (Hax & Majluf, 1986, p. 15). Because of Higher Learning Commission institutional-accreditation cycles and changing accreditation methods, institutions of higher education may elect to undertake strategic planning at different points (Lumby, 1999). Many strategic planning models tend to obscure the line between the end of formulation and the beginning of implementation (Peterson & Dill, 1997). Additionally, accreditation agencies strongly influence the activities undertaken during the stages of strategic planning. Therefore, this section only summarizes the common actions, changes, or functions (i.e., strategic planning processes) used by community college leaders during the formulation stage of strategic planning.

Strategic planning formulation is comprised of three distinct phases. Figure 3,

depicts the three phases of strategic planning formulation and its component parts.
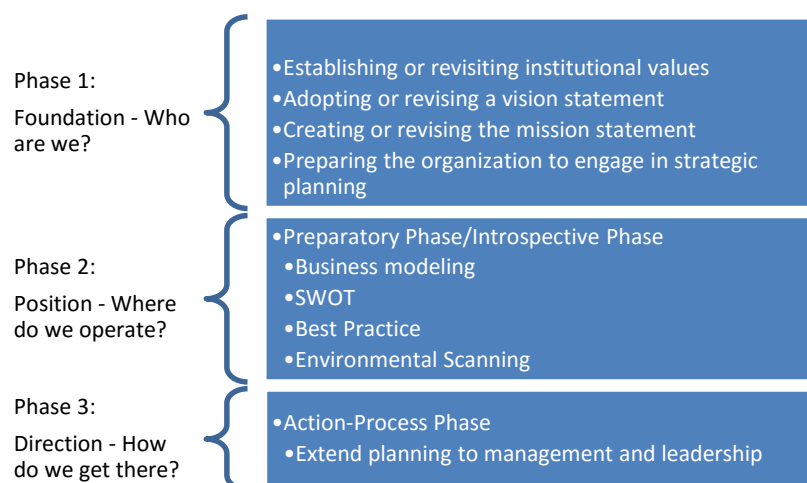
Figure 3. Phases and activities of the formulation phase of strategic planning.

The Foundation Phase

The foundation phase is the cornerstone of the strategic planning process. The foundation phase focuses the institution's attention inward where leaders evaluate the organization's relationships with internal stakeholders, culture, leadership, communication, and decision making ability (Woods-Wilson, 2012). During the foundation phase of strategic planning the organization attempts to answer the following questions

- who is the organization;

- what does the organization stand for;

- what vision would the organization like to create in the minds of stakeholders (Goodstein et al., 1993; Kaufman, Herman, & Watters, 2002; Martinez & Wolverton, 2009; Nolan, Goodstein, & Goodstein, 2008)?

The specific activities undertaken in the foundation phase traditionally include: establishing or revisiting institutional values, adopting a vision statement, creating or

revising the mission statement, and preparing the organization to engage in strategic

planning (Goodstein et al., 1993). Identifying the steps of the foundational phase of

strategic planning is important to my study because two of the most common elements of

the foundation phase (i.e., mission and vision) are the "two ends of an analytical view of

the institution from which the strategic plan is developed" (Hinton, 2012, p. 10). My

study probes on distinctive community colleges processes to determine what these

colleges are doing differently with respect to strategic planning perspectives and

processes.

      Establishing or revisiting institutional values. Values scanning can be

completed using different approaches. Some researchers (i.e., Goodstein et al., 1993;

Hunt, Oosting, Stevens, Loudon, & Migliore, 1997) advocate utilizing an incremental

approach to the values scanning. The incremental approach involves an "in-depth

examination of the personal values of the planning team, the values of the organization as

a whole, the organization's operating philosophy, the organization's culture, and the

organization's stakeholders" (Goodstein et al., 1993, p. 147).

      Through the incremental approach, colleges and universities normally start with

existing outcomes rather than forward-looking measurements that are prevalent in the

minds of stakeholders (Alfred, 2007). "An incremental approach to assessment focuses

on easily measured outcomes and in a world of profound change [this approach] is

unlikely to uncover new or hidden forms of value" (Alfred, 2007, p. 69). Today colleges

are viewed as service industries that have to not only meet, but exceed many

stakeholder's expectations (Woods-Wilson, 2012). By simply changing the cognitive

frame from "what is" to "what could be, [the values scan will] enable colleges and

universities to more fully understand the value they deliver to stakeholders" (Alfred, 2007, p. 70; Hinton, 2012). Alfred (2007), contends that differentiating between the " . . .'academic conception of value' - the value intended through programs and services, and the 'stakeholder conception of value' - the value of programs and services as perceived by stakeholders" is [a] critical [step] to successful strategic planning" (p. 70).

The vision statement flows from the values scan. Vision statements are "an institution's description of what it intends to *become* within a certain timeframe. The vision statement defines the institution's strategic position in the future and the specific elements of that position with relationship to the mission statement" (Hinton, 2012, p. 10). According to Goodstein et al. (1993), "all business decisions are based on values. . . [and] . . . all organizational decisions are value-based" (p. 143). He also stresses that the success of any strategic plan is predicated on the congruence between the organization's values and its strategic plan.

Adopting or revising the mission statement. Martinez and Wolverton (2009) stated that the terms, "mission, mission statement, and vision statement are often used interchangeably, but they are distinct" (p. 34). Although the mission of the organization defines the overall purpose of the organization, the mission statement can be somewhat overarching but should articulate the organization's current function (Dougherty & Townsend, 2006). According to Hinton (2012), publically controlled community colleges may have a prescribed mission statement that is set at the state level but regardless of where the statement originates, ". . . the statement serves as the explanation for the existence of the organization" (p. 9). "It is an abbreviated statement that captures the essence of the mission" (Martinez & Wolverton, 2009, p. 36). Authors agree that the

exploration of the vision coupled with formulation/revision of the mission, is a crucial step in the strategic planning process (Hunt et al., 1997; Rowley & Sherman, 2001; Toft, 2000; Woods-Wilson, 2012).

Historically mission statements were all encompassing and tried to address every stakeholder imaginable (Dougherty & Townsend, 2006; Hinton, 2012). These types of mission statements were called, "comprehensive mission statements." Comprehensive mission statements "included everything anyone thought might be important to know about the institution" (Hinton, 2012, p. 9).

Although comprehensive mission statements appeared informational useful, they were a hindrance to planning at institutionally accredited colleges and universities. Because the Higher Learning Commission used mission statements as a benchmark "to assess the institution and its management," comprehensive missions proved difficult to measure because the "essential" elements were difficult to recognize (i.e., mission creep), and many qualities (i.e., culture and values) could not be easily evaluated or assessed (Hinton, 2012; Rowley et al., 1997, p. 155). As strategic planning and accreditation activities began to become more intertwined, many community colleges stripped down their comprehensive mission statements into "a very short, basic statement of purpose" (Hinton, 2012, p. 9). In conjunction with paring down the mission statement, many college leaders began to identify "mission priorities" (see McPhail & McPhail, 2006).

Preparing the organization to engage in strategic planning (preplanning). Morrill (2007), consistent with Hamel and Prahalad (1994) and Toma (2010), summarized the internal leadership competencies necessary for successful strategic planning as ". . integrative system thinking, quantitative reasoning, collaborative decision

making, effective communication, sensitivity to narratives and values, and a capacity to work in structured group processes" (p. 18).

The pre-planning stage is an important step for higher educational leaders (Toma, 2010). The leader must overcome internal mindsets and cultural beliefs about strategic planning (Woods-Wilson, 2012). The phrase, "strategic planning" is often seen, by both faculty and administration, as the latest management fad and a complete waste of time (Birnbaum, 2001; Cope, 1987; Schmidtlein & Milton, 1990). Strong leadership through the pre-planning process is necessary as the "planning processes frequently open up a broad array of latent as well as obvious political issues, overloading an institution's capacity for resolving them" (Schmidtlein & Milton, 1990, pp. 11-12).

The pre-planning stage is where the organization opens the planning process to the entire organization and all stakeholders. According to Cope (1987), "the deficiencies of planning in higher education have not been recognizing the need for planning, but recognizing the need for planning at different levels" (p. 66). Taylor, De Lourdes Machado, and Peterson (2008) stated that the pre-planning phase allows the institution to communicate that all members' contributions are an imperative, valued part of the strategic planning process. Keller (1987) added, "communication must be effective and continued, from the inception of planning through the several years of its implementation" (p. 165). Morrill (2007) stated that the goals of preplanning communication should be to create "a sense of urgency to respond to tough external pressures, and to seize the attention of busy academics who are preoccupied with the many other claims on them" (p. 219). "If strategic issues are to engage an academic community, they must be communicated skillfully and persistently, and at times,

movingly" (Morrill, 2007 p. 219). Both Keller and Morrill indicated that leaders should engage in a dialogue during the pre-planning phase that is led by "(1) raising questions, not providing answers' (2) using debate and dialogue, not coercion; (3) conducting autopsies on mistakes without placing blame; and (4) building red-flag problem indicators into their systems of information" (Morrill, 2007, p. 7)

Each internal dimension of the organization influences the choice of strategic planning perspective. The internal dimensions dictate communication, culture, decision making, leadership, organizational design, and the internal ability of the organization to cope with change. The values scan reveals the values inherent in the organization's culture. The culture of an organization also contributes to the leadership cognitive frame (Goodstein et al., 1993).

The Positioning Phase

The second phase of strategic planning formulation is the positioning phase. During the positioning phase the college utilizes an external frame by examining "'all phenomena that are external to and potentially or actually influence the organization under study'" (Hawley, 1968, as cited in Smith-Ring, 2000, p. 92). According to Goodstein et al. (1993), the major external environments that impact higher education are the macro environment (i.e., the major external and uncontrollable factors that influence the organization) the industrial environment (i.e., external factors that impact everyone in the same industry) and the competitive environment (i.e., degree of competition or rivalry within a particular industry).

This is important to my study because each of the external factors are intertwined and subsequently impact a leader's choice of strategic planning perspective (Pitkethly,

2006). Research has suggested that not all forces are operating in the environments at any one time. Alfred (2007) categorized the environments in terms of whether they were ". . . perennial drivers (drivers that continue without interruption) or situational drivers (drivers that emerge under special conditions)" (p. 108).

To examine the external environment colleges may use various tools and techniques. Which tools institutions use is strongly influenced by accreditation agencies (Woods-Wilson, 2012). To analyze all of the different tools and techniques used by community colleges during the positioning phase is well beyond the scope of my study. Therefore, this section explains the customary tools, and those that are recommended by accreditation agencies, (i.e., evaluating business models, conducting a situation (i.e., SWOT) analysis, emulating best practices, and scanning the macro environment) (Goodstein et al., 1993; Martinez & Wolverton, 2009; Rowley et al., 1998).

The business model. The business model is " the logic of the firm, the way it operates and how it creates value for its stakeholders" (Casadesus-Masanell & Ricart, 2010, p. 196). There is no agreement in higher education literature as to what constitutes a superior business model (Casadesus-Masanell & Ricart, 2010). Authors (i.e., Casadesus-Masanell & Ricart, 2010; Christensen et al., 2008) have agreed that the primary components of higher education business models are the customer value proposition (i.e., how the organization creates value for their customers), the profit formula (i.e., how the organization profits by delivering the customer value proposition), key resources (i.e., the most important assets to achieving the customer value proposition and profitability) , and key processes (i.e., the most important business rules or competencies) (Christensen et al., 2008). The greatest challenges facing colleges and

universities are student engagement, institutional accountability, revenue generation, and globalization (Fullan & Scott, 2009; Hinton, 2012; Woods-Wilson, 2012). Additionally, the overall higher education industry is changing (i.e., opening of access, funding pressures, growing competition, changing participation patterns, maintaining accrediting standards, and changing student demographics) (Fullan & Scott, 2009; Hinton, 2012; Woods-Wilson, 2012). These challenges coupled with the changes in the entire industry mean that traditional higher education business models are being replaced with more market-oriented, student-centered businesslike models (Fullan & Scott, 2009; Kerr, 2002). The higher education business model resembles a for-profit entity (Birnbaum, 2001; Woods-Wilson, 2012). Entrepreneurship has become a virtue in higher education. Departments are considered revenue centers, while students are considered customers (Birnbaum, 2001; Woods-Wilson, 2012). Each institution strives to balance their academic mission, focus, and values, while providing a service commodity in a for-profit manner that can be exported and imported (Fullan & Scott, 2009; Woods-Wilson, 2012).

SWOT analysis. Another tool used in the positioning phase of strategic planning is the situation or SWOT analysis. The origin of SWOT analysis is contrasting and contradictory throughout business and higher education literature (Friesner, 2011). Regardless of its origin, SWOT analysis has become a widely used rational tool that "if done well, achieves an insightful synthesis of the internal and external realities that define an organization's possibilities" (Morrill, 2010, p. 162). According to Morrill (2010), the SWOT analysis teases out the opportunities and threats that the institution faces and also turns the institution's focus inward allowing it to identify areas of institutional strength and weakness. "In both cases the analysis is relational and contextual" (Morrill, 2010, p.

163). In higher education, examples of internal strengths include reputation, customer service, partnerships, accreditation, awards conferred, human capital, student life, student leadership, student-centered learning communities, small class sizes, infrastructure, diversity, and shared governance (Cordeiro & Vaidya, 2002). Examples of internal weaknesses include a lack of unique competencies, top-heavy organizational structure, slow response to student and community needs, fiscal uncertainty, high turnover, inability to adjust to uncertainty, weak or unclear organizational culture, limited resources for faculty and staff development, excessive reporting at the expense of student success, and promoting egalitarianism (Cordeiro & Vaidya, 2002). Opportunities are external factors where the organization is particularly well suited to obtain a competitive advantage. Threats are external factors where the organization is at a disadvantage or where competitors already have a stronghold.

To be valuable to strategic planning formulation the SWOT analysis must be objective and succinct. According to Goodstein et al. (1993), the SWOT requires "detached objectivity and a willingness to evaluate realistically the internal strengths and weaknesses of the organization as painful as such an analysis may be" (p. 25). Similarly Jackson (2007) indicated that the SWOT analysis should not be an endless discussion that derails strategic planning formation.

Benchmarking. Another tool used during the positioning phase of strategic planning is benchmarking (i.e., a continuous process of comparing one's organization to others or studying the processes of other institutions and then debriefing the findings to formulate the organization's own goals and benchmarks). The goal of benchmarking is to provide external standards in order to measure the quality and cost of internal activities,

and to identify areas for improvement (Alstete, 1997). Benchmarking and other synonyms for organizational improvement (i.e., business models) appear regularly in accreditation literature (Spangehl, 2012). According to Birnbaum (2001), benchmarking appeared to be particularly well-suited to higher education due to its quantitative nature and reliance on research methodology. However, what had been adopted by higher education as "benchmarking" was "not benchmarking at all, but a half-sibling called *performance indicators* and a kissing cousin called *performance funding*" (emphasis in original, Birnbaum, 2001, p. 80). The primary difference between benchmarking and performance indicators is that in benchmarking an organization studies the processes that were instrumental in setting the benchmark. However, in creating performance indicators, the organization simply adopts the benchmark with little understanding of what processes led to the benchmark (Birnbaum, 2001). In higher education, performance indicators became tools for management control and decision-making "because they dealt with outcomes and not processes" (Birnbaum, 2001, p. 81). Although benchmarking is inherent in the process of performance indicators and performance funding, performance indicators and performance funding can exist without benchmarking. Therefore, benchmarking did not produce the same type of result at each institution. According to Birnbaum (2001), indicators failed to answer the basic questions of benchmarking: "How is the organization doing compared to others? How good does the organization want to be? Who is doing the best? How did they do it? How can our organization adapt what they are doing at their institution to our own institution? And how can our organization do it better?" (Kempner, 1998, as cited by Birnbaum, 2001, p. 81).

The unintended consequence of performance indicators was performance funding.

With vast amounts of data available and the accountability and assessment movement of the mid-1980s, everything was measured, given value, and that value was then held as a standard for accountability in funding (Gaither, Nedwek, & Neal, 1994). A number of state and federal reports were developed based on these measurements, giving rise to an entire industry of consumer-focused comparative reports, such as state report cards" (Hinton, 2012, p. 7). However, "performance measures [or dashboards] 'often lacked validity and reliability'" (Gaither et al., 1994, p. 8). The measures often used criteria that was not empirically related to quality or that emphasized institutional contributions to state economic growth rather than to student learning (Birnbaum, 2001).

      Environmental scanning. One of the most prevalent tools used to competitively position a college is macro environmental scanning (i.e., PECTS or scanning the political/legal, economic, competitive, technological and societal environments to determine how changes in those areas will influence an institution). Macro environmental scanning provides organizations with a proactive way to respond to the rate of change and level of complexity occurring in the external environment. The macro environmental trends impacting community colleges include "changing external conditions, including changing demography; demands for accountability from outside agencies; decreasing financial strength and increasing operational costs and disruptive information technologies" (Dalrymple, 2007, p. 4; Goodstein et al., 1993; Hinton, 2012; Woods-Wilson, 2012). Not only do these external conditions represent areas that must be continually scanned for change, they also represent areas that impact a community college leader's choice of strategic planning perspective.

The Directional Phase

The last phase of strategic planning formulation is the directional phase. In the directional phase the institution chooses a strategic perspective and a subsequent strategic process for implementation. In for-profit organizations the directional phase culminates with the choice of strategy and embarking on the implementation phase. In higher education, the entire strategic planning process is contingent on accreditation mandates.

The goal of the directional phase is to "infuse a culture of continuous quality improvement into colleges and universities through processes [i.e., strategic planning] that provide evidence for accreditation" (Spangehl, 2012, p. 29). Consequently, in higher education strategic planning appears to be a more iterative process. Therefore, most higher education strategic planning literature does not delineate the formulation phase from the implementation phase (Peterson & Dill, 1997).

Depending on the type of strategic perspectives adopted by institutions there may not be a clear delineation between the formulation phase and implementation phase of strategic planning. If organizations were utilizing an iterative approach to strategic planning, no separation between formulation and implementation would exist. Formulation and implementation would be a continuous cycle without a firm line of demarcation.

One of the outcomes of the directional phase is to prepare an implementation plan. Kiechel (1984) indicated that only 10% of formulated strategies were actually implemented. Drawing from Kiechel, it was determined that every failure of implementation was a result of a failure in formulation. Mintzberg (1994) stated that the failure of strategic planning was the disassociation that exists between formulation and

implementation which is also separating thinking from acting (Mintzberg, 1994).

The formulation phase of strategy is comprised of three separate stages. The foundation phase establishes the institution's values, vision, and mission statement, and prepares the organization to engage in the strategic planning process. In foundation phase, the organization decisively answers the questions: Who are we? What do we stand for? The second phase is the positioning phase where organizational leaders use various tools to introspectively examine their organization and examine the environment in which they compete. In the positioning phase, the organization decisively answers the questions: Where do we operate? Who are our competitors? The last phase is the directional phase that builds from the foundation and positioning phase to produce a way to implement the strategy and to infuse strategic thinking throughout the organization.

Although many of the stages of the strategic planning process are applicable to both for-profit organizations and higher educational institutions, these two entities diverge when considering the factors that influence strategic planning perspectives and processes. Higher education institutions have unique organizational designs and the informal structures within these organizations can be just as powerful, if not more so, than the formal structures. These organizational factors (i.e., communication, culture/motivation, decision making/control, leadership/power, and organizational design) have a direct influence on the processes and perspectives that are used in strategic planning formulation. Understanding the unique factors that influence strategic planning processes and perspectives is important to my study because the interplay between these factors may explain what distinct community colleges are doing with respect to strategic planning perspectives and processes. To understand distinctive community colleges it is

also important to examine the multitude of relationships between environments, organizations, and individuals.

The next section discusses those factors that influence strategic planning processes and perspectives. Although few researchers have explored both the internal and external factors that influence strategic planning perspectives, some studies (i.e., Hutzschenreuter & Kleindienst, 2006; Peterson & Dill, 1997) briefly discussed these influences using different terminology.

Factors Effecting Strategic Planning Perspectives and Processes

In addition to those external factors already discussed, Peterson and Dill (1997) indicated that higher educational institutions processes were impacted by the environmental assumption, the organization-environment dynamic, institutional strategy, and planning process. The external perspectives addressed the macro environmental factors (changing demography, demands for accountability, decreasing financial strength, increasing operational costs and disruptive information technologies), and how the institution responded to those factors (passive, reactive, or proactive), which informed the premise of the strategy (goal achievement, organizational change, or communication) (Chaffee, 1985).

The internal perspectives developed by Peterson and Dill (1997), included organizational planning focus, motivation mechanism, mode of control, and member behavior. Peterson's categorical framework both summarized and supported other studies that examined internal factors and strategic planning (e.g., Chaffee, 1985; Fariborz Rahimnia, Pavel, & Sharp, 2005). One of the most important characteristics of organizational structure in higher education was that the "knowledge areas form the basic

foci of attention [in strategic planning]" (van Vught, 1988, p. 28).

Organizational Planning Focus

Traditionally, the organizational design in higher education has been fragmented knowledge areas that form the "building blocks" of the organizational design (Fariborz Rahimnia et al., 2005; van Vught, 1988). The four building blocks of organizational design are organizational structure, function, infrastructure, and integration (Rowley & Sherman, 2001). An organizational chart depicts organizational structure. But organizational design in higher education appears to be much more complex than can be illustrated in a chart (Weick, 1979). Unlike traditional business organizations that have a specific organizational design, higher education may have a multitude of structures (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). Faculty members have organic structures that have substantial authority over decision-making and have the capacity to support or hinder strategy (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008; Chaffee & Jacobson, 1997; Gumport & Pusser, 1997). Administrators' structures are more bureaucratic. These structures must maintain and grow the institution. "These two structures exist in parallel and have no consistent patterns in structure, delegation, or authority" (Fariborz Rahimnia et al., 2005, p. 6). Therefore, it is important to not only explore the organizational chart, but those underlying cultures which are not represented in black and white.

Structure. How the organization coordinates the dual structures depends on how authority is granted in the organizational structure and the formal organizational policies (i.e., decision making) (Gumport & Pusser, 1997). The structure is combined with division, unit, and individual functions to form a loosely coupled system (Chaffee, 1985; van Vught, 1988). Over time this loosely coupled system differentiates and divides itself

into "smaller, functional units of academic specialization" (Gumport & Pusser, 1997, p. 456).

Integration. Integration is the extent to which different units integrate their activities and efforts (Rowley & Sherman, 2001). The parts of the organization are integrated into the whole through structural and procedural interdependence coupled with professional and administrative authority (Gumport & Pusser, 1997). Traditionally, higher education has suffered from isolating activities and programs that have "minimized the need for coordination across tasks and maximized the discretion of the specialists who carry out those tasks" (van Vught, 1988).

Infrastructure. College infrastructure includes physical plant, technology, management information systems and capital items (Rowley & Sherman, 2001). In firms that are capital intensive, planning for expenditures must happen well in advance. "With respect to integration and control, strategic planning is valuable because capital-intensive firms require steady, surprise-free, coordinated operations to be successful" (Grinyer et al., 1986; Schmenner, 1986 as cited in Miller & Cardinal, 1994, p. 1651).

Motivation mechanism. Peterson and Dill (1997) indicated that motivation was the reason why the higher education institutions chose to undertake strategic planning in the first place. Peterson et al. (1997) stated that the motivation mechanisms could range from leadership wanting to gain, or retain, direction and control, to having the organization engender particular themes and visions that resided with the stakeholders.

The motivations that drive an institution to engage in strategic planning may be an factor of the institution's success with strategic planning. If an organization is responding to external mandates as opposed to embracing a process that leads to strategic thinking,

then the model adopted will not have the necessary prerequisites for success (Rowley et al., 1997). Bryson and Bromiley (1993) determined a correlation between the impetus for engaging in strategic planning and success or failure of the process.

Mode of Control

The mode of control is the mechanism that leadership uses to ensure fulfillment of the strategic plan. Although the mode of control could be considered more of a strategy implementation factor as opposed to a formulation factor, mode of control does correlate to organizational decision making and organizational design (Fariborz Rahimnia et al., 2005). The dual organizational structures present in higher education each have differing modes of control that they deem appropriate. Administrators embrace accountability measures as a more appropriate mode of control than the disciplinary measures advocated by the faculty. The congruence between institutional measures and disciplinary measures is paramount for successful strategic planning to occur (Chaffee & Jacobson, 1997; Fariborz Rahimnia et al., 2005).

Member Behavior

Member behavior encompasses the organization's culture. In community colleges, shared governance, tenure, unionization, and power bases all impact a college's organizational culture (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008; Chait, 2002). Each of these internal factors contributes to the selection of the appropriate strategic planning perspective (Chaffee & Jacobson, 1997; Fariborz Rahimnia et al., 2005).

Culture. According to Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) there are six competing cultures operating simultaneously in institutions of higher education. The six cultures are collegial (valuing academic freedom), managerial (valuing efficiency, accountability, and

rational planning), developmental (valuing affective and moral development of students), advocacy (valuing equity, social justice, and collective action), virtual (valuing the effect of online epistemology), and tangible (valuing refocusing the institution on core identity) (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). Each of the six cultural values is contradictory. Conflict between the cultures is inevitable. Additionally, the cultures of administrators, faculty, students, and staff may overlap and can also be in conflict with one another (Chaffee & Jacobson, 1997).

To overcome conflict between the subcultures Chaffee and Jacobson (1997) stated that the "strategic report" cannot replace the need for communication across the various subcultures. Communicating "planning related information" through various channels in the organization coupled with various forms of analysis (i.e., modes of control) can overcome the resistance to change in the organization (Chaffee & Jacobson, 1997). Bergquist & Pawlak (2008) stated that leaders should avoid the "one best size fits all" cultural mandates, and use creative interplay that weaves the various cultural strands together in a meaningful way.

Other facets of organizational culture that influence a community college's choice of strategic planning perspective are tenure, unionization, and shared governance. Each of these factors determine the positions of power within higher education institutions (Chait, 2002). According to Chait (2002), the *1966 Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities* which was jointly formulated by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the American Council on Education (ACE), and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) declared that "faculty have 'the primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and

methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process' (p. 183)" (AAUP, 1966, as cited in Chait, 2002, p. 301). This statement indicated that the primary base of power in higher education resided with the faculty. In the areas above, "governing boards and presidents should, on the questions of faculty status, as in other matters where faculty have the primary responsibility, concur with the faculty judgment except in rare instances and for compelling reasons . . ." (Chait, 2002, p. 301). For 22 years, the power base firmly resided with the faculty. However, in 1998, the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges changed its position and in the "Statement on Institutional Governance" indicated that the institution's governing board had the "ultimate responsibility" with matters related to mission, and strategy. Additionally, the statement declared that the board had the "'right to question, challenge, and occasionally override decisions or proposals,' including academic decisions and proposals to adopt or eliminate academic programs" (Chait, 2002, p. 301). The statement by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges was intended to ensure that no one stakeholder in the organization had any more power than any other (Chait, 2002).

Power. The shift in the power base was widely debated in academic circles. The debate was an "Academic Revolution." However, not all higher education institutions were affected by these declarations to the same degree. Community colleges experienced the greatest changes as they have the greatest degree of non-tenured and part-time faculty. Non-tenured, non-unionized community colleges saw a greater degree of board centralization of control (Chait, 2002). Tenured or unionized community colleges experienced less centralization because the systems were in place to ensure that the

faculty had a voice in the governance of the institution.

Planners at community colleges must consider both external and internal factors when choosing a strategic planning perspective. The external environment is continually changing (i.e., changing demography, demands for accountability, decreasing financial strength, increasing operating costs, and disrupting technologies). The institution must audit the college's internal factors (i.e., strategic planning focus, motivation mechanism, mode of control, and member behavior) to ensure that the perspective selected is consistent with the internal organization. Leaders of community colleges must evaluate all of these factors to determine what strategic planning perspective is best suited to the institution.

Another factor effecting strategic planning perspectives and processes is institutional accreditation. Accreditation agencies see strategic planning as a gateway to strategic leadership. Institutions start with strategic planning and leaders of these institutions start to manage strategically, finally the institution evolves into a strategically led institution. The work by Chaffee and Jacobson (1997), Neumann and Larson (1997), and Rowley et al. (1998) each specify that the culmination of strategic planning is to embed strategic thinking into the organization. Rowley and Sherman (2001) allude to this transformation by indicating that the directional phase is where organization should "decide what should happen, and then develop the strategic plan-and strategic thinking . . . to ensure that the plan will happen" (p. 278).

During the preplanning phase the organization must consider external agencies that may impact the choice of strategic planning perspective and the strategic planning process. The major external influence on strategic planning in higher education is

accrediting agencies. "Higher education institutions rely on accreditation for various reasons. Among them are programmatic prestige, respect among organizations who hire their graduates, funding or financial aid resources, as well as enrollment of students with a greater opportunity to be successful both in the institution and in the work force" (Woods-Wilson, 2012, p. 152). Accreditation is "a generally agreed upon external measure of quality assurance that validates the work of a higher educational institution as legitimate, providing education consistently at a high standard of academic value" (Woods-Wilson, 2012, p. 151).

The accreditation process as outlined by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) influences many aspects of the strategic planning process. "It, [accreditation], is a credible accountability report for all constituencies interested in organizational performance, including specialized accrediting agencies, state regulators, funding and grant agencies, voters, legislators, and various public groups" (Higher Learning Commission, 2003, p. 6.3-3). Each pathway to accreditation (i.e., PEAQ, AQIP, or Open) is designed to infuse a culture of continuous improvement and to integrate strategic thinking in every area of the institution. Accreditation is an important aspect of my study because many of the reasons why institutions do what they do with respect to strategic planning processes (i.e., the activities of strategic planning) is because these activities are mandated by the HLC. Additionally, to remain competitive, many institutions must be accredited or reaccredited. According to Woods-Wilson (2012), "the need for accreditation has intensified, not just to ensure quality, but to help institutions redefine and redesign their purpose" (p. 152).

Accreditation and Strategic Planning

This section presents and overview of institutional accreditation as outlined by the

Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Institutional accreditation is important to my study

because institutional accreditation and strategic planning are closely related (Goodman &

Willekens, 2001). Institutional accreditation influences, and even mandates many parts of

the strategic planning process. Due to the similarities between the two processes, Barker

and Smith (1998) have argued that a common process could be used for both strategic

planning and institutional accreditation (Goodman & Willekens, 2001). "It makes sense

to integrate accreditation efforts with ongoing planning, assessment, and improvement

initiatives" (Dodd, 2004, p. 15). The benefits of combining the two processes include:

increased efficiency of resources, increased unity between the strategic plan and the

Systems portfolio, and an increase in the consistency of service to external and internal

constituents (Barker & Smith, 1998).

Although researchers agree that there is a link between strategic planning and

accreditation, some (e.g., Alstete, 2004; Barker & Smith, 1998) view the two processes as

interdependent, whereas, others (e.g., Dodd, 2004; Jackson, Davis, & Jackson, 2010;

Spangehl, 2012) see accreditation as an input to strategic planning where the "self-

assessment is used as the catalyst for strategic planning" (Dodd, 2004, p. 15). Regardless

of whether there is a direct or indirect link between accreditation and strategic planning

formulation, the two processes do, and are meant to, influence one another (Higher

Learning Commission, 2003).

This section starts with a brief history of accreditation, followed by a synopsis of

the different type of accreditation pathways. This is important to know for my study

because the convergence between strategic planning and accreditation is a relatively new

phenomenon. Yet some researchers (i.e., Goodman & Willekens, 2001) have found a

linkage between accreditation and strategic planning processes. Additionally, one of the

conceptual frameworks in my study (i.e., the Institutional Accreditation/Strategic

Planning process matrix) illustrates exactly how the interconnection between strategic

planning and accreditation differs according to pathway type.

The section also discusses accreditation's influence on strategic planning

formulation activities. Because my study focuses on those community colleges that have

followed the AQIP accreditation pathway, the section concludes with the AQIP principles

that underscore all of the AQIP categories.

History of Institutional Accreditation

Accreditation is a uniquely voluntary, nongovernmental, self-regulating,

evaluative American process that originated over a century ago. It has "two fundamental

purposes: quality assurance and institutional/program improvement" (Higher Learning

Commission, 2003, pp. 1.1 - 1). Voluntary accreditation is the cornerstone of the United

States post-secondary knowledge industry (Higher Learning Commission, 2003).

Regional accreditation provides accreditation by private agencies, requires a significant

exercise of self-evaluation by an institution or program, conducts team visits by the

accreditation agency members, judges institutional standards by experts and trained

peers, and allows institutions under review to respond to most steps in the accreditation

process. Although the HLC has changed accreditation standards and processes at least

two times since 2000, they still "rely on institutional self-evaluation, peer review, and

institutional response as essential to sound accreditation practice" (Barker & Smith;

Higher Learning Commission, 2003, pp. 1.1 - 1).

After the passage of the Higher Education Act of 1965, federal financial aid, and student enrollment increased dramatically (Brittingham, 2009). As a result, many higher educational institutions opened. Accreditation was needed to "vouch for educational quality while providing peer oversight . . . to serve both the public interest and the interest of higher education" (Brittingham, 2009, p. 13). According to Dodd (2004), the primary constituencies (i.e., stakeholders or constituents) that have a vested interest in accreditation are the students the institution serves, the institution's peers, the public at large, and governmental entities.

Between 1950 and 1965 regional accrediting organizations developed and adopted what are considered today's fundamentals in the accreditation process: a mission-based approach, accreditation standards, a self-study prepared by the institution, a visit by a team of peers who produced a report, and a decision by a commission overseeing a process of periodic review (Brittingham, 2009, pp. 14-15).

Pathways to Accreditation

In 2000, the Higher Learning Commission established two primary pathways to accreditation, the Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ) and Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) (Spangehl, 2012). The primary focus of PEAQ was process improvement. However, in 1999, "using the Baldridge framework as a foundation the NCA (i.e., North Central Accreditation later known as the Higher Learning Commission), with the help of a Pew Charitable Trust grant, [the Higher Learning Commission] initiated an alternative format [AQIP] for institutions previously

accredited under traditional standards" (Dodd, 2004, p. 23). The focus of AQIP is

outcomes (i.e., student outcomes and measures for success). The goal of AQIP is to

"capture the benefits of both the 'big picture' view (derived from completing a process-

focused Systems portfolio that comprehensively inventoried an institution's operations)

and close-ups that zoom in on Action Projects designed to create or improve specific

processes that will produce the results an institution wants" (Spangehl, 2012, p. 31).

Institutions seeking AQIP accreditation/reaccreditation create a " . . .Systems portfolio, of

no more than one hundred pages, documenting their ongoing progress on the nine AQIP

criteria" (Dodd, 2004, p. 24). "The Systems portfolio [(i.e., self-study)] consisted of an

organizational overview that explicates each of the major systems employed to

accomplish an organization's mission and objectives (Higher Learning Commission,

2003, p. 6.3-2). Although the HLC stated that there is "no single accreditation process

that represents the only - or best - way to assure and advance quality [they did began

phasing out PEAQ in favor of the AQIP model in 2003]" (Higher Learning Commission,

2003, p. 5.1-1). "By 2003 more than seventy institutions had participated in AQIP . . ."

(Dodd, 2004, p. 23).

In September 2012, the Higher Learning Commission "began a three-year

transition during which PEAQ would be replaced by two new Pathways, the Standard

Pathway and the Open Pathway" (Higher Learning Commission, 2012, p. 2). However,

according to the HLC, AQIP would remain unchanged for the foreseeable future.

Because AQIP has the longest tradition among community colleges, and it will remain a

viable accreditation pathway, my study was limited to those community colleges that are

AQIP accredited.

AQIP Criteria

"AQIP is characterized by its concentration on systems and processes both as a basis for quality assurance and as leverage for institutional improvement, the nine categories together are comprehensive, covering all of the key processes and goals . . ." (Higher Learning Commission, 2003, p. 6.2-1). Traditionally, the Higher Learning Commission used five criteria as a basis for accreditation. The AQIP pathway used "nine criteria [to] examine a category of processes vital to every college or university" (Higher Learning Commission, 2003, p. 6.2-2). Appendix A, Figure 2 describes how the five criteria are embedded in the nine AQIP criteria.

AQIP's synoptic structure and "specific questions about processes, results, and improvement allow each organization to fully describe its activities and accomplishments while analyzing itself . . ." (Higher Learning Commission, 2003, p. 6.2-2). For each of the nine AQIP criteria the institution answers specific questions that "deal with context for analysis, process, results, and improvement" (Higher Learning Commission, 2003, p. 6.3-2). Many of the questions either directly or indirectly link to strategic planning. "The organizational overview presents a capsule picture that helps readers understand the organization's key strengths and ambitions, as well as the challenges and conflicts it faces" (Higher Learning Commission, 2003, p. 6.3-2). Moreover, the Higher Learning Commission states that the Systems portfolio provides information about the organization (i.e., systems, processes, and performance) that "provides a context for appreciating the organization's choices and decisions" (p. 6.3-2).

Influence of Institutional Accreditation on Strategic Planning Formulation

Authors (i.e., Alstete, 2004; Barker & Smith, 1998) have agreed that there is a relationship between strategic planning and accreditation. In 2007, Cotter and Paris (2007) administered a survey to the members of the National Consortium for Continuous Improvement in Higher Education (NCCI). The respondents indicated that "planning and institutional accreditation are closely related" (Cotter & Paris, 2007, p. 7). Moreover, one of the respondents, the Office of Planning for Michigan State University, commented, "To the extent that overall university accreditation assesses academic quality as a whole and our BBD [Boldness by Design (i.e., strategic plan)], initiatives are all tied to that in some way, there is a strong link to accreditation" (Cotter & Paris, 2007, p. 7).

Other higher educational leaders and strategic planning researchers (i.e., Dodd, 2004; Goodman & Willekens, 2001; Jackson et al., 2010; Spangehl, 2012) view the relationship between strategic planning and accreditation as more complementary. One of the respondents to the survey conducted by Cotter and Paris (2007) indicated, "Recommendations from our HLC data-gathering *informs* our planning process" [emphasis added] (p. 7).

"Although strategic planning and accreditation are treated as separate issues in the literature, the two processes share many common elements" (Alstete, 2004, p. 52). Barker and Smith (1998) found commonalities between strategic planning formulation and institutional accreditation processes. In both processes the institution:

- must have a clearly stated mission;
- considers the external forces in the environment;
- uses a system of "ongoing evaluation and assessment with assessment of

outcomes being an important issue";

- engages in periodic assessment (i.e., tactical planning and departmental or programmatic accreditation);

- establishes a feedback loop to determine if specific goals are being met (p. 747).

The relationship between accreditation and strategic planning is important to my study because an institution's Systems portfolio provides insight into an institution's strategic planning process. According to the HLC,

the self-study report [Systems portfolio] should identify the plans that exist as well as evaluate the institution's past record of planning. It should describe the various planning committees and the processes at the institution and explain how the institution evaluates the usefulness of its planning process. (Higher Learning Commission, 1990, p. 18)

AQIP Alignment to Strategic Planning

Goodman and Willekens (2001) found a link between the Higher Learning Commission, "Criteria for Accreditation" and higher educational strategic planning processes. Goodman and Willekens composed a matrix that listed the five institutional criteria, and then linked those criteria to specific strategic planning activities. They went on to describe the potential impact that the institutional criterion would have on community college strategic planning efforts.

Much has changed since Goodman and Willekens (2001) published their matrix. The Higher Learning Commission has added additional accreditation pathways, phased out others, and increased the number of AQIP criteria from five to nine. Although dated,

their matrix does provide a framework for examining the linkages between strategic planning and accreditation. This is important to my study because in order to delve deeply into why distinctive community college's "do what they do" with respect to strategic planning, it is important to determine if institutions use processes because they are mandated by accreditation or because those processes yield "value" to their strategic planning efforts. To date, no one has updated the Goodman and Willekens' matrix. Revising their matrix to reflect the nuances (i.e., processes and results) of the nine AQIP criteria it becomes possible to use a college's Systems portfolio (i.e., self-study) to glean insight into an institution's strategic planning processes (see Appendix A). Likewise, it provides a means to parse out those processes that are a function of accreditation mandates and those processes that are unique to individual institutions.

In order to gain insight into strategic planning among leading community colleges it is important to look at the institution's processes. The Goodman and Willekens' (2001) matrix is a good starting point to determine whether strategic planning processes are unique to an institution or are part of institutional accreditation mandates. By analyzing the institution's Systems portfolio and then probing more deeply into a community college's experience with strategic planning phenomenon, I may be able to determine exactly what distinctive strategic planning processes are used at the participating community colleges.

Although understanding strategic planning processes are important to my study, these processes are a result of a leader's perspective on strategic planning. To study process without perspective does little to determine why leaders in distinctive community colleges "do what they do" with respect to strategic planning formulation.

The choice of strategic planning perspective impacts every facet of the college (Hahn & Powers; Ron & Peter, 2006). The literature does not address how or why community colleges choose a particular planning perspective. Nor does the literature examine why some perspectives appear to be more dominant than others. This lack of information coupled with the speculation that many community colleges may have simply "copied" traditional for-profit perspectives does little to assist other community colleges in choosing the best perspective for their institution.

The most comprehensive methodological framework for examining strategic planning perspectives is Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives framework. Their framework condensed the various strategic planning perspectives into nine distinctive categories (the tenth is a combination of perspectives 1 – 9). These categories are important to my study because it gives a comprehensive framework to study strategic planning perspectives and to determine to what extent leading community colleges align with Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 strategic perspectives.

Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's 10 Strategic Perspectives.

Early in the 1990s, Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel conducted a review of strategic planning peer-reviewed literature. Their research categorized strategic planning according to "particular points of view, most of which are reflected in management practice" (p. 4). These themes were unique perspectives that focused on major aspects of the strategy formation process (Mintzberg et al., 1998). The goal of their research was to ". . . determine whether the 10 perspectives were fundamentally different processes of strategy making or different parts of the same process" (Mintzberg et al., 2003, p. 22).

Mintzberg et al. (1998) divided the 10 perspectives into three prescriptive, six

descriptive, and one that was both prescriptive and descriptive. The first three

prescriptive themes (i.e., the design, planning, and positioning perspectives) were ". . .

functionalist and systems views of the firm [that were based on] sociological organization

theory" (Calori, 1998, p. 285). These prescriptive positions viewed corporate strategy as

". . .deductive reasoning for the general administration of the firm" (Calori, 1998, p. 285).

The focus of these perspectives was to prescribe rational strategic behaviors as they

pertain to the organization and its relationship with the environment.

The descriptive perspectives (i.e., entrepreneurial, cognitive, learning, power,

cultural, and environmental) were considered "specific aspects of the process of strategy

formation . . .and how strategies actually do, in fact, get made" (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p.

6). Each of these perspectives took a slightly different vantage point in exploring

relationships that existed between, and within, organizations and individuals.

The last perspective (i.e., configuration) was a culmination of the prior

perspectives. This theme sought to utilize the contributions of the previous perspectives

and categorize them into distinct phases that may be used to describe the life cycle of the

organization (Miller, 1986; Mintzberg et al., 1998).

The Design Perspective

Origin and premises. Originating from Selznick's *Leadership and*

Administration of 1957 and advanced by Chandler's (1962) work, the design perspective

was ". . . prescriptive in nature-more concerned with how strategy should be formulated

than how they necessarily do form" (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 5).

The basic premise of the design perspective was to create a model that reconciled

the internal organizational capabilities with the external environmental. Followers of the

design perspective followed elaborate techniques that were designed to study the firm's internal and external position. After key success factors were identified and distinctive competencies explored, top management would set the strategic direction.

According to Mintzberg et al. (1998) the basic premise of the design perspective was that strategy formulation had to be learned. Because chief executive officers had the knowledge base, they should develop the plan and then delegate these plans to subordinates for implementation. "Senior management formulates clear, simple, and unique strategies in a deliberate process of conscious thought-which is neither formally analytical nor informally intuitive-so that everyone can implement the strategies" (Hutzschenreuter & Kleindienst, 2006; Mintzberg et al., 2003, p. 23).

Another premise of the design perspective was that strategy formation should be simple and informal, and only after strategies were fully formed should they be implemented. These ideals lead critics to condemn the design perspective for linking analysis with synthesis (Mintzberg, 1994). Mintzberg et al. (1998) even indicated that these assertions appeared to be at odds with the first premise, "strategy as a tightly controlled process of human thinking " (p. 29). The conflict between these two ideas has been cited one of the reasons the design perspective did not develop as a standalone perspective. Instead the design perspective provided the theoretical foundations for subsequent perspectives (Mintzberg, 1990; Mintzberg & Lampel, 1999).

The fourth premise of the design perspective was that strategies should be unique. Due to its prescriptive nature the design perspective did not concentrate on content but focused on the creative process that should be used to build distinctive competencies (Mintzberg et al., 1998).

The final premise indicated that there should be finality to strategic planning. "The design process was complete when strategies appeared fully formulated as perspective" (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 32). This specific premise has drawn many critics (e.g., Hamel & Prahalad, 1994; Pettigrew et al., 2002; Whittington & Cailluet, 2008) for its shortsighted view of dynamic environments.

Critique and contributions. Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) critique of the design perspective found that the perspective rested heavily on "thought independent of action" (p. 36). The shortcomings of the design perspective included: a reliance on a stable environment, a view of formulation as a process of conception, a need to split formulation from implementation, and a dependence on subordinates to carry out an articulated strategy. According to Mintzberg et al. (1998) the design perspective provided a very narrow view of strategy.

The contribution of the design perspective to strategic planning formulation was that it laid the foundation for many of the later perspectives. The design perspective was the most influential of all of the strategic planning perspectives (Calori, 1998; Mintzberg et al., 1998). The design perspective has had historical significance in that it "developed an important vocabulary by which to discuss grand strategy, and it has provided the central notion that underlies so much of the prescription field in strategic management, namely that strategy represents a fundamental fit between environmental opportunity in internal capability" (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 45).

The Planning Perspective

     Origin and premises. The planning perspective grew from Igor Ansoff's (1965) work, *Corporate Strategy*. Although the design perspective also drew from Ansoff, the planning perspective viewed strategy as a more formal, linear process. According to Mintzberg and Lampel (1999), ". . . the process was not just cerebral but formal, decomposable into distinct steps, delineated by checklists, and supported by techniques (especially with regard to objectives, budgets, programs, and operating plans)" (¶ 4).

     The goal of the planning perspective was to formalize strategic planning. By integrating control measures into strategic planning the organization could monitor overall strategic processes thereby ensuring implementation (Mintzberg et al., 1998). Utilizing levers of control that addressed belief systems (values, purpose and direction), boundary systems (limits to action), diagnostic control systems (goal achievement) and interactive control systems (budgets) strategy could be developed in a specific, structured, and formalized way (Mintzberg et al., 1998).

     The planning perspective was deeply rooted in the basic model of the design perspective. The primary tool of the perspective was SWOT analysis. As stated previously, the emphasis of a SWOT was to analyze situational variables for strengths and weaknesses that are internal to the organization and evaluate them against opportunities and threats that were external to the organization. Many of the tools used in the planning perspective created checklists and procedures to achieve strategic objectives. Each procedure was relatively similar and followed the basic production model (Mintzberg et al., 1998). The steps included setting measurable goals (i.e., the input), assessing the external environment, auditing the organization's internal conditions, (i.e.,

the process) and analyzing strategies for viability using quantitative tools (i.e., the output). The planning perspective used objectives to drive behavior and behaviors to achieve performance goals. According to Mintzberg (1998), ". . . in the fully developed model, objectives drove the formulation of strategies which, in turn, invoked programs, the results of which influenced budgets for purposes of control" (p. 57).

Critique and contributions. During the early 1980s, several staunch opponents, including Mintzberg, indicated that the planning perspective had devolved into nothing more than quantitative trend analysis. Mintzberg's 1994 work, *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning*, indicated that "few of the supposedly brilliant strategies concocted by planners were successfully implemented" (p. 63). He criticized all the prescriptive planners for their lack of adaptability and generalizability. Mintzberg et al. (1998) argued that in an unpredictable environment it is impossible to pre-plan strategy. The uncertainty of the environment would continually negate predetermined courses of action (Mintzberg et al., 1998).

Mintzberg et al.'s criticisms of the prescriptive planners were quickly dismissed by the followers of the design, planning, and positioning perspectives. Ansoff (1991) indicated that Mintzberg et al.'s criticisms were ill informed and lacked ". . . methodological soundness and factual veracity" (p. 449). Ansoff declared that the foundational work of the design perspective was not only integrated into the planning perspective, but the planning and positioning perspectives had continued to ". . . stay in close touch with the changing practice of strategic management, adopting many prescriptions which have emerged in practice" (Ansoff, 1991, p. 452). He termed the evolved design/planning perspective, "Holistic Strategic Management." Ansoff (1991)

further quipped, "Because of his [Mintzberg's] dismissal of 'the other' prescriptive perspectives, it is not possible to tell whether Mintzberg is aware of the existence of this perspective" (Ansoff, 1991, p. 452).

Both Mintzberg's (1998) and Ansoff's (1991) views reflected the divergent ideologies indicative of strategic planning research and practice. However, the planning perspective became the hallmark of the rational mechanistic approach to strategic planning. Even though the rational model was under scrutiny as external environments became more turbulent, the planning model became the primary strategic perspective of many colleges and university leaders (Martinez & Wolverton, 2009).

The debate between Mintzberg (1998) and Ansoff (1991) is important to my study because it highlights one of the problems with studying strategy. In order to study strategy, one must examine various aspects of organizations. According to Calori (1998), strategy is ". . . both an organizational phenomenon (i.e., Ansoff, 1987) and an individual phenomenon . . . this problem can be negotiated by conceiving strategy making as a 'conversation' between a few individuals interacting with each other . . ." (p. 283). The rest of the perspectives examined one or more of these relationships.

The Positioning Perspective

Origin and premises. The positioning perspective retained many of the principles of the planning perspective including SWOT analysis and the "strategy precedes structure" philosophy. The difference between the planning and positioning perspectives was the emphasis on the competitive environment. In the positioning perspective, the planner studied the environment and used analytical frameworks (i.e., tools) that generated an optimum strategy. Strategies were based on Michael Porter

(1980), who espoused three "generic strategies" (i.e., cost leadership, differentiation, or a combination of either cost leadership or differentiation) (Porter, 1980).

Porter (1980) noted that one of the primary pitfalls of organizational strategic planning was that the organization failed to follow one of these generic strategies or, in times of crisis, flipped back and forth between strategies. These organizations were "stuck in the middle." Moreover, they could not differentiate themselves enough from the competition to gain market share. According to Porter (1980), these organizations probably ". . . suffered from a blurred corporate culture and a conflicting set of organizational arrangements and motivational systems" (p. 42).

In choosing which generic strategy (i.e., cost leadership, differentiation, or focus) was best for an organization, Porter (1980) would use analytical techniques that would reveal the "right" strategy. Organization's leaders would choose one of the three strategies that was "best suited to the firm's strengths and the one that was least replicable by competitors" (Porter, 1980, p. 44).

Critique and contributions. The primary criticism of the positioning perspective was the limited number of strategies that an organization could choose. When an organization aligned themselves toward a generic strategy even when the environment was rapidly changing it was detrimental to the organization. Many times an organization illustrated escalation of commitment toward their chosen strategy rather than choosing a new strategy that was more suited to their changing environment.

Another criticism of the positioning perspective was that it had a distinct bias toward binary logic. According to Calori (1998), an organization must choose one particular generic strategy or risk being "stuck in the middle." This meant that the

organization simplified the number of possibilities and ignored the multiplicity of alternatives that existed between cost-leadership and differentiation. Organizations that failed to consider unofficial sanctioned strategies and prematurely chose a strategy may have limited the firm's ability to act thus, creating a narrow vision for the organization.

According to Mintzberg et al. (1998), although the positioning perspective was seemingly one of the most progressive of all prescriptive perspectives, it was also among the most deterministic. As the model b choice of strategy, it narrowly defined the strategies that could be used (Mintzberg et al., 1998). He chastised generic strategies for their lack of originality and their ease of replication.

Mintzberg et al. (1980) also criticized the positioning model because it perpetuated the idea that analysis could produce synthesis. The positioning perspective had reduced the role of strategy formulation to simply conducting a strategic analysis that supported a particular generic strategy. (Mintzberg et al., 1998) believed that the role of positioning was to support the strategy process, not to replace strategy formulation.

The contribution of the positioning perspective was that organizations could have a specific strategy rather than leave things to chance. Additionally, Porter (1980) drew attention to the necessity to understand the dynamic competitive framework in strategy formulation. Perhaps due to its ease of use, Porter's work continues to be very influential in strategic planning formulation.

Although the positioning perspective is the most widely adopted perspective to date, many critics (i.e., Hamel & Prahalad, 1994; Miles & Snow, 2003; Mintzberg, 1994; Pettigrew et al., 2002) questioned whether in an ever changing environment strategy could be preplanned. According to Mintzberg (1985), the positioning perspective was not

wrong, but extremely narrow. Porter (1980) indicated that strategy could be crafted using analytic techniques. However, in the strategist's quest to quantify a strategy using external factors, vital internal components (e.g., internal communication, culture, decision making, leadership, and organizational design) were "left out of the equation."

The Entrepreneurial Perspective

Origin and premises. Similar to the design, planning, and positioning perspectives the entrepreneurial perspective grew from economic thought, specifically the work of Schumpeter (Swedberg, 1991). As organizations grew, many economic theories began to study the role of the leader in the strategic planning. In the entrepreneurial perspective, the leader's contribution to strategy became the focal point of strategic planning research.

The entrepreneurial perspective combined the fields of strategic management and entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship was defined as "the identification and exploitation of previously unexploited opportunities" (Hitt, Ireland, Camp, & Sexton, 2001, p. 480). Strategic management provided "the context for entrepreneurial actions" (Ireland, Hitt, Camp, & Sexton, 2001, p. 50). Proponents of the entrepreneurial perspective believed that "strategic entrepreneurship is the integration of entrepreneurial (i.e., opportunity-seeking behavior) and strategic (i.e., advantage-seeking) perspectives in developing and taking actions designed to create wealth" (Hitt et al., 2001, p. 481). As the entrepreneurial perspective evolved it integrated core ideologies from other perspectives (i.e., cognitive, learning, and cultural).

Critique and contributions. Early critics of the entrepreneurial perspective (i.e.,

Hamel & Prahalad, 1994; Mintzberg & Lampel, 1999), chastised the perspective in that it

". . . presented strategy formation as all wrapped up in the behavior of a single individual,

yet it can never really say much about what the process is . . . [the process of strategic

planning remains] . . buried in human cognition" (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 144).

Therefore, when an organization was underperforming the easiest solution was to find a

new leader.

Another early criticism of the entrepreneurial perspective was that the chief

executive officer was the central actor in strategy. Rather than disseminate strategic

planning throughout the organization, the early followers of the entrepreneurial

perspective sought to centralize the process "hinging on the health and whims of one

individual" (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 145).

As the entrepreneurial perspective evolved it began to integrate many of the

premises of other perspectives (i.e., cognitive, learning, and cultural). The current

disposition of the entrepreneurial perspective is much more descriptive and not only

integrates adaptive leadership but also champions the idea of an adaptive organization.

The entrepreneurial perspective was the springboard to the cognitive perspective which

seeks to understand the mind of the strategist (Mintzberg et al., 1998).

The Cognitive Perspective

Origin and premises. Unlike the previous perspectives, the cognitive perspective

was a prescriptive collection of research that stemmed from the field of cognitive

psychology. The main premise of the cognitive perspective was that the cognitive styles

of strategists differed significantly ". . . so that psychologists who studied such

characteristics of human behavior as 'cognitive complexity' or 'openness' helped to inform strategy making" (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 154). The strategist created, ". . . relationships by bringing connections and patterns to action" (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 169).

The cognitive perspective delved more deeply into the leader than the entrepreneurial perspective. The cognitive perspective sought to explore the way that the strategist "*sees*" the environment. The primary emphasis of the perspective was to determine how strategists' cognitive maps influenced strategy formation (Mintzberg et al., 1998). A strategist's cognitive frame as well as the strategist's interpretation of the macro environment is susceptible to filtration bias. Therefore, these frames of interpretation may not accurately reflect how the world actually existed (Mintzberg, 1994). "We build our own and our shared realities and then we become victims of them – blind to the fact that they are constructs, ideas" (Langer, 1990, p. 11).

Critique and contributions. Mintzberg et al. (1998) believed that the work in ". . . cognitive psychology has not been terribly helpful [in explaining strategy formation]" (p. 162). However, proponents of the cognitive perspective (e.g., Chaffee, 1984; Hamel & Prahalad, 1994) disagreed. The cognitive perspective probed the mind of the strategist. It highlighted the narrative fallacy and dimension reduction that may unconsciously effect strategy formulation and implementation. "The way we first take in information (that is, mindfully or mindlessly) determines how we will use it later" (Langer, 1990, p. 25).

One of the strengths of the cognitive perspective was questioning the plausibility of a pre-determined strategy. Starting with the Myers-Briggs instrument (Myers, 1962),

and then expanding into decision heuristics, and cognitive mapping, the cognitive perspective continued to question whether, in a changing informational environment a strategist's decisions could be stable. "There was no shortage of evidence about organizations that got locked into set ways of doing things, based on set ways of *seeing* things, and then spiraled downward as the world around them changed" (emphasis in original, Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 154).

The main contribution from the cognitive perspective was that it highlighted the relationship between cognition and strategy. The cognitive perspective examined the cognitive component in the mind of the strategist. It also highlighted the necessity for organizations and individuals to question, that which we do not question (Taleb, 2007).

The Learning Perspective

Origin and premises. The origin of the learning perspective began with Lindblom's (1959) article, "*The Science of Muddling Through*" (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 176). Lindblom's analysis of governmental organizations indicated policy making was not an orderly step-by-step process but rather a process which emerged as many actors involved in the process tried to ". . . cope with a world that is too complicated" (Mintzberg et al., 1998). Lindblom's theory, according to Mintzberg, indicated that "policy making is typically a never-ending process of successive steps in which continual nibbling is a substitute for a good bite" (Mintzberg, 1994, p. 179). However, Lindblom indicated incremental steps would eventually lead to discernible patters that one could call strategy.

Building on the work of Lindblom, Quinn (1980) agreed in the incremental nature of strategy building, but she believed that process was far less random. Quinn proposed

the notion of strategy as integrated conceptions. Quinn interviewed leaders of large

organizations and found that the previous strategic planning perspectives did little to

inform strategy formulation. However, incrementalism not only explained strategy

formulation but determined that there was ". . . an underlying logic that knitted the pieces

together" (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 180). Later Taleb (2007) challenged Quinn's

analysis by stating that

> members of the human variety hunger for rules because we need to reduce the
>
> dimension of matters so they can get it into our heads . . . The more random
>
> information is, the greater the dimensionality, and thus the more difficult to
>
> summarize. The more you summarize, the more order you put in, the less
>
> randomness. (p. 69)

Among strategy scholars, the extent of logic or randomization in the learning perspective

has led to continued debate.

The main premise of the learning perspective was strategy was uncontrollable.

Due to the complex and unpredictable nature of the macro environment, coupled with

individual and group knowledge bases, strategy was more of an emergent process of

learning over time. Everyone within the organization relied on their interpretation of the

macro environment to inform strategies. This collective knowledge system would

subsequently inform strategy over time (Mintzberg et al., 1998).

The prime deterrents to learning were preconceived deliberate strategies, such as

those advocated by Ansoff (1965) and Porter (1980). By presetting strategy, innovative

and novel strategies fell by the wayside. Managers' behaviors inadvertently contributed

to the organization's problems. "We build our own and our shared realities and then we

become victims of them – blind to the fact that they are constructs, ideas (Langer, 1990, p. 11). Thus, strategies appeared out of the patterns of the past.

Critique and contributions. Quinn (2003) also saw the organization as made up of subsystems. Strategic management was the method that developed a consistent pattern of decision making in each organization's subsystem. Quinn's interpretation of an organization was later emphasized by Mintzberg (1998) - who proposed that every failure of implementation was a result of a failure of formulation. Mintzberg indicated that many of the previous perspectives disassociated formulation from implementation which was paramount to separating "thinking from acting" (Mintzberg & Lampel, 1999).

The learning perspective also differed with respect to structure. In the learning perspective, implementation did not follow formation. These two actions could be in any order. Therefore, strategy formation was truly a process whereby ". . . reality emerged from a constant interpreting and updating of our past experiences" (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 198).

The learning perspective forcefully challenged the rational foundation of the design, planning, and positioning perspectives. According to Mintzberg et al. (1998), the learning perspective set out to question the most basic premises of strategy, posing questions such as, "Who really is the architect of strategy and where in the organization does strategy formation actually take place?" "How do strategies actually form in organizations? How do they come into existence" (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 177)?

The primary contribution of the learning perspective was that it provided a stark contrast to many of the previous strategic planning perspectives. The learning perspective saw strategy as emergent rather than deliberate. Historically, leaders' saw strategy as well

planned, with an emphasis on controlling the organization. In the learning perspective, strategy was seen as emergent where ". . . unintended order, then patterns, may just form, driven by external forces and internal needs, rather than the conscious thoughts of any of the actors" (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 195).

The Power Perspective

Origin and premises. Quinn (1980) and Lindblom's (1959) work on the voluntary roles individuals play in organizations formed the basis for the power perspective. The power perspective interpreted strategy formation as ". . . an overt process of influence, emphasizing the use of power and politics to negotiate strategies favorable to particular interests" (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 234). Using French and Raven's research which categorized five basis of power (i.e., reward, coercive, legitimate, expert, and referent) (Tauber, 1985). French and Raven indicated that expert and referent power generally have a positive impact, reward and legitimate have a slightly positive impact, and coercive power has a slightly negative impact. "Reward, coercive, and negative legitimate power tended to produce compliance while positive, legitimate, expert, and referent power fostered internalization" (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2007, p. 439).

The premise of the power perspective was that the strategy process was shaped by "power and politics, whether the process was inside the organization or as the organization behaved in its external environment" (Mintzberg et al., 1998). Mintzberg et al. divided the power perspective into two distinct parts, the micro- and macro- power. Micro power was internal power wielding through persuasion, bargaining, or political games. Macro power was external to the organization. Organizations sought greater

control either by controlling, or by cooperating, with other organizations.

Critique and contributions. Mintzberg et al. (1985) declared that the power perspective had other points to make aside from the cost or benefit of networks and coalitions. However, because the main emphasis was on bases of power, it overstated the power-strategy relationship and may have missed some of the nuances of leadership and culture (Mintzberg et al., 1998).

The power perspective was significant to strategic planning because it addressed how changes in the macro environment shaped the organization. "It is very difficult to separate strategy formation and politics because many strategies are formulated during periods of major change in the internal and external environments" (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 261). It seemed that conditions that encouraged power and politics also encouraged strategic formation. Mintzberg et al. indicated that power and politics tend to be more prevalent in organizations that are undergoing periods of major change, are a large portion of market share, are complex with highly skilled knowledge workers, are trying to overcome victimization by a competitor, or are unable to craft any particular strategy (i.e., muddling through) (Mintzberg et al., 1998). It is difficult to discern whether strategy created politics, or politics created strategy. Mintzberg et al. advocated both are ever-present at the same time.

The Cultural Perspective

The cultural perspective took the ideas of the power perspective and began to explore the internal relationships in organizations. As opposed to the positioning perspective that studied an organization's from "outside-in" the cultural perspective studied organizational strategy from the "inside-out" (Mintzberg et al., 1998).

Origin and premises. During the 1980s when the big four automobile companies began to lose market share to the Japanese, US businesses became very interested in the idea of corporate culture (Goodstein et al., 1993). However, according to Schein (1990), research in organizational culture did not provide a thorough understanding of organizational culture. This was partially because the researcher must interpret many variables when studying either the internal, or external culture of an organization (Mintzberg et al., 1998). According to Goodstein, Nolan, and Pifer (1993), the most widely used working definition was derived from "Deal and Kennedy (1982):*'The Way We Do Things Around Here'*" (p. 57). "An organization's culture is a social system based on a central set of beliefs and values. This system was developed or learned as a consequence of the organization's efforts over time to cope with its environment" (Goodstein et al., 1993, p. 58).

An organization's culture was particularly important because it determined the frame through which the organization interprets information about its environment. Culture also provided a framework for decision-making, how resources would be distributed, whether innovation was encouraged or inhibited, and what perceptions and attitudes shaped the behavior of the organization (e.g., internal or external) (Goodstein et al., 1993; Pettigrew et al., 2002).

Researchers used two primary models of organization culture as a lens through which to study strategy formulation. The Deal and Kennedy (1982) presented four basic organizational cultures. These cultures included the top-guy/macho culture, the work-hard/play-hard culture, the bet-your-company culture, and the process culture (Goodstein et al., 1993). Although these typologies were useful to researchers in shaping discussion

regarding organizational cultures, these typologies were not all-inclusive and were very difficult to apply to strategy (Goodstein et al., 1993).

Like the Deal and Kennedy model, the Harrison and Stokes (1990) model also identified four different types of organizational cultures. However, the Harrison and Stokes model viewed the categories as continuums. Organizations were measured in order to determine the extent which power, role, achievement, or support cultures existed. Goodstein (1983) indicated that the "Harrison and Stokes model was more closely related to the reality of the organization . . . and also provided an instrument with which to begin the process of understanding the culture of a particular organization" (Goodstein et al., 1993, p. 64).

"The impact of organizational culture on both the process of planning and the resultant strategic plan was considerable"(Goodstein et al., 1993, p. 65). According to Goodstein (1993), an organization's culture determined the organization's view of the strategic planning process, whether the organization set realistic outcomes, how the organization viewed the external environment, and the assumptions the organization had about internal processes. Depending on the organization's culture, strategic planning could be viewed as a competitive necessity or an exercise in futility. Although organizational culture influenced more aspects of the organization than strategic planning, its impact on the strategic planning process could not be overlooked. Especially when organizational culture could deeply impact decision-making style, organizational change, organizational values, and culture clashes (Mintzberg et al., 1998).

Critique and contributions. Researchers have challenged the cultural perspective for its ". . . conceptual vagueness . . . [and its] . . . emphasis on tradition and consensus" (Mintzberg et al., 1998, pp. 280 -281). The cultural perspective also tended to "equate a strategic advantage with organizational uniqueness" (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 281). Although being different may be a strategy which an organization followed in order to differentiate itself from its competitors, being different for the sake of simply being different could place an organization at a serious disadvantage as it could lead to arrogance coupled with ignorance.

According to Mintzberg et al. the cultural perspective "brought in the important collectivist dimension of social process, and secured a place for organizational style alongside personal style . . ." (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 283). Similar to the cognitive perspective, the cultural perspective reinforced the human interaction that took place in the strategic planning process. "In this perspective, strategy formation became the management of collective cognition-a critically important idea although hardly an easy one to manage"(Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 283).

The Environmental Perspective

Origin and premises. The environmental perspective, also known as contingency theory, viewed the macro environment as the focal point for strategic planning. The environment was addressed in many of the other perspectives and had long been considered a ". . . moderator of planning" (Brews & Purohit, 2007, p. 65). However, the environmental perspective saw everything as subservient to the external environment. This perspective viewed the organization as a passive organism reacting to the environment that ultimately dictates organizational change.

The environmental perspective sought to integrate some of the concepts from earlier perspectives, because strategy was dependent on the environment (Mintzberg et al., 1998). However, because every environment was different, when asked for an ideal strategy, the organization would respond with the phrase, "It all depends."

According to Mintzberg et al. (1998), the environmental perspective evolved from contingency theory. Although authors (Andrews, 2003; Fahey & Christensen, 1986; Kreitner & Kinicki, 2007; Mintzberg et al., 1998; Mintzberg & Lampel, 1999) agreed that the contingency approach used situation specific tools and techniques to avoid the "one best way" or "one-size-fits-all" approach to planning, in the contingency approach everything was dependent on context (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001; Kreitner & Kinicki, 2007). According to John (2006), there were many areas of context including: situational or environmental factors, situational strength, cluster of stimuli, events, individuals interpretation's, and many other "omitted variables."

The premise of the environmental perspective was that situation or context would dictate appropriate strategic responses. Organizations must respond to forces in the environment or they will be "selected out" (Mintzberg et al., 1998). Another foundation of the environmental perspective was based upon population ecologist's arguments that "the basic structure and character of an organization was fixed shortly after birth" (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 291). Population ecologists (i.e., Hannan & Freeman, 1977; Miller, 1986; Young, 1988) argued that most of the changes which took place within an organization after its inception are not truly strategic but rather represent constraints both inside and outside the organization (Mintzberg et al., 1998). Population ecologists viewed strategy as a process of continually reacting to the environment, which would then

determine the criteria that was necessary for organizations to survive.

Critique and contributions. One of the main criticisms of the environmental perspective was that it never specifically defined the components of "the environment." (Mintzberg et al., 1998) stated, "in reality no organization faces and 'environment' that is munificent or complex, or hostile, or turbulent" (p. 297). Moreover, if every organization was reacting to the same environmental stimuli, how can two organizations that followed two dissimilar strategies achieve success in the same marketplace (Mintzberg et al., 1998)?

Another criticism of the environmental perspective was based on Weber's (1971) "iron cage" of rationality (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Building on the view of population ecologists, once a competitive arena became fixed, Weber stated that "a paradox arose: rational actors made their organizations increasingly similar as they tried to change them" (Weber (1971) as cited by DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 147). According to the ". . .bureaucratization in organizations resulted from apparatus related causes: competition among capitalist firms in the marketplace; competition among states, increased rules needed to control staff and citizenry; bogus demands for equal protection under the law" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 147). Although entrants into a field utilized innovative practices, as competition increased, organizations would have to change their strategy based on heightened competition. According to Weber, "in the long run, organizational actors who made rational decisions constructed around themselves an environment that constrained their ability to change further in later years" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 149). Because each organization was changing strategy in response to the environment, strategies lacked creativity. The lack of diversity meant that the overall

industry became relatively homogenous (Hawley, 1968).

One of the primary contributions of the entrepreneurial perspective was that it prompted the ideology of viewing the competitive environment as a population that consisted of organizations. Moreover, the environmental perspective provoked researchers to study the multiple dimensions that influence the organization. According to (Mintzberg et al., 1998) this perspective has also encouraged contemplation on ". . . which types of organizations seemed most constrained and when strategic choice seemed most limited . . ." (p. 300) particularly with respect to the organization's lifecycle.

Another contribution of the entrepreneurial perspective was that it brought academic research closer to strategy practice. The entrepreneurial perspectives, along with the configuration perspective, provided researchers (i.e., Mintzberg, 2007; Pettigrew et al., 2002; Van de ven, 1992; Weick, 1995; Whittington, 2001) with an entire movement based on strategy-as-practice.

The Configuration Perspective

Origin and premises. The configuration perspective was a culmination of the other nine strategic perspectives. Stemming from Chandler's (1962) original assertion that strategy followed structure, this perspective saw the organization as a configuration of integrated and "coherent clusters of characteristics and behaviors" (Mintzberg & Lampel, 1999, p. 302).

The configuration perspective united the strategy and structure issue in strategic planning research (Miller, 1986). Building on the work of Miller and Friesen (1977, 1978), as well as Miles and Snow (1978, 2003), it was determined that "organizational behavior was only partially preordained by environmental conditions and that the choices

that top managers made were the critical determinants of organizational structure and process" (Miles et al., 1978, p. 548).

The premise of the configuration perspective was that "the elements of strategy, structure and environment often were coalesced into a manageable number of common, predictably useful types that described a large proportion of high-performing organizations (Miller, 1986, p. 236). The configurations were composed of tight groupings of equally supportive characteristics. According to Miller (1986) and Mintzberg et al. (1998), the presence of certain elements within an organization could lead to "the reliable prediction of the remaining elements" (Miller, 1986, p. 236).

Miller (1986) stated, there were "three interrelated arguments for configuration" (p. 236). The first argument based on the work of population ecologists (i.e., Aldrich, 1979; Hannan & Freeman, 1977) determined that the environment favored particular organizational forms. The second argument for the existence of configurations was that an organization utilized a " . . . common configuration to achieve internal harmony among its elements of strategy, structure and context" (Miller, 1986, p. 236). The third argument was that research had proven (Miller, Friesen, & Mintzberg, 1984), "that organizations tended to change their elements in a manner that either extended a given configuration, or moved it quickly to a new configuration that preserved it for a very long time" (Miller, 1986, p. 236). Because fragmentary changes created conflict between strategy, structure, and context only when one change was eminent, or when one would create a substantial competitive advantage, would organizations switch from one configuration to another.

Critique and contributions. Donaldson (1996) reprimanded the simplicity that most organizational researchers had used when studying organizations. Historically researchers defined the organization as a thing in, and of, itself; separate from all of the nuances that made up an actual organization. Donaldson argued that organizations were actually created by individuals and their complex relationships.

To confront the complexity of studying organizations, many researchers used theoretical frameworks to simplify and explain organizational structure. However, Donaldson chastised the use of categories, indicating that "Configurations represent a stark, but simplistic caricature: simple structures, machine bureaucracy, and innovating adhocracies. These models provided "scant help" in understanding organizational change as organizations lie somewhere between these classifications (Donaldson, 1996). Mintzberg et al. (1998) thwarted Donaldson's criticisms by indicating that the frameworks proposed by Miles and Snow (2003) as well as Mintzberg himself, were simply meant to explain, rather than distort, a very complex world (Mintzberg et al., 1998). Additionally, Mintzberg et al. indicated that categorizing or lumping concepts "simplified one way or another . . . . even though researchers must be aware of its [lumping] limitations" (Mintzberg et al., 1998, pp. 345-346).

Aside from integrating all of Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's nine strategic perspectives, the contingency perspective provoked deeper inquiry into the reasons for organizational change. Moreover, the contingency perspective provided the bridge for researchers to move from examining the field of strategic planning to developing the field of strategic management.

Although Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives were based

on for-profit organizations, the perspectives have been employed by many non-profits including higher education. The next section examines the 10 perspectives framework in higher education.

Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's 's 10 Perspectives in Higher Education

Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's 10 strategic perspectives provided the foundation for many postsecondary strategic planning models. According to Peterson (1997) the two most important corporate theories to influence higher education were "Porter's (1980) competitive strategy" (i.e., the positioning perspective) and "Prahalad and Hamel's (1990) notion of core competencies" (i.e., the learning perspective) (p. 209).

Many community college leaders adopted the positioning perspective because of changes in institutional accreditation (El-Khawas, 1997). Historically institutional accrediting agencies limited their authority to periodic evaluations designed to suggest institutional improvement. Reporting requirements were minimal and institutions were given latitude during the self-study and reporting phases (El-Khawas, 1997). However, during the 1980s, institutional accrediting agencies expanded their authority in response to public demands for accountability. Consequently, during the late 1990s, governmental agencies pressed regional accrediting agencies to ensure greater uniformity across regional standards and requirements. Since that time regional accrediting agencies have given greater attention to comparable standards across regions, stronger enforcement of standards, and a requirement for documents that provide evidence of student outcomes (El-Khawas, 1997). As organizations renewed/applied for accreditation they had to adopt strategic planning process in order to meet Criteria 1 and Criteria 2 of the self-study accreditation requirement.

Accreditation planning is akin to long-range planning. Long range planning assumes that the environment is predictable. This type of planning uses past experiences to direct and control institutional behavior. When an organization lacks a formal method to look outside the organization it lacks the ability to respond systematically to both internal and external changes (Morrill, 2007).

"Accreditation planning looks backward and becomes a tool or mechanism for articulating the impact of the situation. . . . Institutional planners evaluate the current state of the campus, describing trends that will require attention, and develop goals and plans for the institution to follow" (Rowley et al., 1997, p. 31). One of the major problems tying strategic planning and accreditation is that "accrediting bodies, while maintaining high standards, generally discourage highly innovative program development . . .[thus] helping to perpetuate a sameness across college and university offerings" (Rowley et al., 1997, p. 47). Another problem with accreditation induced planning is that it is similar to tacit strategy which Mintzberg (1994) criticized for being reductionist in nature. "Decomposition of the process of strategy making into a series of articulated steps, each to be carried out as specified in sequence, will produce integrated strategies" (Mintzberg, 1994, p. 13). Although these deductive approaches to planning are based on rationality, they have "proven to be patently false" (Mintzberg, 1994, p. 13). Mintzberg (1994) goes on to state that "analysis will not produce synthesis" (p. 13).

In addition to the design and positioning perspectives higher education also integrated other perspectives that were based on the learning, cultural, and configuration perspectives. The contextual planning model advocated by Peterson (1997) was deeply rooted in the cultural perspective. Contextual planning was proactive and sought to

examine the external changes outside of an organization. Unlike the positioning

perspective, contextual planning was based on the assumption that the post-secondary

knowledge industry changed and influenced the external environment (Peterson, 1997).

Along with being an ideology of control, the contextual planning model indicated that

internal structures and processes had to be redesigned and an organization had to

"establish or re-create an institutional culture that motivates and supports its members in

responding to a new direction" (Peterson, 1997, p. 137).

Due to the growing disconnect between higher education providers and

stakeholders, the provider-driven strategic planning perspectives (i.e., design, planning,

positioning, and entrepreneurial perspectives) were slowly being replaced with an

iterative planning processes (Rowley et al., 1997). These perspectives were based on the

descriptive perspectives included the learning (Hamel & Prahalad, 1994; Prahalad &

Hamel, 1990; Rowley et al., 1997), cultural (Chaffee & Jacobson, 1997), and cognitive

(Neumann & Larson, 1997) perspectives. In these perspectives, the leader viewed

strategy as more descriptive and emergent activity. Perspectives proposed by Morrison

and Brock (1991), Morrison, Renfro, and Boucher (1984), and Shirley (1988) advocated

using strategic planning to "change thinking and introduce a model in which ongoing

decisions are made strategically. . . [These perspectives gave leaders an opportunity to

push strategic thinking down to the lower levels of the institution which is an] . . essential

outcome if strategic planning is to be effective" (Rowley et al., 1997, p. 67).

Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives effectively

categorized the vast array of strategic planning perspectives present in the literature. The

first three prescriptive themes (i.e., the design, planning, and positioning perspectives)

see strategic planning as rational strategic behaviors as they pertain to the organization and its relationship with the environment. The descriptive perspectives (i.e., entrepreneurial, cognitive, learning, power, cultural, and environmental) explored the relationships that existed between, and within, organizations and individuals. The last perspective (i.e., configuration) used all the perspectives to describe the continually changing community college (Mintzberg, 2007) .

Chapter II Conclusion

The purpose of my study was to determine the extent to which distinctive community colleges in Michigan have adhered to a particular strategic planning model during the formulation phase of the strategic planning process, and to explore how external and internal factors affected the selection of a particular strategic planning model. This chapter presented a thorough review of empirical strategic planning literature, a comprehensive background on the field of strategic planning, and possible internal and external factors that influence a college's choice of strategic planning model.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of my study was to identify five community colleges that were characterized as leaders in strategic planning (i.e., distinctive), and explore both the perspectives that these community college leaders use and the processes they employ to formulate their strategic plans. More specifically, the aim of my study was to identify, using a theoretical framework (i.e., Goodman's (2001) Institutional Accreditation/Strategic Planning process matrix), what strategic planning processes are being used at these distinctive institutions, whether these community college strategic planning perspectives align with Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives framework, and if these community colleges believe that their strategic planning perspectives and processes have added "value" their institution.

There is no one best approach to conducting strategic research (Balogun, Huff, & Johnson, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Weick, 1995). As research problems become more complex, researchers have sought to situate numbers and words to increase validity, scope, and the depth/breadth of inquiry (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011; Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). Early researchers supported the use of multiple data sources (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). Balogun et al. (2003), indicated that there were inherent methodological challenges in studying strategy from one theoretical perspective. Strategic research could only be furthered by "reconceptualizing frequently taken-for granted assumptions about the way to do research and the way we engage with organizational participants" (p. 197).

This chapter is divided into six sections. The first section discusses my study's

overall mixed method research design. This section also discusses my study's research approach, knowledge claims and state of inquiry.

The second section describes how two theoretical frameworks were modified for use in my study. Goodman's (2001) Institutional Accreditation/Strategic Planning process matrix was updated to reflect current Academic Quality Improvement Processes (AQIP) accreditation practices. Using this crosswalk, I reviewed institutional Systems portfolios and explored whether any of Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1989) 10 perspectives were used in strategic planning formulation.

The third section details the sampling method used for my study. My study relied on an expert sampling method to identify distinctive community colleges. Distinctive community colleges were those colleges who the expert identified as leaders in strategic planning, were AQIP accredited, and were located in the state of Michigan.

The fourth section is specific to the first phase of my study. This section presents the research design for the first qualitative strand of inquiry (i.e., document analysis). This section outlines how I obtained documentation, met the requirements of the Human Subjects Internal Review Boards (HSIRBs), stored and reviewed archival data.

The fifth section is specific to the second phase of my study. Phase II, semi-structured interviews, was the major emphasis of my study. This section defines the research design for Phase II including HSIRB, data storage, instrumentation, data collection, and analysis.

The sixth and final section describes the point of interface of my study. Although I analyzed data broadly after collection, the actual point of interface did not occur until the completion of both Phase I and Phase II.

Mixed Method Research Design

According to Balogun et al. (2003) there is no preferred method to study strategy. My intent was to utilize a pragmatic approach to strategic planning formulation. A pragmatic approach was appropriate as strategic planning, arises out of the action of the organizational members (Mintzberg, 1994). Because there is a social component of strategic planning which occurs inside an organization, there is consistency with social ontology (Tsoukas & Knudsen, 2002).

Although pragmatism has been a favored approach in mixed method studies, it has been largely ignored within the metaphysical paradigm (Creswell, 2003; Morgan, 2008). Although researchers (i.e., Biesta, 2010) agreed that paradigms should not be mixed, proponents of the metaphysical paradigm also believed that the "research question determined the choice of the research method" (Morgan, 2008, p. 48).

The purpose of my study was to explore those factors that influence a community college's strategic planning perspective, how such perspectives influence the institution's strategic planning process, and whether the leader perceives "value" in their strategic planning perspectives and processes. My research questions were chosen based on a review of literature and the necessity to offer deeper explanations about how and why community colleges "do what they do" with respect to strategic planning. The review of literature identified that strategic planning was plagued with plurality, and that strategic planning was a function of an institution's processes and the leader's perspectives that were used to develop such processes. Pluralism can also be found in the research modalities (e.g., descriptive versus normative, process versus content) of strategic planning. Although most research in strategic planning was prescriptive, a few

researchers (i.e., Langley et al., 2007; Pettigrew et al., 2001) tied theoretical propositions with actual practice. My study was designed to respond to Rajagopalan et al. (1993) who pleaded for strategic planning researchers to examine both institutional content and institutional processes.

The field of strategic planning offered numerous perspectives that organizational leaders could use to formulate strategy. The literature review indicated that the most predominant perspective identified by Mintzberg et al. (1998) among community colleges was the positioning perspective. Why do post-secondary leaders appear to favor this particular perspective? More specifically, why do community colleges appear to follow a "one-size-fits-all" approach to strategic planning when there are other, seemingly more compelling, perspectives, that could be adopted?

These larger questions evolved into the phenomenon under examination (i.e., those factors that influence community college leaders' choice of strategic planning perspectives and how those perspectives influence strategic planning processes). Supporting questions as to whether there was a predominant perspective used among community colleges in Michigan and whether institutions "stuck with" one perspective through the formulation process were also be examined.

Because the phenomenon under study occurred within complex institutional contexts, I deemed data from one source insufficient to grasp the essence of strategic planning perspectives and processes. "Institutional mantra" [was prevalent in strategic planning]" (Yin, 2012, p. 13). This "organizational speak" developed among members of an organization when discussing organizational processes with outsiders (Yin, 2012). To differentiate between, and identify consistency in, espoused ideology and enacted

processes, my study triangulated evidence from archival records (i.e., AQIP Systems

portfolios) with information gleaned from semi-structured interviews with selected

community college leaders.

The subject of the study (i.e., community college strategic planning perspectives

and processes) along with the research questions encompassed a broad array of world

views and assumptions. To fully understand why community college leaders chose a

particular strategic planning perspective, my research design employed "pluralistic

approaches to derive knowledge about the problem" (Creswell, 2003, p. 12).

Flexibility in methodology was required to investigate the complementary facets

of a community college's strategic planning perspectives, and how those perspectives

influenced an institution's strategic planning processes. The research design was a two-

phase, sequential, mixed method (i.e., qual + QUAL), phenomenological design that

utilized two distinct theoretical frameworks. Figure 4 depicts the sequence and priority of

the design.

Adaption of theoretical frameworks	Expert selection of subjects	Phase I - Qual		Phase II - QUAL		Interpretation of entire analysis
		Qual *Archival data collection*	Qual *Archival data analysis*	QUAL *Interview data collection*	QUAL *Interview data analysis*	
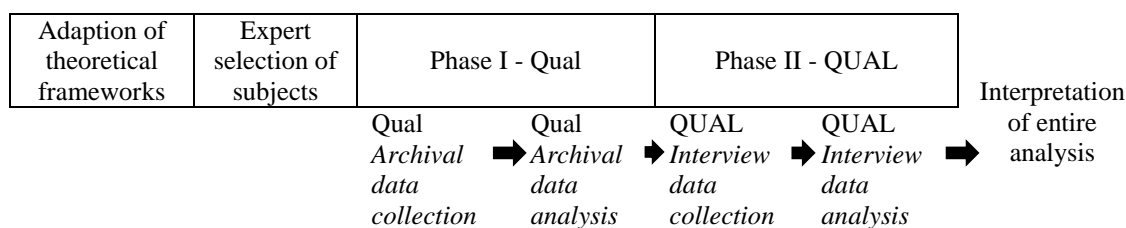
Figure 4. Procedural diagram for my study.

Strategic planning research is rife with mixed method designs (Creswell, 1998;

Greene et al., 1989; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). My study employed a mixed method

design to "increase the interpretability, meaningfulness, validity of constructs, and

inquiry results by capitalizing on inherent method strengths and counteracting inherent

biases in methods and other sources" (Greene et al., 1989, p. 259).

Little was known about the strategic planning perspectives that community

college leaders use to formulate their strategic plans. Additionally, the internal and external factors that influenced strategic planning perspectives remained ambiguous. Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011) stated that an exploratory design was appropriate when measures and instruments are unavailable, constructs and variables are unknown, *or when a guiding framework or theory is unobtainable*. Although my study relies on an exploratory design to address the problem statement and research questions, my study seeks to not only to describe the strategic planning formulation process among these community colleges, but like other researchers (i.e., Goodstein et al., 1993), I also wanted to understand how institutional leaders (i.e., community college presidents, chief academic officers, and directors of institutional research) experienced the phenomenon of strategic planning.

Yin (2012) stated that an exploratory design may be perceived as "sloppy" as data gathering took place before research questions have been formalized (Berg, 2009). Although elements of my study were exploratory, the purpose of my study was to describe the essence of strategic planning perspectives and processes in a particular context. Perhaps exploratory study was not completely consistent with my research design because I did rely on two theoretical frameworks to describe strategic planning perspectives (i.e., Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 strategic perspectives), and processes (i.e., Goodman's Institutional Accreditation/Strategic Planning matrix). These frameworks provided a theoretical proposition that suggested ". . . simple sets of relationships about why acts, events, structures, and thoughts occur (Sutton & Straw, 1995, p. 378, as cited in Yin, 2012, p. 9).

In my study, the factors that influence a community college leader's strategic

planning perspective and how such perspectives impact an institution's strategic planning process were unknown, yet comprehensive frameworks existed that when modified, provided a lens to exam these concepts. The next section describes how these frameworks were modified for use in my study.

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Modification of Methodological Frameworks

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Goodman's (2001) Institutional Accreditation/Strategic Planning Process Matrix

The first theoretical framework that I used in my study was Goodman's (2001) Institutional Accreditation/Strategic Planning process matrix (see Appendix A). Although Goodman's matrix described how institutional accreditation criteria were linked to specific steps of the strategic planning processes, it was dated and did not reflect current Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation practices. I updated Goodman's matrix to reflect the current accreditation pathway (i.e., AQIP) under investigation. I found it was possible to examine an institution's Systems portfolio to determine what leading community colleges were doing with respect to strategic planning processes. Goodman's updated matrix served as one lens for analyzing an institution's AQIP Systems portfolio (i.e., self-study) and provided insight into participating institutions' strategic planning processes.

Modification of Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's 10 Perspectives Framework

The second theoretical framework used in my study was Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 strategic perspectives. The Mintzberg et al. framework summarized the various strategic planning perspectives that institutional leaders used to formulate strategic plans. I created a cross-walk between the Mintzberg et al. framework and AQIP accreditation criteria. This framework made it possible to deduce what strategic planning perspectives

community colleges used to formulate strategy. Although the cross-walk provided a basic template of something to look for, my investigation was "not limited to merely confirming or disconfirming a set of a priori categories" (Nagle, 2004, p. 63). I used the information gained from each of the selected institution's Systems portfolio to investigate the nature of the lived experience (i.e., strategic planning) during the second phase of my study (i.e., semi-structured interviews with institutional leaders).

Expert Selection of Subjects

There were 28 community colleges in Michigan; 14 had adopted the AQIP accreditation pathway. After the theoretical frameworks were updated for use in my study, a non-probability sample of five community colleges was selected by an industry expert.

The community colleges included in my study were those that have been accredited with the Higher Learning Commission using the AQIP pathway, were considered by an expert to be a leader in strategic planning formulation, and were located in the state of Michigan. Consistent with exemplary design of small populations, it was appropriate to focus on those Michigan AQIP accredited institutions that are considered to be distinctive in their strategic planning processes in order to discover the essence of strategic planning perspectives and processes (Arsovska, 2012; Pershing, Lee, & Cheng, 2008). Mike Hansen, President of the Michigan Community College Association was the industry expert who selected five institutions from the 14 Michigan Community colleges that were using AQIP. Mr. Hansen not only served as the President of the Michigan Community College Association "he has also worked for the Michigan Senate Fiscal Agency where he was a chief analyst for Capital Outlay and Community Colleges. His

professional background included teaching in public schools" (Michigan Community College Association, 2014, para. 1). Once Mr. Hansen identified five community colleges, Dr. Robert Harrison, President of Lake Michigan College, who was familiar with strategic planning scholarly writing, and who had personal experience leading a Michigan Community College, reviewed Mr. Hansen's selections. The expert sampling method ensured that the community colleges chosen were exemplary in their field, and that the data collected was "the views of persons who have specific expertise" in strategic planning in Michigan community colleges (McGee, 2013, p. 11).

The number of cases included in my study was also appropriate. According to Creswell & Plano-Clark (2011), the sample for a qualitative case study method should be a small number so that the researcher can focus on the most in depth information. "Typically, when cases are studied, a small number is used, such as four to 10" (p. 174).

<div align="center">

Phase I: Research Design Document Review

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Phase I: Data collection

In compliance with Public Act 201 of 2012, Sec. 209, all Michigan educational institutions are required to provide, on the front page of their website, information about their institution that is pertinent to the public. Additionally, the Higher Learning Commission mandates that all accredited institutions make their AQIP Systems portfolio available to the public. Consequently, all of 14 AQIP accredited institutions had their Systems portfolios available on their websites.

Like the first strategic scholars (i.e., Bowman et al., 2002; Chandler, 1962; Schwenk & Dalton, 1991), Phase I of my study was an archival review. Relying on Goodman and Willekens (2001), the archival material that I chose to examine were

accreditation self-studies (i.e., AQIP Systems portfolios). I was able to examine institutional Systems portfolios to develop an overall depiction of each college's strategic planning processes. Like Venkatraman and Subramaniam (2006), Phase I of my study allowed me to familiarize myself with institutional argot, espoused mission, and internal processes, and to uncover themes that were represented in the Systems portfolios. These archival reviews also gave me points to probe on during the second phase of my study.

To winnow the information in the Systems portfolios to those areas that directly pertained to my study, I delved more deeply into AQIP Category 8, Planning Continuous Improvement. "Criterion eight examined the planning processes and how strategies and action plans helped the organization achieve the mission and vision. This criterion examined processes and systems related to institutional vision, planning, strategies and action plans, coordination and alignment of strategies and action plans . . ." (Higher Learning Commission, 2003, p. 6.4-10).

Following the analysis of Category 8, I also reevaluated AQIP Category 2, Preparing for the Future. Many institutions referenced Category 2 in conjunction with Category 8. "Criteria two examined the processes that contribute to the achievement of the major objectives . . . and fulfill other portions of the mission. Criterion two examined processes and systems related to distinct objectives including, faculty and staff roles, assessment and review of objectives" (Higher Learning Commission, 2003, p. 6.4-3). Both Category 2 and 8 provided more textured information pertaining to Research Question 1: What strategic planning processes were being used by distinctive community colleges?

According to Berg (2009), much can be gained from archival information;

"official documentary records offer a particularly interesting source of data" (p. 276). The document review allowed me to triangulate evidence from multiple sources. Yin (2012) stated it is "always better to use multiple rather than single courses of evidence (p. 13).

Although a review of documentation could not provide insight into how and why leaders relied on a particular strategic planning perspective or why they employed a particular process, the review "enabled the researcher to obtain the language and words of the participants" (Creswell, 2003, p. 187).

The information amassed through the document review assisted me in later phases of my study. The archival review provided me with a sense of the organization's values, culture, and "ways of doing things." This allowed me to better contextualize and interpret information gleaned in Phase II (semi-structured interviews). Likewise, the document review established a baseline that assisted me during the point of interface when I determined threads, patterns, and connections (Seidman, 2006).

Phase I: HSIRB and Data Storage

The data used in Phase I was public, non-copyrighted, secondary data. Therefore, data from Phase I was exempt from HSIRB review and approval. I cleansed the data of any identifying information prior to triangulation and interpretation.

Research Design - Phase I: Review and Analysis of Strategic Plans (qual)

Phase I: qual data collection
- Document review of Systems portfolio

Phase I: qual data analysis
- Identification of strategic themes
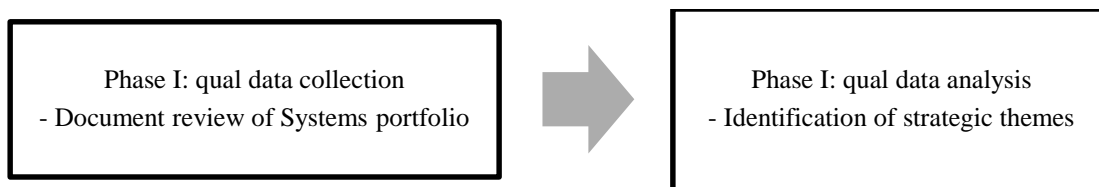
Figure 5. Research design for Phase I (qual).

As depicted in Figure 5, I downloaded each of the selected community colleges'

Systems portfolios from institutional websites and stored them in PDF formats.

Following proposal approval, I stripped the System Portfolios of all identifying

information and imported them into NVivo software for coding and analysis.

After I imported the Systems portfolios into NVivo, I created three different

internal sources (i.e., document analysis, institutional information, and interviews). I used

the seven first cycle coding methods identified by Saldana (2009).

Classifications

To code attributes, I created source classifications for each Systems portfolio

according to community college. To ensure anonymity I used an alphanumeric

numbering system for each college (e.g., CC1, CC2, CC3). In addition to using NVivo

default classifications, I also created source classifications based on Saldana's magnitude

and structural coding methods for the broadened Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) themes (see

Appendix B).

Coding

Themes came from the data and from the investigator's "theoretical sensitivity"

(Strauss & Quinn, 2001). The first pass of generating themes relied on Ryan and

Bernard's (2003) procedure of asking, "What is this expression an example of?" (p. 87).

They state that ". . . looking for repetitions and similarities and differences as well as

cutting and sorting techniques are by far the most versatile techniques for discovering

themes" (p. 101). Relying on Ryan & Bernard (2003), first round themes were identified

through repetitions, transitions, comparison methods, and linguistic connectors.

During first cycle coding I held loosely to the theoretical frameworks. I also

created new nodes based on themes that emerged during analysis. Although NVivo can

automatically code materials, I closely examined each institutions' Systems portfolio to gain a sense of each institutions' strategic planning process.

After several rounds of reviewing the Systems portfolios, coding for indigenous categories was performed. Subthemes were identified, and child nodes were created if statements were byproducts of an overarching expression (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Major nodes were reanalyzed to determine if they were indicative of multiple themes or if they needed to collapsed into comprehensive categories that could specify broad topics that corresponded to the relationship between environment/organization/individual that was inherent in each of Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 perspectives.

After themes are developed, a master code list was created in NVivo based on Miles & Huberman (1994). Like Miles & Huberman (1994) and Ryan & Bernard (2003), during the pre-coding phase "the list will be held lightly, applied to the first set of Systems portfolios, and then examined closely for fit and power" (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 58).

During the first cycle descriptive coding process the list of general coding questions developed by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) provided the basis for both memos, links and annotations. During the first cycle coding I made numerous memos, links and annotations that allowed me to "create connections and track ideas across the data" (Edhlund & McDougall, 2013) p. 117

I used the information gathered from the document review to craft semi-structured interview questions that were used in Phase II of my study. Those questions allowed me to probe into an institution's strategic planning perspectives, and which if any, of the strategic planning perspectives were used by the institution's leadership. I also performed

numerous exploratory queries including word frequency queries, word search queries, and matrix coding queries. Some of these results peaked my interest and I made notations to follow up on these items during the second phase of the study. After I concluded coding Systems portfolios they were set aside until the point of interface.

Phase II: Research Design Semi-structured Interviews

The second phase, and major emphasis of my study, was semi-structured interviews with selected community college leaders. This strand used a multi-case phenomenological approach that focused on internal and external factors that influenced the "choice" of a strategic planning perspective. I sought to "understand the meaning of experience of individuals" (Creswell, 1998, p. 38). Like Golsorkhi et al. (2010), I wanted to discover a "wealth of tacit, [latent] understandings of strategy practitioners as they go about their practical affairs, unaware of the tacit knowledge that they possess" (p. 848). My belief was that the only way to understand the essence of strategic planning as experienced by institutional leaders was to discover as much as I could about their world views of strategic planning so that I could, with my limited perspective, view strategic planning formulation through their unique lenses. The contextual familiarity that I gained from analyzing institutional Systems portfolios coupled with the distilled leadership perspectives from semi-structured interviewing provided me with a pure and thorough description of strategic planning processes and perspectives.

Strategic planning researchers (i.e., Balogun et al., 2003), have indicated that there is "a growing need for researchers [of strategic planning] to be close to the phenomena of study, to concentrate on context and detail . . ." (p. 199). Relying on Creswell (1998), Creswell (2003), and Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011), a

phenomenological approach was used as the basis for Phase II. Figure 6 illustrates the

research design for the second phase of my study.

Research Design - Phase II: Semi-structured Interviews (QUAL)
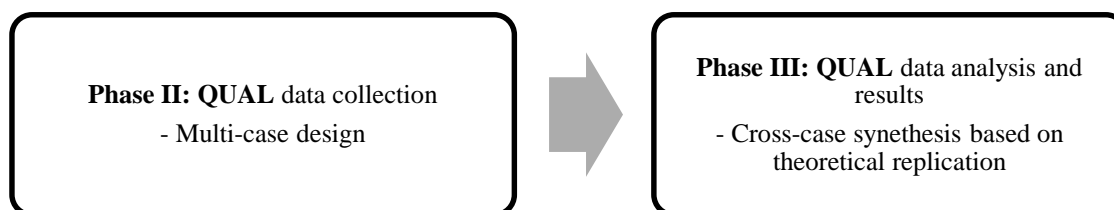
Figure 6. Research design for Phase II.

As depicted in Figure 6, the second phase of my study was a qualitative case

study approach that used semi-structured interviews. In these interviews I had a general

plan for the topic, but I did "not follow a fixed order of questions or word those questions

in a specific way. Interviewees were allowed a great deal of latitude in the way they

answered and the length of their responses" (Packer, 2011, p. 43).

A case study approach was appropriate as each case was bounded by geographic

area. Additionally, the participants were part of a specific group (i.e., leaders at AQIP

accredited institutions that have been expertly chosen because they exhibit exemplary

strategic planning practices) (Yin, 2012).

Phase II: HSIRB and Data Storage

I complied with the requirements of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

(HSIRB) standards by obtaining a written consent from each participant. I not only

received exempt status from Western Michigan University's (i.e., WMU) HSIRB board,

but also received exempt status from one of the participating community college's

HSIRB board. The written consent facilitated cooperation as it presents the purposes of

the project and sought to reassure respondents as to how the data would be used (Fowler,

2009).

Because the concept of strategic planning is proprietary, the confidentiality of participants was assured by using pseudonyms for each community college and each interviewee. The master cross-walk that identified respondents was kept in a secure electronic file that resided on a WMU server. The database containing survey responses was also be stripped of all identifying information as data was uploaded to the NVivo computer program.

Phase II: Piloting of the Study

Seidman (2006) indicated that one of the drawbacks of an emergent design is that the overall study may lack focus. The researcher may have "misplaced nonchalance about purpose, method, and procedure" (p. 35). To protect against "undisciplined and haphazard poking around," I will conducted pilot interviews with two community college leaders that were not chosen for the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 251). "The purpose of the pilot project is to learn how to interview. . . These are steps in the process of preparing to do research" (Morse, 2011, p. 350). The pilot helped to ensure that the questions were clear, concise, and elicited the types of responses that covered information about the institution's strategic planning perspectives and processes. Extensive field notes were kept on the pilot study in order to refine questions that will be used in Phase II.

Phase II: Sample Selection

After HSIRB approvals, I contacted the President's office of each of the institutions that were identified by the expert sampling technique and invited them to participate in my study. Each community college's president was sent an electronic letter seeking permission for access to the institution, and requesting the names and contact

information of the institution's planning officer and lead academic administrator (i.e.,

chief academic officer), if this information could not be easily identified by the

institution's website (e.g., some institutions use differing titles for the respective positions

of chief academic officer and director of institutional research). All three personnel (i.e.,

college president, chief academic officer, and director of institutional research) were then

invited to participate in my study. The electronic letter outlined the purpose of the study,

methodology, and disclosed the rights of the participants and the responsibilities of the

researcher.

To clearly explore the strategic planning perspectives and processes it was

important to gain perspectives from multiple constituents in the organization (Clayton,

1997; Marshall, 2009; Martinez & Wolverton, 2009; Newman et al., 2004; Rowley et al.,

1998). However, due to time and resource constraints my study focused on the *leaders'*

strategic planning perspectives, and other pertinent groups (i.e., faculty and staff) were

not interviewed.

Once consent was obtained, I requested an appointment with the interviewees for

a personal interview at a time and place that was convenient for the interviewees.

Participants chose the time and location of the interviews. All of the participants chose to

conduct the interviews at their campus' offices.

All selected participants received the interview questions at least two weeks prior

to the scheduled interview. The personal interviews were expected to take between 60

and 90 minutes, the average interview took 53.23 minutes. The purpose of the interviews

were to ". . .'obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to

interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena'" (Kvale, 1996, pp. 5 - 6, as cited

by Packer, 2011, p. 49).

Phase II: Data Collection

Each interview followed the interview protocol. Interviewees were informed both verbally and in writing that the interview would be recorded, all interviewees agreed to interview recording. All interviews were recorded with two different electronic devices (i.e., iPhone and tablet).

Phase II: Analysis

Although the point of interface was after Phase II of my study, the interviews were transcribed within 24-48 hours of each interview using a transcribing application. Raw interview transcripts were sent electronically sent to each interviewee to ensure that the frameworks (i.e., Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1989) 10 perspectives framework/Goodman's (2001) Institutional Accreditation/Strategic Planning process matrix) were not "imposed on the words" (Seidman, 2006, p. 37). Many researchers are vulnerable to using "theoretical frameworks developed in other contexts and force-fitting the words of the participants into the matrices developed from those theories" (Seidman, 2006, p. 37).

Interviewees were asked to respond within 7 days if they have modifications to the transcript data, only two interviewees (i.e., Community college 3's president and director of institutional research) made minor modifications to their interview transcripts. These modified transcripts were imported into the NVivo software.

Following Phase II second cycle elaborative pattern coding will be used "based on thematic or conceptual similarity"(Saldana, 2009, p. 151). Analytic memos were subsequently added to the coded data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Phase I: **qual** data analysis and results - Process patterns and perspective themes identified	Phase II: **QUAL** data analysis and results - Cross-case synethsis based on theoretical replication	Point of interface **qual QUAL** **- Analytic generalizations based on theoretical frameworks**
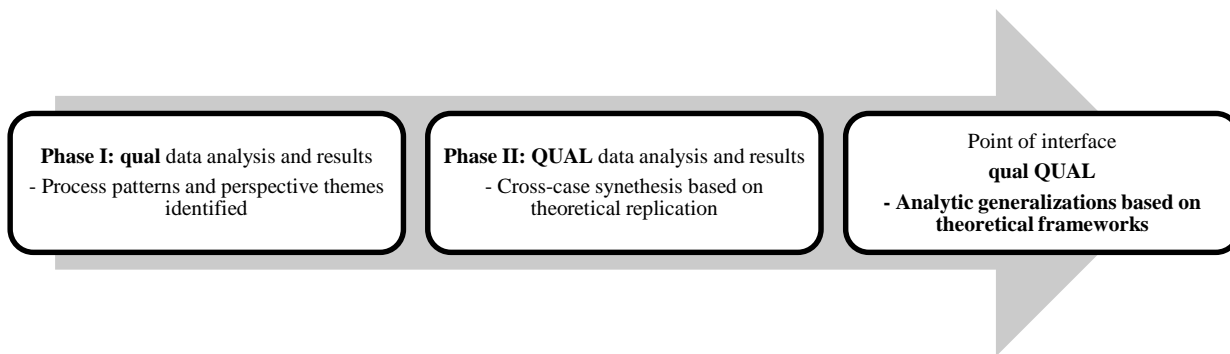
Figure 7. Research design – Point of interface (qual) + QUAL).

As identified in Figure 7, after Phase I and Phase II had been completed, all of the data was reviewed to provide information about what leading Michigan community colleges are doing with respect to strategic planning. Although each interview was broadly reviewed following each interview, the actual point of interface did not take place until after all interviews were completed. Although some researchers (i.e., Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994) advocate for integration between interviews and analysis, my study intentionally separated interviewing and analysis (Seidman, 2006). As a researcher I wanted to come to each interview with an "open attitude, seeking what emerges as important and of interest" rather than with a preconceived notion of what the interviewee should disclose (Seidman, 2006, p. 117).

I should stress that my study has been primarily concerned with strategy formulation. Like Peterson & Dill (1997) I found it difficult to segregate formulation from implementation. The problem was compounded as each of the participating institutions used a cyclical approach to strategic planning. Therefore, the line between strategy formulation and implementation was often blurred, and determining the exact point when formulation stopped and implementation began was not easily discernible.

Limitations

My study was limited, in part, by the qualitative design. According to Dolence &
Norris (1994), ". . . because the primary instrument in qualitative research is human, all
observations and analyses are filtered through that human being's worldview, values, and
perspective" (p. 22). My study was further limited in that it will only include perceptions
from chosen leaders. Other constituents' perceptions (i.e., other faculty members and
students) may yield significantly different responses.

My study suffered from what I termed "best case" representation. This particular
limitation given the subject matter proved to be significant. According to (Downey,
2000), "Respondents bring some biases to their assessment of the effectiveness of the
planning process and their institutions; however, such perceptions often reflect their
involvement in the planning process in their perception that planning is effective in their
colleges" (p. 54). By using interviews, the study was further limited by the respondents'
recollection of, and attitude toward, strategic planning.

My study was also limited by the expert purposive sampling method. Expert
sampling provides a cost effective and convenient way to "elicit the views of persons
who have specific expertise" (Singh, 2007, p. 108). The primary disadvantage was that I
am relying on one person's opinion of unconventional strategic planning processes
among the 14 AQIP Accredited Michigan Community Colleges. Additionally, the use of
nonprobability sampling meant that the results of the study could not be generalized to
the larger population and because my study was limited geographically to community
colleges in Michigan, findings could not be generalized to all community colleges
(Creswell, 1998).

My study was also limited due to the administrative access method that was used to select non-presidential leaders. Seidman (2006) determined that if senior administrators formally grant access to participants, it may "influence the equity of the relationship between the interviewer and the participant. It is almost as if the interviewer were someone higher in the hierarchy instead of outside it" (Seidman, 2006, p. 46). I found throughout the interviewing process that many of the respondents within a particular institution had spoken to each other about the interviews. Because the selected community college presidents identified other institutional leaders (i.e., Director of Institutional Research, and Academic provost) the non-presidential participants may have felt pressure to participate in the study or may have been unwilling to "speak 'in their own words'" (Packer, 2011, p. 43).

Lastly, the study was limited by various extraneous (Creswell, 2003) variables including, but not limited to the validity and reliability of the data gathering instrument, a naturalistic setting in which to gather the data, the level of bias on the part of the researcher, the level of communication between the interviewer and interviewee, and the lack of similar studies in which to compare findings.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of my study was to explore the strategic planning perspectives and

processes of community colleges who were identified as having a distinctive strategic

planning process. I sought to understand these college's strategic planning process and

those factors that influenced the organization's strategic planning perspective. I also

wanted to understand how such perspectives influenced the institution's strategic

planning process, and to what extent an institution's strategic planning processes and

institutional perspectives benefitted the institution.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section describes the

institutions and institutional leaders that participated in my study. This information is

important to my study because it provides the context for my study. The second section,

and major emphasis of this chapter presents an institutional profile for each participating

community college. Figure 8 lists the parts of the institutional profile that I have created,

and how these parts align with my study's research questions.

Institutional Profile

- Definition of strategic planning
- Strategic planning processes
  - Research Question 1 - Process
- Strategic planning perspective
  - Research Questions 1 and 2 - Perspective
- Value of strategic planning perspectives and processes
  - Research Question 3
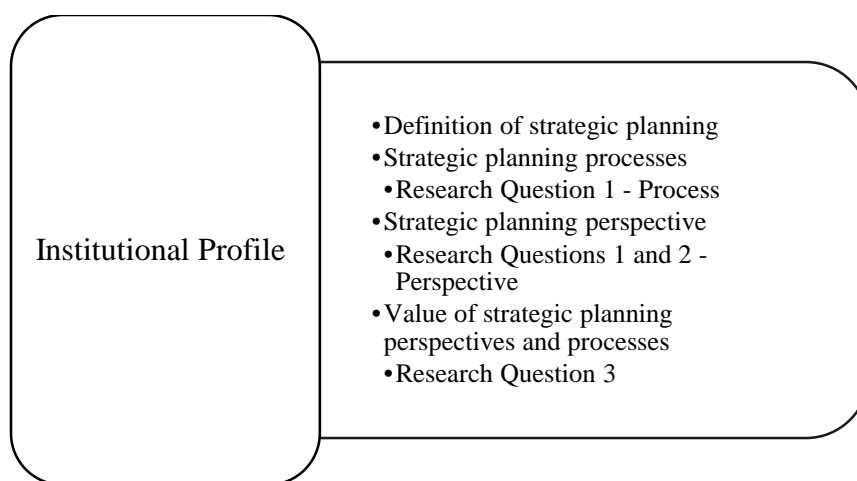
Figure 8. Conceptual framework for institutional profile.

As described by Figure 8, each institutional profile is divided into four parts. The first

part describes how the institution defines strategic planning. Although how institutions' defined strategic planning was not the primary focus of my study, I found that institutional definitions provided insight into a college's strategic planning perspectives and processes.

The second part of the institutional profile provides an overview of each institutions' strategic planning process. This section responds to the process component of Research Question 1 (i.e., what strategic planning processes do distinctive community colleges use?). This section is divided into four sub-sections according to systems that support strategic planning processes (i.e., communication, culture, decision making, leadership, and organizational design).

The third part of the institutional profile examines an institution's strategic planning perspective. This third part responds to the perspective component of Research Question 1 (i.e., what strategic planning perspectives do distinctive community colleges use)? This part also responds to Research Question 2 (i.e., to what extent do the strategic planning perspectives of distinctive community colleges align with Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 strategic perspectives)? In this part each institutional profile is analyzed according to the 14 broadened perspectives described in Appendix B. These broadened perspectives are then aligned to the Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 strategic perspective that best typifies the institution's strategic planning perspective.

The fourth part of the institutional portfolio responds to Research Question 3 (i.e., to what extent do participating institutional leaders perceive that their strategic planning perspectives and processes have added "value" to their institutions).

Description of Institutions

For this study, five AQIP accredited community colleges had been chosen by an expert sampling method whereby these institutions were recognized as employing a distinctive approach to strategic planning. Of the five institutions, three Presidents agreed to have his or her institution participate in my study. Table 1 describes these three participating community colleges, using information gathered from the Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System (IPEDS). Note, the sources for these data are not listed to preserve the confidential nature of the study.

Table 1.

Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System (IPEDS) Description of Participating Institutions

Institution	IPEDS Description	Total Enrollment	IPEDS Size Classification	Annual Operating Budget
Community College 1 (CC1)	Public, 2-Year	6,328	Rural, Fringe	$44,991,500
Community College 2 (CC2)	Public, 2-Year	17,448	Midsize	$106,742,766
Community College 3 (CC3)	4-year Primary Associate's	4,846	Remote	$43,152,558

As illustrated in Table 1, Community College 1 is a public, 2-year, rural college with 6,328 students and an annual operating budget of $44,991,500. Community College 2 is also a pubic, 2-year college, but is larger than CC1 and CC2. Community College 2 is midsize with 17,488 students and an annual operating budget of $106,742. Community College 3 is a public college that primarily awards 2-year degrees but also has a bachelorette degree in one programmatic area. Community College 3 is the smallest college in my study with 4,846 students and an annual operating budget of $43,152,558.

Each community college is accredited through the Higher Learning Commission (i.e., HLC) using the Academic Quality Improvement Principles (i.e., AQIP)

accreditation pathway. Table 2 depicts each institution's last date of reaffirmation of accreditation and the institution's next reaffirmation date.

Table 2

Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System (IPEDS) Dates of Reaffirmation

Institution	Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation	Reaffirmation of Accreditation
Community College 1 (CC1)	2009-2010	2016-2017
Community College 2 (CC2)	2007-2008	2014-2015
Community College 3 (CC3)	2011-2012	2018-2019

As illustrated in Table 2, CC3 had the most recent reaffirmation of accreditation, followed by CC1 and CC2. However, CC2 was preparing to update their Systems portfolio for reaffirmation of AQIP accreditation in 2015.

Description of Institutional Leaders

Since strategic planning is a proprietary process, all institutions and participants were assured confidentiality. Once data was gathered all identifying information was stripped from the data, and pseudonyms were assigned to each community college. Because job titles varied among participants generic job titles were assigned to each participant with the exception of president. Table 3 describes the naming convention that was used in my study.

One grand tour question in Phase II (i.e., semi-structured interviews) of my study, requested information about each participant's length of employment and educational background. This information was pertinent to my study because Mintzberg et al. (1998) asserted that each strategic perspective had an underlying base discipline. Table 3 describes the participants in the study and their educational or employment background.

Table 3

Demographics of Participating Leaders

Community College	Position	Background	Years with Institution	Pseudonym
CC1	President	Business Administration	14	CC1-P
CC1	Chief Academic Officer	HE Administration	5	CC1-CAO
CC1	Director of Institutional Research	Research	9	CC1-DIR
CC2	President	HE Administration	6	CC2-P
CC2	Chief Academic Officer (Interim)	HE Administration	37	CC2-CAO
CC2	Director of Institutional Research	Research	22	CC2-DIR
CC3	President	Business Administration	15	CC3-P
CC3	Chief Academic Officer	History	20	CC3-CAO
CC3	Director of Institutional Research	Political Science	14	CC3-DIR

As shown in Table 3, the average tenure of participants in my study was 15.78 years. The shortest span of employment was the CC1-CAO at 5 years, and the longest was CC2-CAO at 37 years. Within institutions, the average span of employment for CC1 was 9.33 years. The average span of employment for CC2 was 21.67 years with the President having the shortest tenure at 6 years. The average span of employment for CC3 was 16.33 years with the President having served the longest tenure at 15 years institution.

Table 3 also illustrates that CC3-P had a background in business administration with an emphasis in strategic planning. CC3-P also held the position of president for the longest time (i.e., 15 years). CC2-P was the newest president in my study (i.e., 6 years), but indicated that he had held a previous community college presidency outside his current state which provided him an extensive background in higher education (i.e., HE). Like CC3-P, CC1-P also had a background in business administration. Likewise, he had a long tenure (i.e., 14 years) as president.

Table 3 also depicts that background and tenure of the Chief Academic Officers.

Although all three held positions in HE administration, two of the three CAOs held

degrees in HE administration, and one held a doctoral degree in history.

Table 3 also presents the background and tenure of the individuals responsible for

strategic planning processes at participating institutions. The average tenure of Directors

of Institutional Research (i.e., DIR) was 15 years. With CC2-DIR having the longest

period of employment at 22 years and CC1-DIR having the shortest at 9 years. During the

course of my study CC1-DIR resigned from her position at CC1 to pursue research at

another Michigan community college.

<div align="center">

Community College 1 (– CC1) Profile

</div>

Definition of Strategic Planning – CC1

Community College 1 defines strategic planning as "the best thinking on how to

achieve the mission and vision by selecting highest priority areas to address and by

formulating actions with measurable outcomes" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 78).

CC1 uses a laddered approach to strategic planning based on Kaplan and Norton's (1996)

book, *The Balanced Scorecard*. When CC1's Systems portfolio was written, they had just

finished their first year of the scorecard process. "The plan includes intermediate and

completion dates, primary responsible parties, collaborators, resources impact,

assessment measures or forms of evidence and objectives" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014,

p. 78).

Overview of Strategic Planning Process – CC1

Community College 1's strategic planning process is represented in Figure 10.
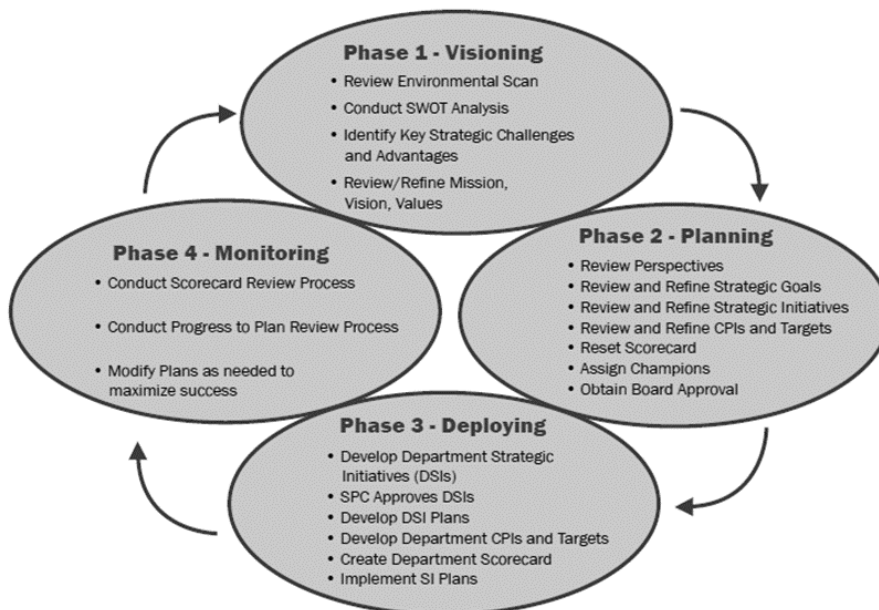
Figure 9. Community College 1's strategic planning process(as extracted from CC1 Systems portfolio, 2014, a non-copyrighted public document).

As depicted in Figure 9, CC1's strategic planning process is divided into four phases (visioning, planning, deploying, and monitoring). The beginning phase (i.e., visioning) is a culmination of both the formulation and positioning phases as described in the literature. During the visioning phase the board of trustees (i.e., Board) sets the long-term Strategic Agenda for the institution. Informing the Strategic Agenda are environmental scans conducted by Institutional Research (IR) and the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC), and situation analyses (i.e., SWOT) that are submitted by college departments. CC1-P described that information gathered as part of environmental scans comes from various sources.

> We're going out and finding stuff from business and industries. Some of the best
>
> stuff that we gather is from industry or international or auto industry or-- I don't
>
> know, Skin Diver Magazine. You can find things and ideas that can guide you
>
> about where things are going for higher education (CC1-P, Interview).

Both the environmental scans and SWOT analyses are then sent to the board who

determines their "Key Strategic Challenges and Advantages (i.e., Strategic Agenda)."

> Annually, at the Board's Spring Planning Session, the Trustees review, affirm,
>
> and/or recommend modification of the institution's Mission, Vision and Values
>
> statements. Additionally, the Board updates a five-year Strategic Agenda that
>
> provides strategic vision and direction while assuring continued alignment with
>
> [the board's] Mission. (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 67)

As shown in Figure 9 after the board has determined the Strategic Agenda,

institutional leadership, with board oversight, creates long-term strategic goals and short-

term strategic initiatives. "[Our process starts] with trying to bring together all of the

environmental [information] that we've been looking at, so that we're all looking at the

same information and have that background in our heads as we come together" (CC1-

DIR, Interview).

During the planning phase, the leadership team (i.e., president, executive assistant

and special assistant to the president, vice president of human resources, vice president of

operations, executive director for community relations, deans of student services, arts &

sciences, and occupational studies, vice president of off campus operations, vice

president of development/foundation, and director of institutional research) and "a few

other instrumental folks" review the Strategic Agenda. These individuals also review and

refine strategic goals and initiatives (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014).

The primary difference between strategic goals and strategic initiatives is

duration. CC1's strategic goals are activities which take more than one year to

accomplish. Strategic initiatives are shorter in duration and take less than one year to

complete. As part of the laddering process long-term strategic goals may be broken into short-term initiatives. However, not all short-term initiatives are subsets of strategic goals.

> We tried to streamline it so we intentionally had no more than three specific strategies under each of those categories that we would work on. So for [institutional leadership], it was a close to an all-day process where we actually wanted to sit down and create that first draft. We were just sitting down [and] kind of did [a] draft plan of, 'Okay, 'What changes do we want to make from last year?' (CC1-CAO, Interview)

During the planning phase, the leadership team reviews, and subsequently, aligns goals and initiatives to the Higher Learning Commission AQIP categories. "Our process is aligned with the AQIP categories, which is our institutional accreditation. We've also tried to align it with Baldrige. We've been looking at those criteria for, I think, at least the last three years" (CC1-CAO, Interview). These Strategic Perspectives serve as AQIP Action Projects and link strategic planning to the accreditation process.

> And because [the strategic plan is] tied to the AQIP process, we always make sure in the last four or five years, that three of the initiatives that are on the strategic plan will be ones that we elevate and report to HLC through their AQIP action project that you always have to have active. So that it kind of always matches and at least try to not have AQIP plan out here and scrap plan hanging out over. So we allowed the folks that came to the open session a vote on which three did they think were the most important to send to AQIP to get that third party feedback. (CC1-CAO, Interview)

After establishing both strategic goals and initiatives and tying those to the Higher Learning Commission the draft of the strategic plan is presented to the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC). The SPC and other standing committees "vet" the plan. These committees review the strategic goals, initiatives, and perspectives. The plan is then "rolled out in open forum" where the college membership votes on which perspectives should be elevated to College Action Projects (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014). CC1-CAO explained how the process seeks input from various college personnel.

It wasn't just either the president sitting in an office, or the leadership team sitting in a room, a conference room creating this, but that we really had widespread involvement in the process and buy-in, so that when we say, 'Here's the strategies, the top two or three priorities for this year that we're going to be working on,' that it wasn't a shock, that everybody already knew that that was our priority, and was on Board and supportive of that. So we really pushed hard to make sure that we-- of course, all of that buy-in stuff takes time. So we really pushed hard to try and start those processes earlier to make sure we were able to have the time to vet it through different committees, and bring people together, and get their input. . . (CC1-CAO, Interview).

Once CC1's internal constituents have voted on which initiatives will be undertaken during the year, champions are assigned to each strategic goal, initiative, and perspective. CC1-DIR described the vital role that champions play in the formulation process.

So once we decide on [i.e., established strategic goals and initiatives], we have each of these strategic initiatives [assigned to] a champion. Each member of the

executive team is the champion advocate and they are asked to put forth an action

plan of what [their strategic initiative] looks like. And then, [the champions] will

decide who they want to be the Leads within the three projects that are under their

category. Those three Leads can then chose their team . . . (CC1-DIR, Interview)

The chief academic officer for CC1 elaborated on her role as a champion.

We have assigned champions to each of the categories that are in the strategic

plan, and then those champions also have-- for the most part, they're already

standing committees behind them that can help focus on those. Like for me, I

have academic council plus all the other academic integrity committees. So it's

not this add-on kind of thing. It's work that's already being done and the groups

are already looking at that. (CC1-CAO, Interview)

CC1's deploying phase is similar to the directional phase discussed in the

literature. After the board approves the plan, CC1's deploying phase begins with

champions distilling the strategic planning down to the department level. Leads, with

champion input, engage in a process very similar to the planning process, but with a

narrower focus at the departmental level. Champions and leads ensure that the

department strategic initiatives are aligned with the overall goals, initiatives, and

perspectives. To tie the process to incentives ". . . administrative and staff annual

performance reviews, and faculty annual professional responsibilities plan (i.e., pay for

performance system), encourages individuals to develop goals in congruence with the

strategic goals, initiatives, and perspectives" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 69). CC1-

P explained the benefits of aligning the strategic planning process.

So that's how [strategic planning] is working now, and it's a very useful tool. It's

been good. It is tightly aligned with the budget. It is tightly aligned with board

policy. It is clearly aligned with board ends and president's direction. It is actually

broken down into a notion of what we can achieve this year, and then next year,

and we make sure that the budget can sustain that. But we have, through best

practices review and plus, just our own utility and the value of a strategic

planning document for everybody-- so everybody can find their place in the

document. What we've decided to do is modify the process even further, and

really align-- use it as an opportunity to align everything that the college does

together. (CC1-P, Interview)

After strategic initiatives are implemented the final phase of CC1's strategic planning

processes (i.e., Monitoring) begins. The SPC determines Key Performance Indicators

(KPIs). These KPIs are based on "best practice information, availability of internal

historic data, and benchmark opportunities" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 69). After

KPIs are selected, "performance targets are determined by reviewing College trend data

and benchmarking opportunities" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 69). Champions are

responsible for the monitoring progress in their area of responsibility using CC1's

Balanced Scorecard system.

[Reporting has gone from] every month, every other month, to now quarterly,

giving a status update of what each of those initiatives are and a percentage. And

then one of my old team mates had a visual management system where we could

see really quickly which of the colors, where's all of our emphasis, and at what

percent completion is each area within that particular color category. (CC1-CAO,

Interview)

CC1's director of institutional research underscored the importance of alignment not only in processes, but also of KPIs and tracking progress.

> Well, I think one of the pieces that I would definitely mention is that we actually have a college level scorecard that is supposed to align with your strategic planning process. And in the past, it's been, 'Here's a bunch of initiatives and here's a list of metrics that really we think are important.' But there may not be a good connection between the two. And so over the course of this last year, [CC1-P] really wanted to have what those three year stretch goals were explicitly written on our strategic plan. And we were really struggling with, 'So what do you then put on a college scorecard?' Until you kind of step back for a moment and go, 'Okay so these should probably be our six metrics, right?' (CC1-DIR, Interview)

Another vital part of the monitoring phase is the ability make adjustments to the planning process. Strategic initiatives are selected prior to the budget process and incorporated into departmental budgets. If resource allocations change action plans must also change. CC1-P stressed the importance of flexibility when confronted with opportunities in the external environment.

> We don't want to be straight-jacketed by what's in the plan. So if something comes-- and that's happened here. So something comes along and it makes sense, it is an opportunity, we think it is an innovation - maybe highly disruptive, but we think it's an innovation. We think it's in our wheelhouse, or we can get the skills to keep it in our wheelhouse, then we'll go after it. [As long as it is] in congruence to the mission, vision, value, and beliefs. (CC1-P, Interview)

Systems Supporting Strategic Planning – CC1

In order to provide a pure and thorough picture of strategic planning, it is necessary investigate those themes that emerged during my study's point of interface. These themes (i.e., communication, culture, decision making, leadership, and organizational design) provide the context in which strategic planning formulation occurs. These themes support strategic planning processes. Without these institutional competencies the community colleges in my study may not be distinctive. "You got to know how to work together, how to communicate, problem solve" (CC1-P, Interview).

Communication – CC1. "Effective and continuous communication is an essential part of [strategic planning]" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 80). According to the president of CC1, communication is essential to strategic planning.

> There's got to be a communication message that comes along [with strategic planning] . . . We spend a lot of time talking about [strategic planning]. I talk about it at our convocations, three times a year. Our board talks about it four times a year. Our strategic planning council talks about it every month. We report it out in our newsletters that we send out to the public about how is what we are doing [is] related to our strategic plan and our mission. (CC1-P, Interview)

Early on CC1 recognized that they needed greater communication throughout the institution. CC1 developed an AQIP Action Project based on improving communications. CC1 reorganized to flatten the structure, ". . . reducing the levels of senior administration and is intended to strengthen communication and understanding between units of the college. . ." (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 5). In addition to reorganizing, CC1's president "reestablished the Administrative Council to include all administrators" (CC1

Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 50). The Administrative Council meets monthly and members are asked to take the information gained in the Council and convey it to their respective areas.

The chief academic officer for CC1 discussed her frustration when she realized that communication efforts needed to be improved.

We constantly - and everywhere I've been - you always get complaints about communications [needing] to improve. And it seems like no matter what you do . . . this one time, we actually put together a page of all the ways we communicate and it was just line after line after line. I mean it was like hundreds of things that we were doing and so you kind of want to beat your head against a wall though. You've got to be kidding me? (CC1-CAO, Interview)

CC1's chief academic officer went on to stress the importance of "intentional communication" (i.e., gaining input from the college community in order to get "buy-in" of the strategic goals, initiatives, and perspectives).

[Strategic planning] would definitely take much more work and discipline at a larger institution to get the level of input that you would want and buy in . . . I'm in all kinds of meetings all day, every day, so I'm hearing all kinds of things whereas, perhaps, a frontline person, their job is to come sit at the front desk, work with students, so they're not getting that same level of information, so you have to be much more intentional about it. (CC1-CAO, Interview)

CC1-DIR spoke about the need for greater communication, especially during the formulation phase of strategic planning.

So there wasn't a lot of broad-based employee input this go around, but in April

the leadership team took all of the information that had already been discussed at

Strategic Planning Council, and came up with the big plan. And then in the fall -

because we were a little behind the game - we then rolled it out in an open forum.

Because we've heard a lot of people don't understand why we are doing things,

and so we tried to frame the box to say, 'We are too late in the game to have

broad-based input to really change what's going on here, but we can at least tell

you this is what it is; this is why it came to be.' (CC1-DIR, Interview)

In addition to gaining support for strategic goals, initiatives, and perspectives,

communication is essential for continually aligning processes and people at CC1. "All

communications from the president incorporate a shared mission, vision, and values that

deepen and reinforce the characteristics of high performance organizations" (CC1

Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 50). "[The strategic plan] creates a common conversational

organization, from whether it is budget-related, whether it's related to accreditation,

whether it's related to board ends, to mission, to vision, values, beliefs. It's all aligned

now, and that is helping people" (CC1-P, Interview). CC1's director of institutional

research also discussed how strategic planning has "helped the conversations" (CC1-

DIR).

Another communications venue designed to enhance communications at CC1 is a

project entitled, "Quality Communications."

[Quality Communications is a] thirty-minute weekly communication opportunity,

open to all employees, which highlights an institutional guiding principle

(Mission, Vision, Values, Strategic Goals, AQIP Categories, and College

Principles). . . As a continuation of [the quality project], each administrator is

expected to dialogue with their respective department regarding how the guiding principle of the week impacts or influences their work. (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 50)

CC1 also relies on transparent communications during the feedback loop of strategic planning (i.e., Phase 4: Monitoring).

The analysis of the College's overall performance is communicated throughout the organization in a variety of formats. Results are shared with the President's Council, Strategic Planning Council, and the Board of Trustees via the College scorecard and Board Monitoring Reports. Additional reports and analysis are shared with deans, directors, department chairs, and academic integrity committee members who identify opportunities for improvement. (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 63)

According to CC1-P, communication was vital to strategic planning, but the need for transparent communication was key to continually improving the strategic planning process.

And we make sure that when we-- as part of the decision-making process and whether to put something on the plan or to decide whether what's on the plan, we want to pursue or not, we make sure that we're very, upfront about the strengths and weaknesses. We don't engage in focusing heavily on the positives, so as to sway the opinion of the decision makers - be they the board, the president, or a department. We share the good, the bad, and the ugly, so full disclosure on what is happening. So that if something goes wrong-- and there will be surprises. If we are in [full disclosure] in all of what we say - the good and the bad - the likelihood

that a surprise will come that we haven't considered or haven't talked about is

going to be significantly less. (CC1-P, Interview)

Culture – CC1. Another theme related to strategic planning that emerged during

my study's point of interface was organizational culture. "The quality of work that we do

with regard to strategic planning - the benchmarking that we do - happens not only in the

strategic planning process, but across our institution because it's part of our DNA" (CC1-

P, Interview).

The president of CC1 viewed many processes through a cultural lens because he

was writing a book on the culture of community colleges. He stated that his frame was

influenced by his writing. The president did underscore the importance of culture

recommending that new leaders should be cognizant of an organization's culture before

making extensive changes.

> When I was looking through the questions, one of the things that occurred to me
>
> first was really the culture of the organization. The culture of most organization is
>
> pretty deeply seeded, and to come in [as a new leader] and make wholesale
>
> change is not going to be successful or happy for anyone. So I think it's a
>
> recognition that you have to undertake a core assessment of the talent that you
>
> currently have - what's working well, what's not working. You really want to get
>
> an assessment of the environment in which you're existing, and understand the
>
> culture, values, and worries that are out there, and realizing that it's going to take
>
> some time. This is not a sprint. It's a marathon. That's true also with the strategic
>
> plan. The strategic plan has to be part of that process. (CC1-P, Interview)

CC1-CAO also discussed the importance of organizational culture in relation to strategic

planning.

> I think they [strategic planning and culture] absolutely have to be hand in hand
> because if your culture isn't made, if there's no trust between departments, if you
> don't have folks that-- I mean you have to appreciate the style here and the
> environment here that at times, it can feel chaotic. At times it can feel - if
> something is not working, we're going to jump right in and say, 'Try this.' We're
> very creative, very innovative. So if folks aren't comfortable with that type of
> culture, I don't think we'd be successful at all. So you have to appreciate this and
> you have to be willing to just roll with it and know that we, day to day, moment
> by moment, our priorities can change, and that's okay because that's not just our
> culture here, but in higher education [as well]. (CC1-CAO, Interview)

CC1's president also discussed how each person in the institution can change the culture.

> If you came to our organization, just by your presence here, you would change
> our culture. Not necessarily in big ways or not necessarily small ways, but over
> time initially, you would change who we are. One new board member will change
> who we are. A change in president, a change in dean, a change in HR officer
> changes who you are. (CC1-P, Interview)

The president also believed that changing an institution was difficult because many issues
are deeply engrained in culture and may be considered taboo.

> It's going to take a little while to change the planning culture of the organization,
> particularly if it was established by someone who is revered. 'Well, the board
> chair who's been with us 20 years, this is what he required, and we've been
> loathed to touch it for the next 10 after his death,' kind of a thing. Or, 'The

academic officer put this finding together. She is a big planning expert, and we've

followed this.' So you need to understand where those landmines are. You've got

to respect and honor the past, and also recognize where there might be similar

opportunities for improvement, depending upon where you are in that continual

effectiveness of the planning process the school currently enjoys. (CC1-P,

Interview)

Lastly, when the president of CC1 was asked whether he believed that other community

colleges should adopt CC1's strategic planning process, he quickly said, "No."

The reason that I say, 'No' is because - what I spoke to earlier - each institution is

different. So you've got to first understand your culture, understand your people,

and their history, and their value system. You've got to understand your board's

priorities. What is your own intestinal fortitude toward the future? What is your

community like? And then say, 'I also need to understand the history. I need to

understand where you have been, and how is that working for you?' Rather than

to parachute in and then say, 'I've got the planning process for you. Let's just bolt

this onto what you're already doing in discount.' That's a bad idea - a very bad

idea. So I would take time before-- my first reaction would be to say no, is to take

time to understand all of that entire continuum before you do anything. And then,

if you decide that the current planning process in your organization is not

working, then you want to begin enrolling some people. Enrolling people on how

it could be better. [Ask,] 'Why is the current one not working, in your view?'

(CC1-P, Interview)

Decision making – CC1. Another theme related to strategic planning that emerged during my study's point of interface was institutional decision making. Recurring decision making themes focused around how decisions were formulated (i.e., decision making processes), the degree of centralization in decision making (i.e., centralized vs. decentralized), and who, ultimately, made final decisions.

The process for decision making at CC1 is aligned with the strategic plan. The director of institutional research commented on how CC1's decision making process had changed since the adoption of the balanced scorecard approach to planning.

> I really like the approach that it focuses us to be much more balanced and holistic in the decision making process. I think it starts to get into goal setting and monitoring goals, which I think we talk about all day in higher education, but I don't know that we really act that way quite yet. (CC1-DIR, Interview)

One of the tenants of AQIP accreditation is data-informed decision making. According to CC1's Systems portfolio most institutional decisions at CC1 made based on data. "Data-informed decision making is central in supporting mission critical functions" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 1). "Comparative data are often used to establish goals and targets for the Strategic Initiatives" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 63). Additional sources of data were peer benchmarks, scorecard information, and KPIs. "CC1 established 32 KPIs that were directly linked to strategic planning" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 81). "CC1's decision making process is supported by performance as indicated on the College scorecard" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 50). The president of CC1 stated that CC1's decision making process relies on the use of comparative data (i.e., benchmarking) to inform decision making. "But benchmarking, absolutely. For

anything significant and for everything in our strategic plan, we are engaging in substantial benchmarking analysis" (CC1-P, Interview).

According to CC1's Systems portfolio, CC1 uses the National Initiative for Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness survey to "conduct research on leadership and institutional effectiveness" (National Initiative for Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness, 2015, para. 1). These surveys are given to faculty, administration, staff, and students to determine institutional climate. The 2008 results for CC1 "indicated a healthy campus climate, yielding an overall 3.75 mean score (i.e., Likert scale of 1 – 4, 4 maximum) or high consultative management system" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 46) According to CC1's Systems portfolio, consultative management is characterized by

- leaders are seen as having condescending confidence and trust in employees;

- employees are occasionally involved in some aspects of decision making;

- some decision-making processes take place in the lower levels, but control is at the top;

- lower levels in the organization cooperate in accomplishing selected goals of the organization;

- some influence is experienced through the rewards process and some through fear and punishment (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 46).

CC1 mentioned these results in their Systems portfolio and subsequently created action projects to address decision making processes. The director of institutional research indicated that the scorecard approach to strategic planning has helped ensure that the "right people are at the table" when making decisions (CC1-DIR, Interview).

It's also been good for us to help broaden the conversations to realize, 'Okay, like

I'm working on these pathways initiatives.' This is by no means [just] me and faculty in a room. IT needs to be there. Student services needs to be there. (CC1-DIR, Interview)

Although new initiatives (i.e., strategic perspectives) are brought "forward by anyone at any level, decisions about implementation are made through mission critical assessment which is the purview of the Executive Council and the board" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 80). Final decision making authority for smaller decisions that are embedded in the strategic plan are dependent on functional area. CC1's Systems portfolio summarized decision making authority.

All decisions are carried out on an individual basis and determined by the impact to daily departmental operations or committee functions. Currently, the President's Council approves most academic and administrative policies. Certain decisions must be approved by the Board of Trustees. The decision- making process considers available funds, facilities, program scheduling, staff involvement, and other required resources. Decisions made are then charged to a particular work group responsible for implementation. (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 49)

In a continuous effort to improve decision-making at CC1, a new team structure was developed. "The new structure attempted to be more inclusive of all employee groups in decision-making and is based upon the mission critical functions of the College: student success, instructional quality and development, and operational sustainability" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 49). Additionally, the proposed structure involved the creation of team charters to include the scope and authority of each team to

define its decision-making responsibilities and limits.

Leadership – CC1. Another theme related to strategic planning that emerged during my study's point of interface was leadership. The president of CC1 highlighted the importance of leadership in formulating strategy. "You've got to have people who are going to lead it, to do the tough stuff, to make sure that it happens" (CC1-P, Interview).

The president of CC1 indicated that he did not follow one particular leadership style or leadership theory. "I think there are a lot of theories about leaders, leadership types, leadership strata, and those kinds of things. But at the end of the day, I cannot put this institution in a box any more than I can put myself in the box" (CC1-P, Interview). The president indicated that the situation dictates his leadership response.

> And our response to the situation, to people, to the degree of urgency, to the degree of risk versus reward-- you've got to consider every person and every situation on its own merits, and bring a cacophony of skill, knowledge, and experience to the situation. And realize it is a situation, and it can move on you. Even as you think you've got it nailed down, it can move on you. And you've got to be flexible, dynamic, and respond to it. You may have to change in a pretty quick order. So I would say that someday, we might be really process-oriented. Other days, we've got a crisis going on because enrollment has dropped precipitously, and we've got to come up with a new battle plan in a pretty quick order. And I don't have time to form a committee to start thinking about process. I'm going to start doing command and control, because that's what I need to do right now. (CC1-P, Interview)

The president of CC1 stated the importance of presidential involvement in

formulating strategy.

> I will admit that for a time, I stepped back from strategic planning, because we were dealing with lots of other innovations in the college. But I've intentionally stepped back in, in the last year and really owning the responsibility for leading that in our organization, like I used to a few years ago. (CC1-P, Interview)

The chief academic officer at CC1 summarized her role in strategic planning as "Strategic leadership is owned by the senior leaders" (CC1-CAO, Interview). She compared CC1's planning process with other community colleges (i.e., where direction is set at the board and presidential level).

> One of the things that, even though there wasn't broad input, I thought for the first time we actually had our senior leaders setting the direction of what should be in the strategic plan. Which I think is really important, because sometimes you're trying to read minds or back into things or answer as team when you were part of that cross functional committee. . . But at the end of the day, the president and his leadership team, they have a vision of where we want to go. You have to make things work within what that vision is, so that you can help realize it. (CC1-CAO, Interview)

The president of CC1 stated that the only way that you can achieve the vision set by senior leaders is through leadership. He stated that leaders must enroll constituents to stimulate organizational change.

> You will identify people who are open. You will identify people who are excited about moving forward. You'll find some people who are neutral, and then you'll find some people who just don't want to do anything different - don't rock the

boat. Then you'll find out the people you can begin working with. And you can

enroll and ask them, 'Would you like to think about a new way of doing things?'

Or maybe you don't even use the three-letter word, 'new', and say, 'What do you

think about, if we did this? If you were leading strategic planning for the college,

what would you do differently?' And listen, listen really hard about what they

would do differently. People in your organization - unless you've been totally

asleep at the switch in the hiring process - have some good ideas. (CC1-P,

Interview)

Organizational Design – CC1. Another theme related to strategic planning that

emerged during the point of interface of my study was the design of the organization. As

stated previously, CC1 had modified its organizational structure to increase views in

decision making and to communicate more effectively (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014).

Strategic Planning Perspectives – CC1

To determine which, if any, of Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 strategic perspectives

were indicative of CC1's strategic perspectives, all of CC1's Systems portfolio and

participant interviews were coded using the 14 Mintzberg et al.'s broadened perspectives

described in Appendix B. These broadened perspectives were then aligned with

Mintzberg et al.'s 10 strategic perspectives using the crosswalk in Appendix B. Table 4

summarizes which of Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 strategic perspectives appear to be used

at CC1.

Table 4

Strategic Planning Perspectives in Use– CC1

Mintzberg et al., broadened perspectives	Scale based on literature	Mintzberg et al. (1998) 10 perspectives
Central Actor	Board, president, top management, internal constituents	Learning and cultural
Decision making direction	Top-down and bottom up	Learning and cultural
Embedded Approach to strategic planning	Initially intended but emerging courses of action	Configuration
External environment	Unpredictable	Learning
Premise of the strategy	Emphasize organizational values	Configuration
Formality	Formal process with informal norms	Configuration
Frame of reference	Imaginative	Configuration
Leadership background	Business	N/A
Level of complexity	Complex	Configuration
Organizational structure	Organic	Learning
Primary focus of the strategic plan	Organization	Design
Role of external actors	Active	Configuration
Strategic choice	Broadly defined	Configuration
Strategy formation	Descriptive	Configuration

Central actor. CC1's board of trustees "updates a five year strategic agenda that provides strategic vision and direction while assuring continued alignment with its mission" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 1). The strategic agenda specifies CC1's strategic ends (e.g., student success, processes, workforce, finance and community). Although the board sets the strategic ends, college departments provide input into the situation analyses conducted by the SPC who "reviews suggested goals and strategies to determine what could be done more efficiently or eliminated, and what new initiatives support the MVVE of the CC1" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 80). Because the board and SPC are comprised of various internal members (i.e., board members, the president, college leaders, and internal members) the Mintzberg et al.'s 10 strategic perspective that are most representative of the central actors at CC1 are the learning and cultural perspectives. In these two perspectives there is no one central actor.

Decision making direction. At CC1 all decision making is data driven through CC1's KPIs and scorecard (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014). CC1's Systems portfolio states that "recommendations for policy, courses of action, or decisions begin at various levels in the institution including students, employees, committees, and departments" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 49). Beginning in 2010, CC1 implemented a new decision making structure the goal of which was to be "more inclusive of all employee groups in decision-making" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014). This evidence seems to suggest that the results of performance indicators and the decisions that are made based on such indicators flow in a myriad of directions throughout CC1. In fact CC1's Systems portfolio indicates that "coordination and alignment [of the strategic plan] occurs in both a top down and bottom up process" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 80). Although final decision making authority may rest with either the president's council or the board of trustees, multiple individuals are given "the scope and authority to define their decision-making responsibilities and limits" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 49). Based on the flow of information at CC1 it appears that Mintzberg et al.'s learning or cultural perspective is used at CC1. The learning perspective indicates that decisions may flow in either direction (i.e., top-down or bottom-up). The cultural perspective also allows for multiple flows of decision making indicating that the "process of social interactions based on shared beliefs that exist within the organization [i.e., MVVE]" (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 241).

Embedded approach to strategic planning. At CC1 the embedded approach to strategic planning appears to be both intended and emergent.

[According to CC1's Systems portfolio the strategic plan] indicates short and long

term strategies. Each of these goals has tactics which are laddered through the

time line of the strategic plan. The plan includes intermediate and completion

dates, primary responsible parties, collaborators, resources impact, assessment

measures or forms of evidence, and objectives. (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p.

78)

The strategic plan is intended. However, as the strategic agenda is disseminated and

action plans are formed by the SPC. CC1's Systems portfolio states that "CC1 regularly

produces, implements, and revises action plans which mirror the format of the strategic

plan" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 80). CC1-P stated that "We also provide space in

there so that the strategic plan is not a straitjacket for the future" (CC1-P, Interview). The

strategic plan is intended, but the action plans which back the strategic plan are emergent.

This information suggests the configuration perspective is most consistent with CC1's

embedded approach to strategic planning. Organizations using the configuration approach

formulate strategy using an emergent or intended approach.

External environment. At CC1, leaders view the external environment as

unstable. CC1-CAO stated, "Gosh. I think traditionally, it's been very-- I don't know

whether stable is the right word or stagnant is a better word" (CC1-CAO, Interview). She

went on to evaluate the current state of higher education. Higher education is "just very

unpredictable. What is the next thing around the corner with all the [current things] and

all kinds of new things that are being tried that are really – [CC1-P] calls them frame

breaking" (CC1-CAO, Interview). CC1's DIR also discussed the stability of CC1's

external environment.

At CC1, I feel like higher education is kind of in this state of chaos a little bit

right now, and I think we're really struggling as a sector to deal with [that chaos].
Things are not the way they always were, and I think there's a lot of growing
pains that are going on right now, in trying to deal with changes coming fast and
from all directions. And so some things are probably stable, but I think there are
lots of other unknowns and new things, and things [are] going faster with
technology and all of those kinds of pieces. (CC1-DIR, Interview)

These leadership viewpoints suggest that CC1's external environmental perspective is
complex and unpredictable. This type of environment is best depicted by Mintzberg et
al.'s learning perspective. The learning perspective states that institutional leaders view
their external environment as demanding, complex, and unpredictable (Mintzberg et al.,
1998).

Premise of the strategy. To determine if the focus of CC1's strategy was to
establish a distinctive competence, capitalize on organizational resources, or emphasize
organizational values, I performed word frequency queries with source documents (i.e.,
CC1's Systems portfolio and CC1 leader transcripts). To determine if a distinctive
competence was the most frequently cited term I searched for the terms, "competence" or
"opportunity." To determine if the premise of the strategy was to capitalize on
organizational resources, I searched for the terms, "resources." To determine if the
premise of the strategy was to emphasize organizational values I searched for the term,
"values." Table 5 illustrates the number of times these terms appeared in CC1's Systems
portfolio or CC1's interview transcripts.

Table 5

Word Frequency Result - CC1: Premise of Their Strategy

Search Term	Number of times referenced in source documentation
Value	43
Opportunity	31
Resources	18
Competence	0

As described in Table 5 the term, "Value" was cited most often (i.e., 43 times), followed by the term, "Opportunity" (i.e., 31 times). This information seemed to suggest that the focus of CC1's strategy aligned most closely with Mintzberg et al.'s configuration, entrepreneurial, or learning strategic perspectives. After reviewing the descriptions of these perspectives, the one that most closely captured CC1's strategic focus was the configuration perspective. This perspective was chosen because the goal of the configuration perspective is to preserve stability, adapt to change as needed, and to be able to manage transformation without damaging the organization.

Formality. The broadened perspective of formality sought to address the level of formality of an institution's culture. Relying on CC1's sub-system of culture the level of formality at CC1 appeared to be both formal and informal. CC1's strategic planning process, discussed earlier is a formal process. According to CC1's Systems portfolio, "the use of continuous quality improvement strategies and tools are embedded into the college's culture to improve efficiency" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 67). This focus on efficiency suggests that CC1 uses Mintzberg et al.'s design strategic perspective. This perspective is analytical and utilizes a formalized process. There are also informal components to CC1's culture. CC1-VPI discussed the informal nature of CC1's institutional culture.

I mean you have to appreciate the style here and the environment here that at times, it can feel chaotic. At times it can feel - if something is not working, we're going to jump right in and say try this. We're very creative, very innovative so if folks aren't comfortable with that type of culture, I don't think we'd be successful at all. So you have to appreciate this and you have to be willing to just roll with it and know that we day to day, moment by moment, our priorities can change . . .

(CC1-CAO, Interview)

Because CC1 relies on both informal and formal mechanisms to craft the organization's culture the Mintzberg et al.'s configuration strategic perspective appears to best illustrate strategy as practice at CC1. The configuration perspective indicates that the level of formality under the strategic plan could be formal or informal depending on which other perspectives are being utilized at the institution.

Frame used to craft strategy. Like many of the other broadened perspectives, the frame used to craft strategy at CC1 appears to be both logical and imaginative. CC1's Systems portfolio describes a logical process of strategy formation listing each step in the process and how each step is used to fulfill the MVVE (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014). Yet, CC1's institutional leaders state that the process allows for innovation.

If something comes-- and that's happened here. So something comes along and it makes sense, it is an opportunity, we think it is an innovation - maybe highly disruptive, but we think it's an innovation. We think it's in our wheelhouse, or we can get the skills to keep it in our wheelhouse, then we'll go after it. And it wasn't on the strategic plan for the next three years. (CC1-P, Interview)

Although Mintzberg et al.'s environmental perspective defines the frame used to

craft strategy either analytical or imaginative the main driver of the frame is the environment. Moreover, strategy in the environmental perspective is defined as a "fit" with the environment. The Mintzberg et al.'s configuration perspective seems to more closely align with CC1's frame used to craft strategy. Like the environmental perspective the configuration perspective also states that the frame used to craft strategy may be either analytical or imaginative, but the main driver is the organization's strategy, organizational structure, and processes.

Leadership background. This broadened perspective suggested that an institutional leader's background may signify which of Mintzberg et al.'s 10 strategic perspectives were used to formulate strategy. As discussed previously CC1-P had a background in business. Although the positioning and entrepreneurial perspectives were based in economics, none of Mintzberg et al.'s 10 strategic perspectives directly aligned to CC1-P's background.

Level of plan's complexity. This broadened perspective proposed that the level of complexity of CC1's strategic plan (e.g., simple to complex) may denote which of Mintzberg et al.'s 10 strategic perspectives an institution used to formulate their strategic plan. I found this particular broadened perspective difficult to determine as the frame used to inform the level of the plan's complexity needed to be viewed in the context of the organization's stakeholders. I did review CC1's final strategic plan. I also reviewed abbreviated documents which were designed to articulate CC1's plan to external stakeholders (i.e., Z6). Overall, I determined that CC1's strategic plan was complex, but their plan appeared to be easily translated into intended audience vernacular. This information suggests that the Mintzberg et al.'s configuration perspective best illustrated

the level of complexity of CC1's strategic plan. According to the configuration

perspective mature organizations articulate a plan that addresses the organizational

domain. (Miles et al., 1978).

Organizational structure. This broadened perspective classified an institution's

organizational structure as either mechanistic or organic. Based on CC1's Systems

portfolio it appears that CC1 has taken steps to move from a mechanistic organizational

structure to one that is more organic. "CC1 recently modified its organizational structure

resulting in a flatter organization. This structure reduced the levels of senior

administration and is intended to strengthen communication and understanding between

units of the college while also addressing growing budgetary constraints" (CC1 Systems

Portfolio, 2014, p. 5). Based on Burns' and Stalker's (1961) definitions of mechanistic or

organic organizational structures, it appears that CC1 is more organic than mechanistic.

Organic organizations are characterized by fewer rules, participatory decision making,

cross-organization communication, and a less ridged hierarchy. Based on this information

the Mintzberg et al.'s contingency perspective best illustrates the organizational structure

at CC1. The organizational structure in the configuration perspective can be either

organic or mechanistic, but the structure is dependent on the organization's strategy,

organizational chart, and whether the external environment is stable or unstable.

Primary focus of the strategic plan. To determine if the primary focus of CC1's

strategic plan was either the external environment, individual, or organizational, I

performed word frequency queries with source documents (i.e., CC1's Systems portfolio

and CC1 leader transcripts). I queried the terms, "external environment," "individual,"

and "organization" with related synonyms. Table 6 illustrates the number of times these

terms appeared in CC1's Systems portfolio or interview transcripts.

Table 6

Word Frequency Result – CC1: Primary Focus of Their Strategic Plan

Search Term	Number of times search terms used in source documentation
Organization	78
External Environment	35
Individual	33

Table 6 illustrates the number of times that the search terms (i.e., organization,

individual, or external environment) were used in CC1's Systems portfolio or leaders'

responses. The most frequently used term "organization" was used 78 times, followed by

"external environment" used 35 times, and individual used 33 times. Based on the word

frequency queries it appears that the primary focus of CC1's strategic plan is the

organization. After reviewing the Mintzberg et al.'s 10 strategic perspective descriptions,

the perspective analogous to CC1's primary focus of the strategic plan is the design

perspective. The design perspective indicates that organizational objectives are based on

KPIs. Other perspectives (i.e., learning and cultural) also indicate that the primary focus

is the organization, but only the design perspective speaks to the use of performance

indicators.

Role of external actors. This broadened perspective discussed whether external

individuals (i.e., four-year institutions, advisory committees, and community members)

took an active or passive role in strategy formulation. CC1-CAO stated, "It seems like the

folks that are very much involved with the college are the ones that are just really active

in the community. They're the leaders. They're 1000% supportive of the institution and

everything that we want to do in the partnerships between the college and the

community" (CC1-CAO, Interview). CC1-P also spoke about the use of external actors at CC1.

> So broad, strategic planning kinds of things-- I'm gratified to know that as we
> have used our advisory committees, that there is a huge r-squared linkage between
> that which we're doing and thinking about in our strategic planning and what they
> think we should be doing. (CC1-P, Interview)

This information suggests that at CC1 the role of external actors is active. Active participation by external actors in strategy formulation is indicative of Mintzberg et al.'s learning, power, environmental, and configuration perspectives. External actors are also active in CC1's advisory committees and decisions on programmatic offerings. The role of external actors is active, but their role differs depending on the circumstances. The configuration perspective appeared to best describe CC1's role of external actors. In the configuration perspective external actors may be active or passive depending on organizational context.

Strategic choice. This broadened perspective classified institutions according to whether their institutional strategy was broadly or narrowly at CC1. CC1-DIR discussed the changes in strategic planning formulation indicating that one of the major changes has been to prevent CC1 from thinking so narrowly about strategy. "The general theme has been to follow more of the balanced scorecard approach and try to get us out of thinking so linearly. Like, one little narrow focus or topic" (CC1-DIR, Interview). One could argue that because the board sets the strategic agenda, the strategy is narrowly defined. However, CC1-P explained that although the board sets the direction it is up to CC1's membership to articulate how the board ends will be accomplished.

It is clearly aligned with board ends and president's direction. It is actually broken down into a notion of what we can achieve this year . . . we have, through best practices review and plus, just our own utility and the value of a strategic planning document for everybody-- so everybody can find their place in the document. (CC1-P, Interview)

The only Mintzberg et al.'s strategic perspective that recognized a broad overall perspective that narrowed as it trickled down through the organization was the configuration perspective. This perspective indicated that strategy can be narrowly or broadly defined depending on the organization's structure, context, or processes.

Strategic formation. This broadened perspective grouped strategic perspectives according to whether CC1's formulation process was descriptive or prescriptive. Like many of the other broadened perspectives, CC1 appeared to encompass both prescriptive and descriptive methods of strategy formulation. The strategic planning processes depicted in CC1's Systems portfolio was prescriptive. Yet, due to continuous quality improvement the entire process appeared to evolve in a descriptive nature. The only Mintzberg et al.'s strategic perspective encompassing both descriptive and prescriptive strategic formation was the configuration perspective.

Value of Strategic Planning – CC1

Strategic planning has profoundly impacted CC1. According to CC1's leadership the value of strategic planning is providing alignment of CC1's priorities, perception, perspectives, processes, and personnel.

Alignment of priorities. Strategic planning has honed priorities at CC1.
"[Strategic planning] brings focus to the institution. . .It really helps us narrow in on what
are our top priorities for the year" (CC1-DIR, Interview).

> The strategic plan has also created task identity for employees at CC1. I think as
> we've moved to this model and the model [that we have], we have really tried to
> do a better job of scoping out what the projects are, I think more folks know about
> it and can make a tie-in to how their work aligns or directly impacts the strategic
> plan. (CC1-DIR, Interview)

Institutional perception and perspectives. CC1's strategic plan defines the
college and its type of work.

> I would say, [strategic planning is] very impactful for our organization. . . If you
> really want to know who we are as a college, if you really want to know who I am
> as president, if you really want to know where we're going, you'll look at our
> strategic plan, you'll look at our goals and objectives, you'll look at our ends
> documents, and there will be no doubt about where we're headed. (CC1-P,
> Interview)

The director of institutional research reiterated strategic planning's impact on CC1 and
how institutional thinking has changed as a result of strategic planning.

> It was just amazing how [strategic planning] helped change those conversations
> and we think outside of our silos now. Where before, it used to be a line item, a
> question you had to fill on the form –'What other departments could be affected
> by this work?' But now, we don't even need that [blank on the form] anymore
> because that's just the way we think. So I think it's really helped shape the way

that we think here. (CC1-DIR, Interview)

External constituents continually validate and reinforce CC1's leaders' choice of strategic planning processes and perspectives.

Well, it's a good way to check the rightness of your work. At some point, you--particularly as a college president, people are going to default and tell you what you want to hear. But it's nice to know when the work that you are doing is validated by people outside of your organization. (CC1-P, Interview)

Another point of validation comes from external groups and agencies touting similar processes and perspectives that CC1 uses as best practices.

I find value and some soundness in the processes that we undertake, and that they are validated by external groups. Be it our own community advisory committees, or they're validated by our employees - faculty who go to the conference. They're there, and they're talking about what we're doing. (CC1-P, Interview)

Alignment of processes. CC1 uses its Systems Agenda to "coordinate and align its planning processes, organizational strategies, and action plans across various levels of the institution" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 67). CC1's strategic planning process "demonstrates alignment of its various initiatives and outlines the structure of all institutional initiatives by perspective (why the initiative is being implemented), context (what the initiative is), and results (how the initiative will be measured" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 67). The alignment of processes ensures that CC1 operates from a systems perspective and every process supports the mission, vision, values and ends. The president of CC1 summarized how the strategic plan has aligned the institutions processes.

So that's how [strategic planning is] working now, and it's a very useful tool. It's

been good. It is tightly aligned with the budget. It is tightly aligned with board

policy. It is clearly aligned with board ends and president's direction. It is actually

broken down into a notion of what we can achieve this year, and then next year,

and we make sure that the budget can sustain that. But we have, through best

practices review and plus, just our own utility and the value of a strategic

planning document for everybody-- so everybody can find their place in the

document. What we've decided to do is modify the process even further, and

really align-- use it as an opportunity to align everything that the college does

together. (CC1-P, Interview)

The right personnel. Each of the leaders at CC1 spoke about the role that college

personnel play in strategic planning. In addition to leadership, the strategic plan must be

supported by the college workforce. Leaders cultivate buy-in among employee groups

and choose champions to lead strategic initiatives. College personnel are responsible for

monitoring department scorecards and taking corrective action. The president expressed

the need to have the college workforce vested in the Strategic Agenda.

I spend a lot of time trying to get them [college personnel] there, 'Work with you.

Come on, try this. Can you come to this meeting?' Bark, bark, bark, acid

everywhere. It never occurred to me. It never occurred to me, until I read it on

paper from John Kotter. He said, 'Stop the madness. Rather than spending 80% of

your time focusing on 10 or 20% with whom you will not move one inch, don't do

that. Plus, you're ticking off all the good people - the people who are already with

you, and the majority you can probably move anyway. Marginalize those people.'

(CC1-P, Interview)

At first glance strategic planning at CC1 appeared to be a common prescriptive process. However, after examining the process and underlying perspectives, CC1's process was anything but common. Indeed, the process at CC1 was far more complex than the president initially explained.

> We get input from the board of trustees. We do some environmental scanning. We get input from our employees. We get the president's vision. You get some of the directives of the board, and you put this in this cauldron. What comes out on the end is some kind of brew that looks like a three to five-year plan, and you lay that out there. (CC1-P, Interview)

Community College 2 (– CC2) Profile

Definition of Strategic Planning – CC2

Formally, CC2 characterizes strategic planning as a medium to "define core competencies (i.e., enhance relationships with transfer institutions, minimize barriers for students, enrich the community, provide high quality programs, student assistance, and collaborate with area employers) and achieve CC2's six ends (i.e., academic alignment, access, community outreach, the college experience, student success, and workforce development) (CC2 Systems Portfolio, 2012, p. 1). Strategic planning is "focusing on the key strategic challenges that CC2 must address if they are to sustain their success into the future, as well as the key strategic advantages that CC2 can build on to continuously improve their performance" (CC2 Systems Portfolio, 2012, p. 17).

CC2's leadership shared their personal perceptions of strategic planning. The DIR explained, "How we see strategic planning here, [at CC2] is that we're a policy

governance college, which means that our board creates our mission and vision, values,

and what we call ends" (i.e., MVVE) (CC2-DIR, Interview). She extended her definition

to a more personal level. "We see strategic planning as an opportunity to bring together a

lot of people in a very, kind of a formal way, to say, 'What is next for us to do as a

college and then how do we organize ourselves to do that'" (CC2-DIR, Interview)?

CC2's CAO views strategic planning as a "process [that is derived] from the mission in

the ends of the college that are set by the board" (CC2-CAO, Interview).

Overview of Strategic Planning Process – CC2

An overview of CC2's strategic planning process is illustrated in Figure 10.
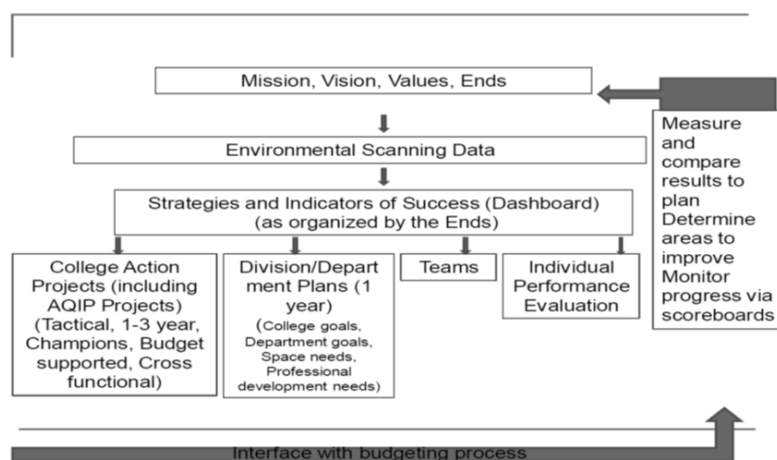
Figure 10. Community College 2's strategic planning process (as extracted from CC2
Systems Portfolio, 2012, a non-copyrighted public document).

Figure 10 describes the alignment of the MVVE and how these items drive the strategic

planning process. Figure 10 also represents how the strategic plan creates alignment

between the foundational items (i.e., MVVE) and the rest of the institution. I had to probe

more deeply into CC2's strategic planning documentation to determine if there were

specific stages in CC2's strategic planning process. Figure 11 was part of CC2's previous

AQIP Systems portfolio and represents a more detailed synopsis of their strategic
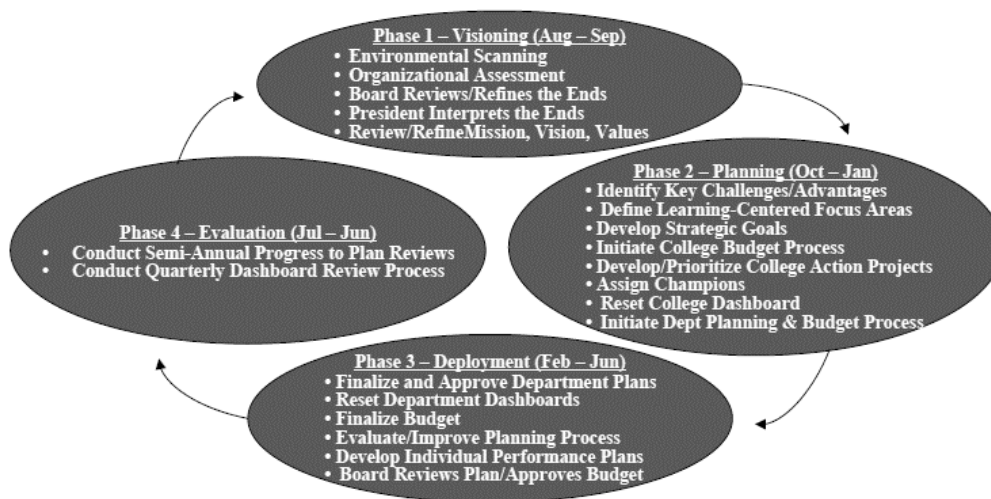
planning process.

Figure 11. Community College 2's phases of strategic planning process (as extracted from CC2 Systems portfolio, 2012 a non-copyrighted public document).

As represented in Figure 11, CC2's strategic planning process consists of four distinct

phases (i.e., visioning, planning, deployment, and evaluation), with actionable items

under each phase. CC2's strategic planning process has "undergone cycles of

improvement for more than ten years and was redesigned in 2009" (CC2 Systems

Portfolio, 2012, p. 16).

> We had what we called a rolling plan, which is every year we updated it. People
>
> found it very confusing. Our plan was not aligned to our college ends so we found
>
> that was confusing to people. We did that for five or six years and then we were
>
> writing for the Baldrige application through the Michigan Quality Application,
>
> and we hired a strategic planning consultant who came in and . . . worked with us.
>
> We went through a very formal strategic planning process [training], not so much
>
> the big team, but more cabinet level people but a pretty traditional, pretty
>
> traditional process. And we did that for a couple of years. (CC2-DIR, Interview)

When the current president arrived in 2007 the strategic planning process was redesigned. The DIR recalled how the president sought her input to improve CC2's strategic planning process:

> The president asked, 'If you could start over, what would you do different?' And I thought about it and I said, 'The problem that we're having is that although we have large groups of people involved.' And it was basically volunteer - the big group. I said, 'Not all the right people are in the room.' We have a number of plans that we've identified that require, for example, information technology assistance. There's nobody from IT on the strategy team. So when somebody calls and says, 'We need your help on this project as part of the strategic plan.' They're [IT are] like, 'Huh? We don't know anything about it. We have our own plan.' So, nothing got [accomplished]. (CC2-DIR, Interview)

One result of the redesigned strategic planning process was to reduce the six ends of the college to three. The president explained the importance of the college's ends. "When you are a policy governance institution, the ends are really what you program around, and we had six with that [initial version of the strategic plan]. [We have] gone through another process [and the ends] were heading to around three" (CC2-P, Interview). The president later elaborated on why he decreased the number of ends. "I wanted to remove some ends, because it committed the institutions to resources that I didn't think we were going to have to spend" (CC2-P, Interview). The president then discussed the current state of strategic planning at CC2.

> So now we only have three ends. We have a student's success pathway, we have transfer pathway, and we have a workforce pathway. Our work, and our resources

and budget is . . . now pretty simple - can we support that [the institution's] work supports our students around these three domains that we are now have developed our next strategic plan, our next set of metrics, our departmental plans, our individual performance plans. (CC2-P, Interview)

Another outcome of the new strategic planning process was the creation of a Strategic Planning Committee (i.e., SPC). "Our process since about '98, '99 has been a process of involving really a microcosm of the college [(i.e., strategic planning committee)] to do the planning" (CC2-CAO, Interview). "The [creation of the I.R. (i.e., Institutional Research) led SPC] enhanced the environmental scanning approach such that it became a continuous, year-long process of gathering and updating data" (CC2 Systems portfolio, p. 16). "The SPC is comprised of an executive committee and three standing committees, one for each of the ends (i.e., student success, transfer, and workforce pathways)" (CC2-DIR, Interview). Each member of the SPC is appointed by the president. CC2's Systems portfolio described the SPC membership.

> The SPC consists of three categories of campus leaders totaling 80 members: team leaders from 15 cross-functional teams, including the academic governing council, dean's council, diversity team, and occupational team among others; 36 department leaders, including the president's office and the provost; 26 leaders of various employee groups, including faculty and all levels of administration; three student leaders; and one board liaison. (CC2 Systems Portfolio, 2012, p. 16)

Although the SPC has responsibility for planning, there are opportunities for the entire college to comment on the plan.

> There are larger group surveys of entire populations, so it's not just the

microcosm. Everybody has an opportunity to weigh in on what we should be considering as we're going forward, where are the areas that you really see that we need to improve or expand, where are the areas that maybe we shouldn't be putting so much attention to all of those kind of things. (CC2-CAO, Interview)

As illustrated in Figure 11, CC2's strategic planning process begins with visioning. During the visioning phase "the mission, vision, values, and ends, and the college dashboard are viewed through the lens of environmental scanning data. This is the board's work" (CC2-DIR, Interview).

Once the board creates the MVVE the SPC "identifies alignment requirements and creates a framework for the plan" (CC2 Systems Portfolio, 2012, p. 17). As part of the alignment requirements and framework, the SPC creates the "key components of the plan – strategies - college action projects, department action projects, and outcome measures" (CC2 Systems Portfolio, 2012, p. 17).

The primary difference between strategies, college action projects and department action projects is duration. Strategies may extend for three years or more. College action projects utilize cross-functional areas of the college and may be short-term (i.e., less than one year) or long-term (i.e., two to three years). Department action projects are short term and support college action projects (CC2 Systems Portfolio, 2012). The chief academic officer indicated that duration has an impact on completion.

But, in terms of organizing and prioritizing it, and maybe in understanding that even when you're looking at a three-year plan, you don't have to get all of the projects that you're going to do in the three years decided in the first year, that you can say, 'Okay, these are the projects that we think we're starting with now.' We

think some of these might take three years, but some of these might only take a

year. Some of these might be a carry-over from the last time, and we know it will

only take a year because we need to complete it. Even though we went from doing

a rolling yearly plan to doing a three-year plan - and this is our second three-year

plan that we're doing - there still is an element of that yearly revitalization of it -

what's done, what's not done, what's working, what do we think was a good idea.

(CC2-CAO, Interview)

After the SPC identifies the key components of the strategic plan, they use

information from IR to assess the internal and external environment. This data "provides

the necessary insight for the SPC to identify CC2's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities,

and threats" (CC2 Systems Portfolio, 2012, p. 17). The environmental scanning process

continues throughout the year so the SPC can modify any plans prior to the next planning

cycle.

The SPC then identifies "the characteristics and performance levels that the

college needs to achieve to move toward realization of their vision" (CC2 Systems

Portfolio, 2012, p. 17). After the development of abstract strategies, the SPC generates

feedback and discussion in order to produce an initial draft of the strategies (CC2

Systems Portfolio, 2012).

I would say that the Dean's council probably took a lot of what came out of there

and really helped with organizing, 'How we are going to do this?' It's always a

laundry list of possible action projects, how would we prioritize those. It's

ultimately [the] SPC that would make the decision. But, I know that there was a

lot of input from deans on that as far as where our completion agenda was, things

that we were needing to be emphasizing on and working on, things we're already

working on, things that we really needed to do that. We took some priority. (CC2-

CAO, Interview)

The SPC breaks into subgroups centered on the three ends. The end committees

assess the draft strategies to determine if they are viable or if they need substantial

revision. The president of CC2 explained that a lot of work begins in the ends'

subcommittees.

[Each end subcommittee] began to look at, what are the outcomes we are trying to

achieve? What metrics measure those outcomes? And then, what are the

objectives or action plans? And in our case, also college action projects were

HLC. We're in the quality track, we've been in it forever. (CC2-P, Interview)

The ends committees also decide whether additional core competencies should be added

in the ends' areas.

Each ends' subgroup revises initial drafts and distributes them for input by the

entire SPC and a "broader segment of the campus community" (CC2 Systems Portfolio,

2012, p. 17). Once the larger group has given feedback to the SPC subcommittees,

strategies are finalized and the subcommittees create college action projects and outcome

measures. Some of the college action projects may also be AQIP action projects if they fit

HLC criteria. The final strategies are presented to the entire SPC for "review, discussion,

and approval" (CC2 Systems Portfolio, 2012, p. 18).

After each college action project is approved, champions are assigned. According

to CC2's Systems portfolio champions are assigned several tasks centered on their

project.

Each champion selects a cross-functional team to help communicate the content

of the college action project to all departments requiring development of

supporting plans; mentor department leaders in development of those plans and

indicators; ensure department plans are developed and implemented; track

progress of the implementation; identify key performance outcomes and establish

outcome measures; report on progress to plan throughout the year; prepare

monitoring reports for the board; and understand causative factors if performance

lags and mentor department leaders in development of corrective actions, plan

improvements, or plan modifications. (CC2 Systems Portfolio, 2012, p. 18)

While champions are starting their assignments, the ends' subcommittees revise the

outcome measures and develop performance projections. These outcome measures are

then submitted to the board and "an iterative process is used to gain consensus on the

indicators and their targets" (CC2 Systems Portfolio, 2012, p. 18). The CAO indicated

that the drafts must pass through the president prior to board review. "But ultimately, the

SPC, and the plan, the whole plan, goes to the president, and then he gets approvals from

the board on what he needs approvals on, and he approves what he approves" (CC2-

CAO, Interview). Once the outcome measures are agreed upon the entire plan is

submitted to the board for approval.

Systems Supporting Strategic Planning – CC2

The director of institutional research for CC2 indicated CC2 "has a lot of support

things that we build [strategic planning] around" (CC2-DIR, Interview).The chief

academic officer stated, "It's the support structures that would help [achieve the ends].

This is what we're focusing on; this is what we're working on" (CC2-CAO, Interview).

These supporting processes include communication, culture, decision making, leadership, and organizational design.

Communication – CC2. Communication is a vital support process at CC2. "I have good relationships . . . [there are] . . . intelligent people who I believe can add value to my thinking, or challenge my thinking, and that I admire and feel like I'm going to get a free consult too" (CC2-P, Interview).

Information sharing – CC2. The leadership of CC2 openly shares information both inside and outside higher education about volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity trends. "That's kind of a change for us. The [current president] is more likely to tell us things than our old president was, which is not a bad thing" (CC2-DIR, Interview). After the MVVE were redesigned the conversations at the board level changed. "Communication with the board centered more on CC2's mission as opposed to financial viability. "Our board today talks about academic issues much more so than when I first started here, much more so" (CC2-DIR, Interview).

Senior level communication is shared with the entire organization. The CC2's president stressed the importance of open communication.

> The opportunity to have significant impact in change is greatly enhanced if we can get as many as possible singing from the same choir book. In that world, there's not a lot of room for silos. We've got to be able to work across organizations if we want to get real quality. (CC2-P, Interview)

The work of the SPC is transparent. The director of institutional research explained that anyone can come to the SPC meeting.

> We're not doing this in secret so if you want to come to SPC, all you need to do,

in most cases, is tell your supervisor because all supervisors are on SPC. So, if you have an interest in it then just tell someone you have an interest and I always say-- whenever I'm addressing people I always say, 'And I'm a member. So, if you want to come in, you don't know who to ask, just ask me.' I'll let anyone come. And people take us up on that. (CC2-DIR, Interview)

Large group input – CC2. Because the SPC oversees the strategic planning processes leaders must be skilled in large group input and communications. External agencies have commented on CC2's ability to accomplish many initiatives through many people. "You guys do process really well. You tell people what to do, and they get it done" (CC2-DIR, Interview).

To ensure representativeness across campus, the SPC uses ". . . mix-max tables of eight people. [Historically teams were] just randomly assigned, but if we were really setting up these mix-max groups, we'd have them in the same configuration as in the population of CC2" (CC2-DIR, Interview). [Because of mix match members of the SPC], through the smaller table conversations really gets a chance to get to know specific people, who they don't normally work with" (CC2-DIR, Interview). Group think and social loafing are discouraged " . . .because you're assigning people to tables, the two people from human resources don't get to sit next to each other. And the three people from X department will sit by each other. So you have to pull your weight" (CC2-DIR, Interview).

At CC2 large group communication has challenges. "We have 70, 75 people in the room. So that's a lot. And people in a group that size, people tend not to ask questions or volunteer stuff, especially if it's critical" (CC2-DIR, Interview).

Each team [within the SPC] gets 15 minutes, and what we do is-- and again, we

bounced around a lot of different ways of giving feedback to these champions . . .

So nobody would ever challenge someone in that group, even if they thought it

was the dumbest thing ever. (CC2-DIR, Interview)

To confront this challenge one of the things that the DIR has done is to assign

roles to the SPC sub teams. Each sub team has an assigned note-taker and facilitator.

These role assignments rotate for each SPC meeting.

I think that the [role assignments] have built people's confidence. It's a little

intimidating. I kind of watch this at first but it's intimidating for someone who's

serving as an administrative assistant to facilitate a team of people, a table of

people that may include a dean or a vice president. That's a little intimidating.

(CC2-DIR, Interview)

CC2's strategic planning system ties individual work to the larger goal of the

MVVE.

That's our college strategic planning system. And each cog is important. There's

nothing that is more important than the others . . . I think most people will

understand that. Giving people a voice - we provide a lot of opportunities for

people to participate in this [strategic planning]. Probably more than most, and

then they learn that there are some people who must participate in strategic

planning, because of the role that they have. (CC2-DIR, Interview)

Culture – CC2. CC2's culture is based on learning and challenging perceptions

and processes. This culture is deeply engrained but has continually evolved as the

institution grows. *Culture of learning – CC2.* The chief academic officer described how

the institution has learned to plan strategically.

> We're a lot better at it [strategic planning] now than we were then, but it gave us
> the courage to try that, to bring 100 faculty and staff together and work through. It
> was very, very, clunky. We took enormous amounts of planning and time that we
> don't, luckily, have to spend on that now. We developed those skills and grew that
> process, and had that background. We didn't make this up. We really did learn this
> from people. We were part of CQIN [(i.e., Continuous Quality Improvement
> Network)] for years, and having those experiences and sending teams there, so a
> lot of institutional commitment around learning those things, and then a lot of will
> to try it. It was that same time then when you look at that '98, '99 time when AQIP
> came in. There are also those lovely accidents of time. At that point where we
> were ready to do more of this work, the opportunity to do this AQIP through HLC
> came about. And then, that fits together, and it also gives [strategic planning an
> importance because] that's your accreditation. And then, doing the Baldrige, the
> Michigan quality. All of those kind of things. When looking back on it, it's just an
> enormous institutional commitment that I'm not sure we even knew we were
> making. You know how you look back and you go, 'That was a lot.' (CC2-CAO,
> Interview)

CC2's strategic planning process predates the HLC accreditation AQIP pathway. CC2 was one of the first Michigan community colleges to join AQIP. CC2 did note that they have participated and honed processes based on their participation in HLC Academies. Yet, CC2 does not adopt external processes unless they fit with CC2's mission, values, vision, and ends (i.e., MVVE). CC2's director of research recalled a

situation when a former president "gave permission" to reject a process that was presented by an external group (CC2-DIR, Interview).

> They [the external agency] took about 20 minutes to talk about this process that we were going to use. And this is the president with a group of higher-level administrators. So [the president] looks up the table, he says, "Are we going to do this or not?" (CC2-DIR, Interview)

CC2's director of institutional research stated that CC2 has a respectful, but "pretty disobedient culture" with external agencies. This disobedience is partially attributable to leadership's stance that you "need to have the right people at the table" (CC2-P, Interview).

> [The president] said, 'We're not the right people to do this. There's a group on campus. We can go back and ask them to have this conversation, but I'm not willing to have this group of people plan work for someone else to do. So we're not going to do it. We will create a project that this group of eight people can do, but we're not going to do what you asked us to do. We're not coming up with a new project'. . . So sorry. So it's kind of our disobedience. So like I said, [CC2's president] said, 'We're not going to do that.' So what we did was created a new project that was a very short duration that just was something that that group of people who were there could do. . . .And I was really proud of him because it was like, 'Whoa. He gets that.' (CC2-DIR, Interview)

CC2's DIR went on to explain why this was such a pivotal moment for her.

'No, we're not going to plan their work. They need to plan their own work.' So I think that's maybe unique about us. I think we recognize where the work has to happen and

we'll do it that way. People here want to have a voice. Like I said, I think we have an unusually large number of people who integrate into strategic planning at some point. (CC2-DIR, Interview)

Although the leaders are essential to the process, "Learning historians" have helped to embed the process of strategic planning so that it transcends leaders (Gill, 2009, p. 91). "What's been curious to me is we've basically kept the same [strategic planning] process, although we've certainly tweaked it. But for three different presidents, which I think is kind of interesting" (CC2-DIR, Interview). She went on to explain that even if CC2 changes, its culture would ensure that strategic planning was inclusive.

> It doesn't matter who's the president. We're always like this . . . I don't know what would happen if we got a new president tomorrow who said, "I'm just going to have our little cabinet of nine people do strategic planning. I think there would be a revolt. Even the people who aren't on SPC would feel like there was some shared governance issue that was violated by that. And it works for us. (CC2-DIR, Interview)

Culture of challenging perspectives and processes – CC2. An important component of CC2's culture an awareness of when to challenge processes and perspectives and when to simply follow directives.

> We have a culture that will do the task at hand, the way that you have outlined it. Like I said, I get out there [in SPC subcommittees] and I say, 'This is what we're going to do.' If I had a VP say, 'Our table, we're going to do something different,' that would undermine the whole thing. And it just doesn't happen (CC2-DIR, Interview)

Another component of CC2's culture is authenticity. At CC2 strategic planning is not considered another management fad. "People have to feel the work is real work" (CC2-CAO, Interview).

> And so, some of that culture around, it's okay to say, 'I thought this is going to
> work. This is not working. And this isn't going to work unless I get another
> $100,000. Therefore, it's not going to work because we don't have $100,000.
> We've got this.' The reality test of things, people can't be going down the tubes
> because of that. There's got to be a shared responsibility even as you give people
> individual responsibility around these things. The way we do it, there has to be a
> commitment to quality improvement and to that cycle of learning and
> changing . . .But if people don't want to do that work of learning and making
> those changes based on what they've learned, then they won't work. (CC2-CAO,
> Interview)

CC2's culture is based on learning and challenging perceptions and processes. CC2's culture has evolved through institutional learning experiences, precisely timed. CC2's chief academic officer provided her view:

> Strategic planning is a means and not an end. I think that's a really important
> piece. It's not only a means to the work that you're doing, the impacts you want to
> have, it's a means of cultural change. It's a means of having people feel connected
> to an institution, having people have shared goals, having people know what
> you're about. It's important to not isolate it to being less than that, because it is an
> opportunity to do that. You just have to know what you're after, or at the very
> least, recognize it when it happens if you didn't know that's what you're after.

I think that you have to have, to one extent or another, as much as you can, leadership teams who are willing to share power with each other, too. If you have a really competitive culture and atmosphere, it would make this [strategic planning] very hard to do, because people won't admit they need each other, and they won't do the correct work that you need to do, and all that kind of stuff. If people are just trying to [advance] their own careers and-- I think that that would be the other observation is that there needs to be a commitment to the whole. I think that we've come a long way over these years of doing this and becoming more of a whole. The boundaries not being so firm. Because when you start doing this work, it's clear that we need each other, and that everybody has their roles that they need to play within this. And then, it works better when we coordinate those efforts. But, I know that, in a lot of places, the boundaries are much firmer, and it makes it harder to do that kind of work. (CC2-CAO, Interview)

Decision making – CC2. Another theme related to strategic planning that emerged during my study's point of interface was institutional decision making. Recurring decision making themes focused on decision formulation (i.e., decision making processes), degree of centralization (i.e., centralized vs. decentralized), and final determinations (who ultimately has the final decision making authority).

Decision formulation – CC2. Decisions are formulated at CC2 using iterative and collaborative decision making. Iterative decision making occurs at the highest level of strategic planning as the board determines the ends. The president explained:

And through an iterative process where the planning group - an 80-member planning group across this campus representing all the units - did the first iteration

and gave it to the board and said, 'Okay, take your best shot.' And they did, and

sent it back to the group, and they did their work. It went back and forth. (CC2-P

Interview)

At the SPC there is also iterative decision making between sub teams and the entire SPC.

There's a lot of iterativeness [sic] between the group working on [the ends] and

then the whole strategic leadership team. So people provide feedback and

sometime they'll get feedback that says, 'We can't afford it. What you're talking

about is really nice. I just don't think we can afford it.' So there are some give and

take. (CC2-DIR, Interview)

Collaborative decision making is embedded in CC2's decision making processes

and organizational culture. CC2 has been "trained to do [what] is called large-scale

change processes or large-scale engagement. We learned how to use large groups of

people to accomplish work, and to build in a lot of ownership by involving people in

important decision-making" (CC2-DIR, Interview).

I think that [large group problem solving] is part of our culture. We did a lot of

total quality management training. I don't know if that's where that backbone of

that is. But we are able to, as a group, kind of approach an issue and just get the

work done. (CC2-DIR, Interview)

Also important to CC2's collaborative decision making is engaging individuals

from across the larger college community. CC2's DIR spoke about the importance of

cross department collaboration.

I'll go back to one of our carpenters, who's on the team. He's on a team with the

president. That doesn't happen very often. And he's kind of proud of that. And

they're buds, and they talk at every meeting, and he can go back to his cronies

down in 'carpenterville' and talk about, 'Well, I was talking to [President's first

name] this morning.' And that's kind of a cool thing. (CC2-DIR, Interview)

Degree of centralization – CC2. Decision making at CC2 is mostly centralized

according to process, but very decentralized within those processes. The president

explained:

> I think presidents have to be able to say, 'I don't know what's going to come out
>
> of the plan, but I do have a model of how we can get there. It's up to you guys to
>
> figure out what's going to come out of the plan.' But I certainly hold the authority
>
> and the responsibility to set up a process that I think has an opportunity to work.
>
> (CC2-P, Interview)

The entire strategic planning process at CC2 is very prescriptive. "The entire SPC team is

set up to very much be [the president's] team"(CC2-DIR, Interview). Yet within groups,

there is a considerable amount of adjusting according to members input and even as the

draft plans are presented to the larger institution. CC2's president seeks input from

institutional leaders and adjusts decisions accordingly.

> I also depend upon my senior leadership for consultation. . . To see the world
>
> through their lens . . . My executive team are all good thinkers, and I won't go
>
> down a path that I'm uncomfortable with until I have some comfort level after
>
> talking to them. That would be hard for us to move forward in a dramatic way
>
> without that support. (CC2-P, Interview)

Final determination – CC2. Final decisions are made in accordance with CC2's strategic planning process. There is a clear delineation between areas of responsibility which helps to ensure that decisions are made by those that are ultimately responsible.

> You can get tied up with having to have too many external permissions to make changes or to do-- well, it will tie it up. It will get too political; it will get too whatever. It's nice that in our-- I think our board does a great job. But, I also think it also helps when it's very clear that these are the board responsibilities, these are the operational responsibilities of running the college. They're different. (CC2-CAO, Interview)

The SPC holds considerable decision making authority. However, final decisions rest with CC2's board. "The group [SPC] is pretty clear that it is the board's responsibility to set the indicators, and we report to the board. So those indicators, we kind of try to keep them in front of us . . ." (CC2-DIR, Interview).

Leadership – CC2. CC2's past presidents did not emphasize strategic planning. Strategic planning used to be a lot of "ifs."

> [Strategic planning] used to be that, if that kind of caught fire and if people could build the support and they could find the funding and if all things start of came together, then it would happen. Now, I don't have any doubt that those projects in that strategic plan. They'll either be completed in three years or someone's going to have to do a lot of explaining. And that's going to be pretty public, if they haven't been accomplished. (CC2-DIR, Interview)

"CC2's former president didn't like to do the strategic planning, so he never showed up [to planning meetings]. That sent a huge message" (CC2-DIR, Interview). CC2's current

president "comes to every single meeting that he can. Now, that's really important,

because it sends a message" (CC2-DIR, Interview). CC2's president articulated why he

felt strategic planning was important.

> So those are some drivers around those principles, and if you can't come in here
> and understand how your work affects the direction of the institution, then we're
> not doing our job as leaders. That's part of our responsibility, is to help you
> connect the dots as to why your work is so important. It's all noble work, given
> our mission. (CC2-P, Interview)

When CC2's current president arrived, he redesigned the strategic planning

process. However, the leadership felt that he did not discount former processes but rather

improved on processes already in place. "In terms of leadership, I really have to

commend [the president] for coming in. He made some changes what he saw from his

end. But he didn't need for us to completely change it" (CC2-DIR, Interview). The

president spoke about the shortcomings of the former process.

> I didn't feel like it had the ownership across the campuses. Strategic planning
> should have it; it's going to be a living document. I didn't think there were enough
> people involved in the work, and I couldn't see the connection of the plan
> throughout the organization so that every employee could find themselves in that
> plan somewhere. It is part of what I think strategically you need to do in
> institutional planning. So, that means that if I'm a custodian, how does my work
> impact students. (CC2-P, Interview)

Along with redesigning the process, the current president was willing to share

power to ensure that individuals "have the room to be able to do what they need to do

strategically" (CC2-CAO, Interview). The president also garnered personnel and financial resources. The president appointed people to the SPC. He also encumbered funds for college action projects.

> One of the things that [the president] did that was, I think, very smart, was to set aside money to use for the college action projects because your money has to be where your mouth is. If you say these are really important projects, but I go to implement it and I can't do what I've set out to do because there are no resources allocated for it, then you don't have a plan. The other thing is people would have to be committed to providing the resources to be able to actually do the project. And it sounds silly, but we've been there too. We're, 'Oh yeah, I'm supposed to do this, but with what? How? I don't really have the means to do this.' (CC2-DIR, Interview)

When asked about his strategic planning process, CC2's president simply stated, "There's no rocket science thinking here at work, except I do know that the sum is greater than the parts." He went on to offer advice to leaders who want to be "distinctive" institutions in strategic planning.

> Honor the process and realize that planning and ongoing strategic planning is not a day-long retreat activity. We spend time in this, both informal, the whole strategic team, to vet all the real work that happens within the work groups as they go back to their campus jobs and then reconvene outside the formal gathering. So you have to be willing to give it the time and energy that it needs, I think, to be successful. You have to be willing to be transparent on what you're trying to accomplish and put it out there for everybody to see. If you'll do that, then I think

you have a shot of being successful.

Organizational Design – CC2. The structure of CC2 is based on a quality improvement model. According to CC2's chief academic officer all of the levels of the college have adopted these principles.

> But, essentially, the structure, the college level, the department level, the individual level, that's really just pure Bald Ridge-y stuff, and how that cycle improvement works and all of those kind of things. That, I would say, our model is very much there. It's very much a quality improvement model. We're one of the first AQIP colleges, and we are-- that is what we're about. We have over the years, I think, really internalized that. (CC2-CAO, Interview)

One of the issues surrounding CC2's organizational design is pressure from agencies to "market that CC2 operates on certain principles" (CC2-DIR, Interview). The director of institutional research recalled the conversation that she had with herself after being asked to advertise the fact that CC2 was using particular processes.

> I'm like, 'Nah.' We have always had a strong strategic plan that served to be our organizing structure, so we didn't need to talk about the fact that we [are this type of institution or that type of institution]. To us those are things that we use to further our strategic plan in where we want to go, not the other way around. If it fits. It's like, 'No. Our own mission, vision, values, and ends are what's driving us.' And these other things are tools to get there. (CC2-DIR, Interview)

Strategic Planning Perspectives – CC2

CC2's Systems portfolio and participant interviews were coded according to Mintzberg et al.'s broadened perspectives in Appendix B. The broadened perspectives

were subsequently aligned with Mintzberg et al.'s 10 strategic perspectives. Table 7

summarizes which of these strategic perspectives appear to be used at CC2.

Table 7

Strategic Planning Perspectives in Use – CC2

Mintzberg et al., broadened perspectives	Scale based on literature	Mintzberg et al. (1998) 10 perspectives
Central Actor	Board, president, top management, internal constituents	Learning
Decision making direction	Top-down and bottom up	Learning and cultural
Embedded Approach to strategic planning	Initially intended but emerging courses of action	Configuration
External environment	Unpredictable	Learning
Premise of the strategy	Emphasize organizational values	Configuration
Formality	Formal process with informal norms	Configuration
Frame of reference	Imaginative	Configuration
Leadership background	Higher education	N/A
Level of complexity	Complex	Configuration
Organizational structure	Mechanistic	Mechanistic with organic divisions and departments
Primary focus of the strategic plan	Organization	Design
Role of external actors	Active	Configuration
Strategic choice	Broadly defined	Configuration
Strategy formation	Descriptive	Configuration

Central actor. According to Table 7, CC2's central actors in strategy formulation

are the board who set the strategic ends (e.g., academic alignment, access, community

outreach, the CC2 experience, student success, and workforce development). The

president is then responsible for creating a process to achieve the board's ends. CC2-DIR

stated, "It is his job as president to develop a strategic plan or create a strategic planning

process that moves us closer to the Ends that the board has agreed on" (CC2-DIR,

Interview). She went on to clarify that CC2's central actor is the president. And so the

whole strategic planning process is the president's, and that's important because as our

bylaws state for our strategic leadership team, our job as an SPC is to make

recommendations to the president. He can either take them or leave them, but we
recommend to the president. We don't decide anything. [The] SPC has no power except
for what their president allows us to have. People are pretty clear about that that he could
choose to go to his summer home and take three top administrators with him and come
back with a strategic plan. As long as the board accepted it, that'd be perfectly fine. He
doesn't owe us the [process]. (CC2-DIR, Interview)

Although CC2-P is the central actor, he believes in significant input into the strategic
planning process.

> Strategic planning should have [broad input]; it's going to be a living document. I
> didn't think there were enough people involved in the work, and I couldn't see the
> connection of the plan throughout the organization so that every employee could
> find themselves in that plan somewhere. It's part of what I think strategically you
> need to do in institutional planning. So, that means that if I'm a custodian, how
> does my work impact students' success? (CC2-P, Interview)

Although the president is the central actor, he is supported by input from the
organization. The Mintzberg et al.'s 10 strategic perspective that aligns with CC2's
central actor is the learning perspective. This perspective states that the top management
team is the central actor, the organization contributes to formulating the strategic plan
through microcosms.

Decision making direction. At CC2 there are opportunities for input into the
formulation process through SPC members. CC2's Systems portfolio indicated that open
communication begins with the board and flows throughout the institution.

CC2 engages in a series of planned practices and activities during the academic

year that provide the forum, context, and opportunity for its many internal and

external constituencies to respond to policy decisions and challenges, and to make

their views and needs heard. This commitment to open communication begins

with the Board of Trustees. (CC2 Systems Portfolio, 2012, p. 8)

Based on the flow of information at CC2 it appears that Mintzberg et al.'s learning or

cultural perspectives are is used at CC2. The learning perspective indicates that decisions

may flow in either direction (i.e., top-down or bottom-up). But top management is

responsible for eliminating ineffective processes and utilizing best practices.

Embedded approach to strategic planning. At CC2 the embedded approach to

strategic planning appears to be both intended and emergent. Because CC2's mission,

vision, and values (i.e., MVV) are the mainstay of strategic planning at CC2. This portion

formulating the strategic plan is intended. However, the purpose of CC2's SPC is "to

provide a forum enabling a wide variety of college constituency group the opportunity to

provide input into the future direction of the college" (CC2 Systems Portfolio, 2012, p.

42). CC2's strategic plan is intended, but the plans of the SPC, who ensure that the

MVVE are accomplished, are emergent. This information suggests the configuration

perspective is most consistent with CC2's embedded approach to strategic planning.

Organizations using the configuration approach formulate strategy using an emergent or

intended approach depending on which of the other perspectives are being utilized at the

institution.

External environment. At CC2, leaders view the external environment as unstable. CC2-P recalled the transition in the manufacturing sector as an illustration of how instability in the external environment impacts the stability of CC2's operations.

> Manufacturers figured out they needed to get into other lines of business and they needed to re-tool. Then, of course, they let a lot of people go. And so, as an institution, we were responding to, at that time, all those people who had been let go, and enrollment jumped by 3,000 students in a two-year time period, on the credit side. So now they've retooled, they've got new lines of business, and they have no employees that have skills, because they all left. And we are now scurrying around, and enrollment has dropped by 2500 students. We are probably as busy as we've ever been in career technical fields and customized training, and new Michigan jobs were getting... no, I wouldn't call this stable at all. We ride with the economy, and we're always reacting a bit to either thousands of students that we didn't anticipate or thousands that now are gone. But now we have a whole different set of urgency around the training that's needed in the workforce pathway side that we didn't have 5 years ago. (CC2-P, Interview)

CC2-CAO also viewed the external environment as unstable.

> Well, honestly I don't think there is so much as stable. What seems to be happening is that the environment - particularly external, but also internal. [Just in the last seven months] things are different. We're doing things differently. There's different-- within the changes, the piece that is the most reliable, that things are changing all the time. And so, in reality, [action] projects are changing all the time, too. (CC2-CAO, Interview)

These viewpoints suggest that CC2's external environmental is complex and unpredictable. A complex and unpredictable environment is consistent with Mintzberg et al.'s learning perspective. The learning perspective views the institution's external environment as demanding, complex, and unpredictable (Mintzberg et al., 1998).

   Premise of the strategy. To determine if the focus of CC2's strategy was to establish a distinctive competence, capitalize on organizational resources, or emphasize organizational values, I performed word frequency queries with source documents (i.e., CC2's Systems portfolio and leader transcripts). To determine if a distinctive competence was the most frequently cited term I searched for the terms, "competence" or "opportunity." To determine if the premise of the strategy was to capitalize on organizational resources, I searched for the terms, "resources." To determine if the premise of the strategy was to emphasize organizational values I searched for the term, "values." Table 8 illustrates the number of times these terms appeared in CC2's Systems portfolio or CC2's interview transcripts.

Table 8

Word Frequency Result - CC2: Premise of Their Strategy

Search Term	Number of times referenced in source documentation
Values	764
Resources	269
Opportunity or competence	219

As described in Table 8, the term, "Value" was cited most often (i.e., 764 times), followed by the term, "Resources" (i.e., 269 times) with the terms "Opportunity or Competence" cited the least (i.e., 219 times). After reviewing the descriptions of each of Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 strategic perspectives, the configuration perspective most

closely captured CC2's strategic focus. The goal of the configuration perspective is to preserve stability, adapt to change as needed, and to be able to manage transformation without damaging the organization.

Formality. The broadened perspective of formality sought to address the level of formality of an institution's culture. CC2's strategic planning process, discussed earlier is a formal process. CC2-DIR indicated that the traditional process used at CC2 was a formal, traditional process.

> And we went through a very formal strategic planning process - not so much the big team but more cabinet level people but pretty traditional, pretty traditional process. And we did that for a couple of years. Again, our big problem was it wasn't aligned to the Ends. And so, it was like another set of things we have to do. But there was some good work done. (CC2-DIR, Interview)

She explained that the revised process aligns to institutional ends, but it is still a pretty formal process. "I think we see strategic planning as an opportunity to bring together a lot of people in a very, kind of a formal way, to say, 'What is next for us to do as a college? And then how do we organize ourselves to do that'" (CC2-DIR, Interview)?

Although I classified CC2's strategy formulation as formal, the purpose of such formality was not to select a common position as described in Mintzberg et al.'s positioning perspective. Nor was the level of formality a reaction to the environment as described in Mintzberg et al.'s environmental perspective. Therefore, the Mintzberg et al.'s configuration perspective appeared to be the most appropriate depiction of the level of formality at CC2. The level of formality in the configuration perspective could be formal or informal, but the impetus for such formality was how the organization utilized

other perspectives to formulate the strategic plan.

      Frame used to craft strategy. The frame used to craft strategy at CC2 appears to

be mostly analytical. CC2's strategic planning process has undergone several revisions.

Each revision honed processes to ensure that systems thinking permeated the entire

strategic planning process. CC2-P discussed how valuable a strategic planning process is

to viewing the institution as a systematic process.

> [This institution] had gotten to the point where the budget was really off the rails,
>
> and they didn't have the planning process, and the president asked me to come
>
> into his office and be responsible for the university budget and the strategic
>
> planning for the institution. And I went to a three-week conference on planning
>
> out in Colorado, and I'd learned some things I thought were pretty important. It
>
> reinforced some system-thinking that I brought with me to the conference. (CC2-
>
> P, Interview)

CC2-DIR also spoke extensively about the formal strategic planning process. She stated

that CC2 "has a lot of pretty specific processes in place . . . We have a lot of support

things that we build around [action projects}. People are pretty aware of what you have to

do . . . A lot of process is built on experience" (CC2-DIR, Interview). CC2's chief

academic officer indicated that sometimes the process may create barriers to innovation.

> There are barriers to that that are systemic barriers. And how do we even-- we just
>
> had a meeting about this the other day, how do you even discern those? Because
>
> it's hard when you live in a system to actually see the barriers within the system
>
> because that just feels like that's how you have to do things. And how do you let
>
> innovation in, like the fast track piece? When it will have an effect maybe on how

many developmental course-- it's the effect we want. But then, what does that

mean for the system? What are the unintended consequences of those changes?

And what are the fears people have around those changes, and how they handle

it? (CC2-CAO, Interview)

CC2's formality coupled with an analytical frame used to craft strategy appears to

be most consistent with Mintzberg et al.'s configuration perspective. Unlike the planning

and positioning perspectives who utilize an analytical frame to position themselves in an

industry, CC2 uses the analytical frame to advance their strategy, organizational structure

and processes.

Leadership background. This broadened perspective suggested that an

institutional leader's background may signify which of Mintzberg et al.'s 10 strategic

perspectives were used to formulate strategy. As discussed previously CC2-P had a

background in higher educational leadership. None of Mintzberg et al.'s 10 strategic

perspectives directly aligned to CC2-P's background.

Level of plan's complexity. CC2's strategic plan appeared to be complex. CC2

devotes significant resources to "onboarding" new employees on their strategic planning

process. In CC2's Systems portfolio there are two full pages of acronyms that are used in

conjunction with their strategic planning process. However, leaders (i.e., CC2-DIR, CC2-

P, and CC2-CAO) are able to effectively communicate their processes so that I could

understand how CC2 formulated their strategy. After reviewing CC2's strategic planning

process, I determined that CC2's strategic formulation was complex, but the plan itself

was easily articulated to multiple audiences. Although several of Mintzberg et al.'s 10

strategic perspectives (i.e., planning, entrepreneurial, cognitive, learning, power,

environmental and configuration) classify strategic planning formulation processes as complex, CC2's process address organizational culture, communication, and invention. Due to these supporting structures it appears that CC2's level of strategic planning complexity is best described by the configuration perspective.

Organizational structure. This broadened perspective classified an institution's organizational structure as either mechanistic or organic. It appears that CC2's organizational chart is more mechanistic than organic. However, utilizing Burns and Stalker's (1961) definitions of mechanistic or organic organizational structures, CC2 appears to have organic organizational structures within a larger mechanistic organization. CC2-DIR discussed how CC2's mechanistic structure is able to retain the positive attributes of organic organizational models.

> What we were trained to do is it's called large-scale change processes or large-scale engagement. We learned how to use large groups of people to accomplish work, and to build in a lot of ownership by involving people in important decision-making. (CC2-DIR, Interview)

The ability to utilize both mechanistic and organic organizational structures is indicative of Mintzberg et al.'s contingency perspective. In this perspective, the organizational structure can be both organic and mechanistic. Which type of structure the organization chooses is based on their strategy, organizational chart, and the stability in the external environment.

Primary focus of the strategic plan. To determine if the primary focus of CC2's strategic plan was either the external environment, individual, or organizational, I performed word frequency queries with source documents (i.e., CC2's Systems portfolio

and leader transcripts). I queried the terms, "external environment," "individual," and "organization" with related synonyms. Table 9 illustrates the number of times these terms appeared in CC2's Systems portfolio or interview transcripts.

Table 9

Word Frequency Result – CC2: Primary Focus of Their Strategic Plan

Search Term	Number of times search terms used in source documentation
Organization	159
Individual	131
External environment	32

Table 9 illustrates the number of times that the search terms (i.e., organization, individual, or external environment) were used in CC3's Systems portfolio or leaders' responses. The most frequently used term was "organization" cited 159 times, followed by "external environment" used 131 times, and individual used times. Based on the word frequency queries it appears that the primary focus of CC3's strategic plan is the organization.

CC2-CAO stated that CC2's process is based on what they have learned about strategic planning over the years.

> Those are the learnings. I think what I like about what we do in strategic planning is that the pieces do fit together, that there is something systematic about this, and it does drive daily work. It isn't just, 'Well, after three years from now, we'll look at this and see what we're doing.' There's an ongoing nature to this - of tracking these things, and monitoring these things, and seeing them as moving our work forward at various levels. (CC2-CAO, Interview)

Based on the data it appears that the perspective that depicts CC2's primary focus of the strategic plan is the learning perspective. The learning perspective indicates strategy formation takes place at the group level (i.e., SPC) where members achieve strategy by continuously improving the strategic formulation process.

Role of external actors. This broadened perspective discussed whether external individuals (i.e., four-year institutions, advisory committees, and community members) took an active or passive role in strategy formulation. According to CC2-CAO, CC2's strategic plan "Generally has focus groups of students and community members who also contribute information as we're putting into a plan together" (CC2-CAO, Interview). This information coupled with the membership of the SPC suggests that at CC2 the role of external actors is active. Active participation by external actors in strategy formulation is indicative of Mintzberg et al.'s learning, power, environmental, and configuration perspectives. The role of external actors is active, but like CC1, the role of external actors differs according to context. Therefore, the configuration perspective best describes CC2's role of external actors. In the configuration perspective external actors may be active or passive depending on organizational context.

Strategic choice. This broadened perspective classified institutions according to whether their institutional strategy was broadly or narrowly at CC2. At CC2 the MVVE are set at the board level (CC2-CAO, Interview).

> [In] our strategic planning system. We have the mission, vision, values, and ends, and the college dashboard through the lens of environmental scanning data. This is the board's work. These two boxes are strategic leadership team's work. And then we have College Action Project strategic leadership team's work. But our

> planning process includes division and department planning, team planning, and
> individual performance evaluation. And we think this is the system that has really
> worked for us. (CC2-DIR, Interview)

The notion that each microcosm of the organization is responsible for strategic planning suggests that there may be various strategic choices which meld together into the final strategic plan. I struggled with determining if the MVVE (i.e., narrowly defined) were of greater importance than the input by the institutional planning components (i.e., broadly defined). CC2-DIR helped to clarify that CC2's strategy was narrowly defined at the board level, but then were broadly defined as the MVVE were integrated into divisional, departmental and individual planning.

> It's not just the college strategic plan. It's the whole system that supports that. And
> it's at the college-wide level. There's work at the department level. There's work
> in teams and it's individuals. And it all fits together. That's our college strategic
> planning system. And each cog is important. There's nothing that is more
> important than the others . . . (CC2-DIR, Interview)

CC2's strategic choice appeared to be most aligned with Mintzberg et al.'s configuration perspective. As stated previously, this perspective indicated that strategy can be narrowly or broadly defined depending on the organization's structure, context, or processes.

Strategic formation. This broadened perspective classified Mintzberg et al.'s strategic perspectives according to whether CC2's formulation process was descriptive or prescriptive. CC2's process has both descriptive and prescriptive elements. At first glance, CC2's strategic formation appears very prescriptive.

> And so the whole strategic planning process is the president's, and that's

important because as our bylaws state for our strategic leadership committee, our

job as an SLC is to make recommendations to the president. He can either take

them or leave them, but we recommend to the president. We don't decide

anything. SLC has no power except for what their president allows us to have.

People are pretty clear about that . . . (CC2-DIR, Interview)

Yet, CC-P feels that input, and the varying frames of reference that come from that input,

are necessary to plan strategically.

And I think really talking about how people, and the culture, and the individual

contributions, and having a diverse talent group, so that we can create synergy -

without using too many buzzwords - create synergy, I think, is imperative to our

institution right now - all of our institutions. (CC2-P, Interview)

Although CC2's strategic planning process is prescriptive (e.g., multiple forms, steps,

deadlines, etc.) the content of those forms and steps are not prescribed. By monitoring

progress and taking appropriate action (i.e., learning) from strategic planning, there are

descriptive elements to CC2's process.

Like many of the other broadened perspectives, CC2 appeared to encompass both

prescriptive and descriptive methods of strategy formulation. The strategic planning

processes is prescriptive. Yet, wide input coupled with institutional learning signified

descriptive nuances within the broader process. Therefore, CC2's strategic formation

process appeared to be most indicative of the configuration perspective.

Value of Strategic Planning – CC2

I asked each of the leaders of CC2 about the value of strategic planning. Themes

that emerged from respondent answers were that strategic planning provides CC2 with

alignment of priorities, perception, perspectives, processes, and personnel.

Alignment of priorities. Community colleges were designed to be all things to all people (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). One of the consequences of CC2's strategic planning process is that it provides the institution with focus. The chief academic officer explained the affirmation that comes with focus. "When you start saying, "This is really what our job is. This is our focus. This is our role in the community. This is what we're doing," then you're not worried about [are we doing enough]" (CC2-CAO, Interview)? Resources are constrained at many community colleges so focus is important. The chief academic officer explained:

> There's nothing wrong with saying, 'We can't do everything.' There's nothing
> wrong with saying, 'This is our focus. These are the things that we are
> strategically going to put our energy into in order to make these differences.' I
> think that was just the learning. This is what we do. This what we are, what's
> going to help us to improve right now in this place in history and do better for our
> students and what we're doing. It would be interesting to see when we get to the
> next one [strategic planning cycle] what we learned out of this, but I think that
> clarity or focus is going to serve us really well. (CC2-CAO, Interview)

Perception. The perception at CC2 regarding strategic planning is that they have expertise in processes, but there is concern about implementation. The chief academic officer shared her perception of where CC2 is at in terms of strategic planning.

> I think we've got the planning down pretty well. But boy, the devils and the
> details on the implementation. Over and over again, I see how where the impact
> gets limited is where we aren't able to make the changes we need to make to truly

implement something. I think that's our next-- that's a big skill we're struggling with right now is the work of implementation is incredibly hard. When you've gotten so good at planning, that's hard [crosstalk]. Now, it's like you have to carry it all through, and [inaudible] to do it, and you have to make it happen. And not that we haven't carried things through, but when you find the things that are really impactful and they require your big change, and you know they are impactful on a little level, how do you bring it to that scale, and how do you make the sacrifices on the way that you have to make to do that? (CC2-CAO, Interview)

The CAO went on to discuss how the lack of resources coupled with the need to increase achievement indicators is the biggest issue confronting CC2.

Nobody has the extra resources. In making those changes, you've got to reallocate time, energy, money, attention to be able to do that. It's a good place, but I think that that's going to be one of the next challenge-- it's the challenge I think we're facing right now. In the facing of that, I think in the implementation of all of our plans in their fullness are - not all of them probably, but a lot of them - that's where we'll start having the impacts that we have to have. Because otherwise, making a difference to 100 students is not going to move those big indicators. It moves them for those students. Thank goodness. That's great. But, it isn't making a systemic change that's affecting the larger group. (CC2-CAO, Interview)

Perspectives. CC2's strategic planning perspectives are based in a learning orientation. CC2's president stated, "I'd learned some things I thought were pretty important. It reinforced some system-thinking" (CC2-P, Interview). According to the chief academic officer one of the most significant things that CC2 has learned is to

deepen impact in a few areas rather than have little impact in several areas. The chief academic officer stated:

> I think that maybe that was one of the most significant learnings was less is more here, in terms of particularly the ends that the more that we could focus and say, 'This is what is central to what we're doing.' There might be other things we would do, but this what we absolutely have to do. That need, the need for clear focus I think came from our own learning. (CC2-CAO, Interview)

> **Processes.** Every process at CC2 is linked. The DIR spoke about the need to ensure that all processes are linked.

> I don't want anything that's not linked, so strategic plan has to link to ends. Strategic plan has to link to HLC in college action projects, and every employee's performance plan has to link to the strategic plan, and every departmental plan has to link to strategic plan . . . So there's no repetitive work. Everything has to be part of the [strategic planning process]. (CC2-DIR, Interview)

The chief academic officer confirmed that there is a connectivity between the parts of the strategic planning process.

> I think what I like about what we do in strategic planning is that the pieces do fit together, that there is something systematic about this, and it does drive daily work. It isn't just, "Well, after three years from now, we'll look at this and see what we're doing." There's an ongoing nature to this - of tracking these things, and monitoring these things, and seeing them as moving our work forward at various levels. (CC2-CAO, Interview)

The director of institutional research indicated that CC2's strategic planning process was

very prescriptive "Except for the fact that we do it with 70 people, the model that we use for strategic planning is pretty textbook" (CC2-DIR, Interview). She went on to discuss how other community college leaders might view CC2's strategic plan.

> If you look at our plan, a lot of people who do a lot of strategic planning would say, 'This is really narrow.' That's purposeful because it fits those ends. But that also means that most, almost every project is academic or student-focused . . . We have a lot of pretty specific processes in place . . . with a lot of forms . . . but these processes and forms are built on our experience with strategic planning. (CC2-DIR, Interview)

Another leadership perspective that surfaced during coding was the idea that because CC2's process is so prescribed that might thwart creativity. The director of institutional research stated, "But people seem to kind of like this [strategic planning process], so they don't mind that there's nothing really fresh.

Personnel. Another value to CC2's strategic planning process is that it creates a commonality for all employees of CC2. The chief academic officer discussed how the strategic plan ensures that the entire organization is working in the same direction.

> I think that the dailiness [sic] of that is really important, that it's just a part of what you know, and what you're all working toward. We went through times when people would fight to get their projects approved, because then you [know] that's a good sign. (CC2-CAO, Interview)

The strategic planning process also provides motivating factors for employees such as task significance, and task identification. Because the president appoints members to the SPC. The director of institutional research explained the empowerment that employees

feel when picked by the president to be part of strategic planning.

> The president writes a letter and says, 'I really need you,' or makes a call to be
>
> part of this group, and, [states,] 'I need you because you have power - it may not
>
> be in your position description, but it is there because of who you are.' So if you
>
> can get people that others respect involved in the work that you respect, that has a
>
> multiplier effect. So, pretty strategic as to how we ask people to join strategic
>
> planning, quite frankly. (CC2-DIR, Interview)

Community College 3 (-CC3) Profile

Definition of Strategic Planning – CC3

According to CC3's Systems portfolio, "CC3 has one aligned planning process

that incorporates strategic planning and operational planning at both the department and

individual levels" (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 98). CC3's Strategic Planning

workbook reiterates this characterization of strategic planning.

> The Strategic Retreat [which begins CC3's strategic planning process] provides
>
> an opportunity for campus leaders to consider the environment in which CC3
>
> operates, the needs of our learners, community and employees, and the external
>
> conditions that impact us. All of these are key considerations as we make strategic
>
> choices. (CC3 - Strategic Planning Workbook, 2014, p. 3)

CC3's president is a strategic thinker (CC1-P, Interview). He defines the college's

strategy as a position in the larger external environment (i.e., the college's role in meeting

the needs of the region).

> We can build products over here, then link to, and support, and change the value
>
> preposition here [regionally], such that I could sell it for more money. I can earn it

the old fashion way. So that's the strategy - to offer or teach strategy for the

institution is move to this, build this out, recognize that eventually a bunch of this

is going to become a commodity, but you can't time the market. You don't know

when. (CC3-P, Interview)

Overview of Strategic Planning Process – CC3

Figure 12 is an overview of CC3's strategic planning process.
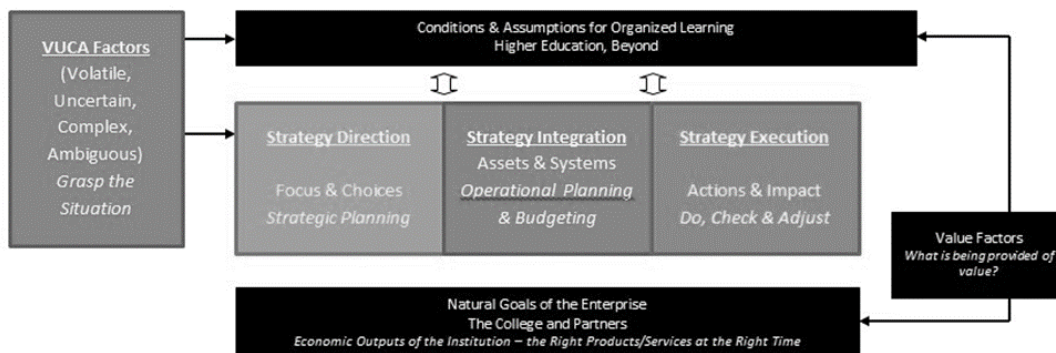
Figure 12. Community College 3's strategic planning process (as extracted from CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, a non-copyrighted public document).

As illustrated in Figure 12, CC3's "aligned planning process incorporates a Plan-Do-

Check-Adjust continuous improvement approach" (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 98).

"We have the framework for the process which is plan-do-check-adjust" (CC3-CAO,

Interview). "CC3 employs different methods of selecting short- and long-term strategies.

A key input to planning at CC3 is the articulation of a set of Planning Assumptions based

on a regular monitoring and summary of environmental trends" (CC3 Systems Portfolio,

2013, p. 98). CC3's Strategy Workbook specifies the set of planning assumptions and

how these assumptions inform CC3's strategic planning process.

These scans inform our Planning Assumptions by providing insight, offering

evidence of change and pointing to trends in the market. CC3's Planning

Assumptions were recently updated by members of the CC3's Scan Team. They

reflect a set of views about the future that we [CC3] believe are on pace to occur,

and they form an important basis for strategy refinement. In fact, the primary

objective of the planning assumptions is informing strategic planning at CC3.

(CC3 - Strategic Planning Workbook, 2014, p. 1)

Also described in Figure 12, are CC3's long-term strategies (i.e., strategic directions).

These strategic directions are set by the Board of Trustees (i.e., Board) as part of the

annual review of the president.

[Long-term] strategies are ultimately expressed as CC3's Strategic Directions.

They provide a 5-7 year vision for where the organization is headed. These

directions are drafted by a small group considering input from numerous sources

and in consideration of the environmental trends. (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013,

p. 98)

The president of CC3 recalled his goal for the initial planning session in 2007.

The most important thing that came out of that [initial session] was that value

statement - documenting the vision. I made a conscious decision not to go to the

mission, but to really focus on trying to answer the [value] question first, 'Okay.

How do you want to do business?' (CC3-P, Interview)

Although the board annually reviews the strategic directions, they do not review the

actual wording of the CC3's principles (i.e., mission, vision, and values).

We aren't really saying, 'Okay. Let's take a look at this wording. Does this really

reflect what we are and what we want to be right now?' We haven't done that in

the last four years, and we didn't have a process to specifically look at those

guiding principles. We created those, [principles] but those really are the-- we

created the process of reviewing them as part of the strategic process, but they're

really the purview of the Board of Trustees. We can't just implement. We are

reliant on the Board of Trustees to convene their policy committee and to really

take a look at the procedure of reviewing those things, but also the actual wording

of them. Does this still reflect where you think the college should be going?

(CC3-DIR, Interview)

After the Board sets the strategic directions, they are sent to CC3's leadership

group. The leadership group is a "54 person representative leadership group (president's

council, planning & budget council, policy council chair, educational services

instructional management team, employee group chairs, and select department heads)"

(CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 99). There is an iterative review process between CC3's

leadership and the board. According to CC3's CAO, "We solicit, of course, the board's

input early on so that if we are far off any particular thing, then the board can align us

with its plans" (CC3-CAO, Interview). CC3's leadership group edits the strategic

directions. These directions are then shared with CC3's internal membership.

After strategic directions are set, CC3 develops institutional effectiveness (IE) criteria.

"Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Criteria, provide actionable guidance for crafting short-

term (1-2 years) strategic and operational goals. The IE Criteria are modeled on AQIP's

nine categories" (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 99). However, CC3's DIR stated that

IE criteria are not intentionally aligned to AQIP categories. "What's aligned intentionally

and very directly are the value statements. The value statements are the principles of

higher performing institutions" (CC3-DIR, Interview). She went on to say, "They [the

principles] are like one in the same [with the AQIP categories]" (CC3-DIR, Interview).

According to CC3's DIR setting up the initial IE criteria "was hardest of all [for CC3]. But once we did that, we knew what our key results were. We have five or six key results – learner success, fiscal thrive-ability, things like that" (CC3-DIR, Interview). She assessed how these key results bond strategic planning and operational planning. "Now, as we go through it, at least we can come up with goals that are aligned with those key results . . . That is just a way that the strategic statements got operationalized" (CC3-DIR, Interview).

After IE criteria are developed, a subset is given to the Board. The DIR explained why the board reviews a subset of the IE criteria as opposed to the entire strategic plan.

We are talking to the Board of Trustees about what they want to focus on. We have a set of board level goals that the board—they are a subset of our strategic goals. There's about five of them that we recommend to the board. These are the ones we think you should hold us accountable for, obviously, hold us accountable for our whole strategic plan, but these are the ones to help measure our effectiveness with, whether we accomplish these or not. These are the top of the top priorities. (CC3-DIR, Interview)

Next, departments begin operational planning based on the IE criteria. According to CC3's DIR "The leadership group [that] is made up of program managers are the primary authors of their operational plans" (CC3-DIR, Interview). According to CC3's Systems portfolio the setting of operational plans is a collaborate effort. "Department leaders in collaboration with those in their departments draft short-term strategic and operational goals. These operational plans help ensure that the short-term strategies are

helping to realize the long-term strategies" (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 99).

Departmental/operational planning is done according to CC3's Z6 internal planning

template. CC3's DIR explained the origin of the Z6.

> The Z6 came to us from our training division, so the folks that do corporate
>
> training in lean manufacturing [and] facilitation skills, leadership skills, trainer-
>
> type skills. They brought [the Z6] to us as part of their lean manufacturing. It's
>
> really from Toyota. (CC3-DIR, Interview).

CC3's Systems portfolio describes how the Z6 ensures alignment between the

strategic plan and operational planning.

> The Z6 tool used throughout the college asks operational plan authors to identify
>
> to which IE criteria and/or strategic direction the goal or activity relates. This
>
> allows CC3 to link strategy with operational goals at the department level. Since
>
> planning precedes budgeting, there is also a column in the Z6 action plan section
>
> which identifies budget impact considerations with a specific goal or activity.
>
> These budget impacts are then carried over to the departmental budget request.
>
> (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 101)

The Z6 is also vital to measuring effectiveness. The Z6 summarizes the entire

strategic planning process and is easily referenced because all of the elements are on one

sheet of paper. CC3's DIR stated that "[the] at a glance, [nature of the Z6] becomes the

important piece. And it's right in front of you all the time" (CC3-DIR, Interview).

After departments have drafted operational plans, CC3's IR office holds a leadership

meeting where departments are encouraged to share their draft plans in order to identify

cross-departmental goals. CC3's Systems portfolio indicated that "This conversation

ensures both vertical and horizontal alignment of goals" (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 99).

As departments are collaborating on draft operational plans, the strategic plan is finalized. "The leadership group is [then] leveraged to help carry the message [of the strategic plan] forward to the campus. Departments revise their operational plans based on a final strategic plan and [the] budget before the start of the new fiscal year" (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 99).

CC3's DIR explained that the strategic planning process must be completed prior to the budget.

> The intent of this timing is so that it feeds budgets, feeds budgeting. We've had, in the past, budgeting was coming first. 'Here's the money. What can we do with it?' versus 'Here's what we really want to do. Now, how do we get the resources to do it?' or 'Can we?' or 'What are the creative ways we can come up with making it not cost so many resources or what have you?' Anyway, planning, and then budgeting, and refinement as the budget gets refined, and then the expectation would be once the budget gets approved by the Board of Trustees in June, then whatever you need to do to make revisions to that plan, because now you're in that fiscal year that you've been planning for. (CC3-CAO, Interview)

CC3's entire strategic planning process is quite complex. In addition to Figure 12, CC3 also uses a detailed process map which is driven by the planning calendar.

> [CC3's] calendar is created each year and identifies key process steps related to each step of the Plan-Do-Check-Adjust process. On a detailed calendar on the IR intranet key due dates and those involved in each process step so that everyone

understands their role in the process. The process map is a detailed flow chart that

depicts the planning process as a system of related activities across Plan-Do-

Check-Adjust. (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 98)

CC3's chief academic officer commented on the progression of the strategic

planning process. "As this process has evolved, I would say it has become less formal in

year two, in year three, and so on. Because now that the institutional effectiveness pieces

are in place, the strategic directions are in place, then we determine what got

accomplished gets taken off the plan [and] what new things are added to the plan" (CC3-

CAO, Interview).

Systems Supporting Strategic Planning – CC3

There are many intricate systems that support CC3's strategic planning process.

These supporting systems include communication, culture, decision making, leadership,

and organizational design.

Communication – CC3. One theme related to strategic planning that emerged

during my study's point of interface was communication. CC3's Systems portfolio states

that "We [CC3] are committed to shared governance and the representative voices across

the organization" (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 109). CC3's CAO confirmed that

input from internal constituents is a vital part of the development of the strategic plan.

The executive staff, and the faculty, and staff of the college all have a part to play

in the strategic plan, and they do it through the planning process. And so we are

solicitous of that input, and there are a number of opportunities for people to

weigh in on the strategic plan as it's developed. (CC3-CAO, Interview)

Although internal communications are strong, both CC3's Systems portfolio and

president indicated that external communications could be improved.

> And a lot of people that we heard from the community that say, 'I lived here. I
> didn't know you're doing a lot of stuff.' And it's a problem. Communication is one
> of our next big strategic culture changes, not from just inside the college but [in]
> the community, because we've done a poor job over the last three to four years.
> We're not a typical community college. But if people move here, they have a
> sense of, 'Well, you know what? I know what GRCC was, or I know Milwaukee
> Technical School so you must be like that.' No, we're not. We do all [a lot of
> different] stuff. (CC3-P, Interview)

CC3's president spoke about CC3's communication role in the larger community.
He indicated that every meeting leads to questions. "For the most part, conferences tend to
be just about questions instead of listening to stuff" (CC3-P, Interview).

> We're good [in this community] at collaborating in groups but we've got plenty of
> work to do to continue to [collaborate] better, because we're still not collecting the
> right data. We're not able to look at the system and say, 'Okay, what do you we
> want for talent? How much is development? How much is retention? How much
> is acquiring it, attracting it? And who's doing and what here? What's the college's
> role? What's the chamber? What's the high school? What's the church?' But does
> everybody here recognize part of our [CC3's] plan for the future is we want to
> continue to attract people? (CC3-P, Interview)

The president is involved in many community groups so that he can provide
leadership in the community (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013).

> You have to be in the conversations because another one of my favorite sayings

is, 'If you are not at the table, you are on the menu.' And so I'm at lots of tables because I don't want to be on the menu. I want to be directing the menu if I can. (CC3-P, Interview)

Culture – CC3. Another supporting system of strategic planning that emerged during my study's point of interface was culture. Recurring themes regarding CC3's culture were initiating innovative actions, improving operations, challenging paradigms and adjusting processes as external forces dictate.

CC3's Systems portfolio indicates that CC3 "maintains a collaborate culture that seeks to take a leadership position in our community and in our industry" (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 109). CC3's culture is founded on W. E. Deming's Plan-Do-Check-Act (i.e., known at CC3 as Plan, Do, Check, Act) cycle (Moen & Norman, 2006). CC3's chief academic officer stated "I really think that the plan-do-check-adjust model is embedded throughout all we do" (CC3-CAO, Interview).

One element of PDCA present in CC3's culture is innovation. CC3's president believes in fostering a culture of innovation. At CC3 members are encouraged to take calculated risks even if such action results in failure.

So we adopted in the innovation process . . . [which is] . . . aligned with [our] values. If I want people to take risks, I have to give them processes that let them do that. And I have to tell them, 'You know what? The discovery component of innovation is going to fail most of the time. That's okay. The answer is fail early, fail often, and fail cheap.' So, I have all [these] business things, but they apply, and they're lessons for people to learn. . . . Now, we're not there yet as 100% of the college. There's still people that believe, 'Oh, I can't do that. Somebody will

fire me.' And I asked them, 'Show me the list of all the people who have been

fired for taking the risk.' They don't exist. It's not there. . . . There is a little cling-

on sticker says, 'Proceed until apprehended.' That's what I want them to think.

(CC3-P, Interview)

CC3's president is keenly aware of the changes in the higher education industry

and challenges CC3's membership to reflect on how these changes may change how CC3

positions itself in the post-secondary knowledge industry.

We can't own it all so we got to figure out a way to move away from what we've

been in, which is a supplier-vendor relationship with lots of people to partnership

relationships. . . .When I first came here, I said, 'I want you [the members of

CC3] to quit thinking yourself as a two-year school. You're a 40-year school.'

I've moved beyond that now. I want you to be a lifelong portal. (CC3-P,

Interview)

As part of PDCA improvement is deeply engrained in CC3's culture. The word,

"improvement" and related synonyms were used 116 times by CC3's leadership. CC3's

president, while discussing adaptation of processes, almost instinctually added ". . . and

it's still a work in progress and it always will be" (CC3-P, Interview). CC3's DIR

explained that the PDCA cycle is ensconced in CC3's culture.

The other thing that I think has worked well, which is fit with our culture is this

concept of plan-do-check-adjust. We have drivers throughout the institution that

know that we need to check things. If you go around and talk to other people on

campus, I would hope, and I would think, that you'd hear the same language.

People know. It's been in place for three to four years. We're on the fourth year.

People know what the Z6 is. They might roll their eyes and go like that, make a face, but they know what it is and they know why we're doing it - for the most part. (CC3-DIR, Interview)

The last phrase that the DIR used ". . . for the most part" also illustrates the need to continuously improve.

In order to be innovative and continually improve CC3's leadership challenges internally held paradigms.

And that our biggest challenge is [that] I can logically lay this on other people but if the cultural norms [of CC3] support something else [we will become a commodity]. I joke quite frequently and I've been tilting at windmills my whole life for things that I believe in, but I think we are changing the culture, and culture changes take time. When I first started it, I told board, 'Look, a typical culture change in an organization, they say, takes at least seven years, so don't expect that I'm going to turn a switch and everything is going to be different.' (CC3-P, Interview)

The last element of PDCA reflected in CC3's culture is adjustment as internal and external forces dictate. CC3's chief executive officer discussed CC3's flexible strategic planning process and how low-task structure can be difficult for some individuals.

I don't think we have the system in place that is rigid-- if something doesn't quite work, then we'll change it. …So if there was a process that wasn't working, the effective people would come together and say, 'This is not working. Let's go in this direction.' People are pretty flexible in shaping it to a situation that requires it. I frankly think part of the fluidity of that is that our faculty is not unionized,

and so we have a lot of conversations, but sometimes this lack of having things set

leads some people to say, 'So, how do we do that? What's the process for that?'

Because we don't keep to a very rigid set of rules and regulations, folks find it

sometimes difficult to work in a gray area. (CC3-CAO, Interview)

When asked whether CC3's chief academic officer would recommend their

strategic planning process for use at other HE institutions, he cautioned that the strategic

planning process must fit the organizational culture.

It certainly works for us. I think strategic planning is sometimes a product of the

culture of each institution is. It can work elsewhere if it fits that school's culture. I

think that one of the things that I've noticed in our own strategic planning is that a

successful model somewhere else is not certain to work here or vice versa. And

we are now in the midst of just starting a review of our shared governance system,

and I spoke with a colleague of mine at another institution and she explained how

shared governance worked there. Well, it works really well at her institution. I

certainly can learn some things about bringing some more ideas to ours, but

ultimately, shared governance like strategic planning has to work at the institution

where it is. And so I do think that the idea of a documented decision-making

process, an idea of setting up a model where you include external and internal

influencers who have a plan-do-check-adjust model are all things that should

work at other institutions. Ultimately, it's got to fit the culture of the institution for

it to be truly effective. (CC3-CAO, Interview)

This ideology was reiterated by CC3's president who stated, "To me, they're only

efficient, effective practices given the environment they're in" (CC3-P, Interview).

Decision making – CC3. Another supporting system of CC3 is a formal decision making process that feeds into formulation of their strategic plan. Recurring themes in CC3's decision making processes were decision formulation (i.e., assessing risk, and reviewing assumptions), processes, and final outcomes (i.e., rendering final decisions). CC3's president described how CC3's decision making process was created to challenge the "low-risk" nature of most higher educational institutions.

> When I came here I said, 'Okay. We're going to do something new. You've got to have a business plan.' So then, people would go write a business plan and they'd turn in this thing and I go, 'We're not going to do with that.' So then, I learned enough from that saying, 'We need to figure this out. We need a process that allows us to make a decision with the least amount of information necessary as opposed to the most,' which is another challenge in higher ed. We always want more data. We always want more information instead of just saying, 'All right. We've got enough. Let's do it. And you know what? If it doesn't work, we'll do something else.' But this is related to my belief that we're so risk averse as an industry that we want to be 130% sure that this is going to work before we try it. (CC3-P, Interview)

CC3's president also stated that the HE environment is changing and decision making has to evolve. "Past performance is no indication of future performance. We're predicating all of this stuff on get the degree and everything will be fine on past performance and that's a completely different environment instead of, again, going to the fundamentals" (CC3-P, Interview).

Decision formulation – CC3. CC3's decision making and strategic planning process begins by assessing the assumptions on which the decisions or plans are based. The president spoke about uncovering assumptions.

> What's in our underlying principles? So that's where I focus because what I've said, 'Look, all your plans are predicated on assumptions. So the first thing we have to do, as an institution, is we have to agree on these assumptions and you have to agree that this is an industry.' (CC3-P, Interview)

CC3's president stated that the entire higher education industry has to get better at assessing the assumptions behind decisions, processes and models.

> We're not very good at that as an educational industry. The assumptions, I don't think, have been looked at. They're starting to be looked at more. But for a long time, I think people just assumed, 'Well, there's business cycle, things have changed but there going back the way they were.' It's just like Michigan did in the earlier 2000s when we spend our rainy day fund because they said, 'That's just a business cycle.' Well, I was sitting around going, 'This is no business cycle. This is structural realignment.' And so we spent $2 billion of rainy day fund in the state under the assumption that it's all going to come back. That's where we get to this VUCA environment of it's not coming back and it's not what we learned, what I learned in college where, yeah, change is like an ice cube tray. You unfreeze it. Put it in a different shape. Refreeze it and you go on. It's just not. (CC3-P, Interview)

CC3's president also stated that gauging the assumptions behind the strategic plan is just as important as the plan itself.

The other piece of this whole thing is that I've told people, 'It's more important to me that you watch the assumptions than just watch the plan.' . . . But scenario planning, 'Okay, what's going to happen if the assumptions change? You better have some idea of what you're going to do.' (CC3-P, Interview)

CC3's DIR elaborated on how the planning assumptions are used in CC3's strategic planning process.

We have a set of planning assumptions. I should've mentioned that. We have a set of planning assumptions that not only guides where we're looking for environmental scan, but also informs the strategic planning visioning. Those would be things like, 'The high school population is declining'. We're going to make that assumption. Then, how does that assumption impact what we need to do? (CC3-DIR, Interview)

Decision making process – CC3. CC3 has a formalized decision making process. This process is embedded into strategic planning. CC3's CAO discussed the institution's decision making process and how it relates to strategic planning.

And sometimes, our plan is a result of that decision-making process, but the plan in and of itself cannot anticipate every new venture that we're going to engage with. So we have a four step decision-making process that begins with an idea summary, which is a couple of pages. A proposer lays out what is to be accomplished. If adopted, a marketing plan is developed. If adopted, a business plan is designed. If approved, the last stage is an implementation plan. (CC3-CAO, Interview)

Although CC3 has this decision making process in place, the CAO indicated that

the process needed improvement and that it was not being fully utilized.

> Within the last year we determined it was necessary to strengthen the decisions
>
> made at each stage. We now have documented sign offs showing the
>
> documentation of the decision at each stage. The process also allows stages to be
>
> skipped if it is determined that the information is not needed to move forward. We
>
> also recognized recently that we have not been using the process enough. We
>
> have become more disciplined in insisting on using the process when important
>
> decisions are needed. (CC3-CAO, Interview)

CC3's president, using continuous quality improvement principles, was in the

process of "checking" on the institution's decision making process.

> It's a plan-do-check-adjust thing and my most recent check question is, 'Okay,
>
> how much are we really using all of this documentation that we are completing to
>
> actually manage what we do?' If we're not using it - I'm not telling you to throw it
>
> away - but we've got to figure out, 'Okay, why? Why isn't this providing value to
>
> the people who have to make that stuff happen?' We've created a number of
>
> systems - I think [the CAO] talked with you about our decision making process.
>
> (CC3-P, Interview)

Degree of centralization and final determination – CC3. Final decision making

at CC3 appears to be centralized within the process with "most initiatives being set by the

leadership who establish the plan" (CC3-CAO, Interview). However, individuals outside

of leadership are able to provide input into the process. "[In departmental plans] the

faculty are the ones that are actually in charge of the Z6s. In those cases where the staff is

in charge of the unit, then they meet with their faculty and teaching staff. And then they

design together their Z6s" (CC3-CAO, Interview).

CC3's DIR explained that she wanted a greater degree of centralization to provide more continuity between the strategic plan and operational plans.

At the operational level, getting people to refer to the strategic directions or the goals of the strategic plan and creating their own goals. It sounds top-down. We need a little more top-down than we had because before, we had all bottom-up. The units were doing their own plans, which basically, that's what we're doing. What we want is a balance between top-down and bottom-up because top-down is not going to work. It's just not going to work. We do too much stuff here. It's too broad-based and we can't-- we try, but it's hard. It's too hard to focus on three things at a comprehensive community college. It's too hard. And our president won't let us focus on three things. We have to get this done - all of this. (CC3-DIR, Interview)

Leadership – CC3. Another system supporting CC3's strategic planning process is leadership. CC3's leadership is unique. The president of CC3 said, "I think big, I think boldly" (CC3-P, Interview). His background includes "work in large-scale systems. That's how my brain works" (CC3-P, Interview). The president also stated, "I want to be the kind of man who has fresh eyes all the time. That is what it is all about" (CC3-P, Interview). The president is many times engrossed in deep thought simply when walking across campus.

You know if you say, 'Hi' to me and I'm walking across campus and I don't answer, it's not because I'm stuck, it's not because I'm rude. It's because I'm living five years in the future and I'm talking to Dorothy in the Land of Oz. You got to

call me back. I do think in large-scale systems. . . .So this is also there in terms of me looking at it, 'Okay, what's our role and how much of this do I talk to with everybody?' because I can overload them because I think in a plane that most people don't. (CC3-P, Interview)

CC3's president stated he spends a lot of time contemplating the future of HE. He believes that institutions must "absorb shocks whether they are internal or external to their system and to adapt" (CC3-P, Interview). He stated, "I believe in Darwin. The principles are an organism that changes less quickly than its environment around it dies. I don't expect the college to die and I don't want our learners to be put in that position" (CC3-P, Interview).

The president is keenly aware that the post-secondary knowledge industry is changing and those changes are going to impact the future of CC3.

This is why I think this is going to happen whether I like it or not. Whether you like it or not, your jobs are going to change. Commoditization will occur in certain areas. You can't convince me we need 1,200 community colleges and 5,500 universities paying people over $100,000 to teach competency-based things like college algebra. Where's the value proposition? [We have to think differently] . . . I'm not a believer that you can time the market particularly well, but you have to understand the market. You have to be willing to get out if you have to, but you also have to be willing to get in before you're really positive that you're going to be successful because if you don't, it may not be there. And it's not a question of being first. If you're not taking the risk, there is no return. (CC3-P, Interview)

CC3's president shared that he felt a sense of urgency about the changes in HE.

> It really started with saying, 'Okay, I've been playing with this for 30 years' when I'm in education, when I'm out of education. Part of the reason I came back into education out of my private businesses was it has to change. This is going to happen. . . . One of the first things I said-- and I also don't believe in dots. I don't believe in the notion that you bring everybody into the room and everybody's opinion is as good as everybody else's. It's not. We all have different knowledge. (CC3-P, Interview)

The president spoke at length about his experiences with strategic planning during his tenure with CC3. He stated that initially, some people thought that he, alone, could create epic change.

> We went through periods early on prior to 2007 where I brought in a number of models. I'm a big believer in models that people can carry in their head. . . . One of the interesting things that I found is people fully expected that once I brought in a model like that, everything would change, and that would be all we'd use. In fact, they talked about it about, 'When are we going to use all of that?' Again, it's interesting to me. You're in an educational institution. Part of the issue is to learn and figure out, 'Can you steal something out of this? Can you modify it? Can you make it yours?' Because that's what I do. I don't have a strict plan that somebody else has. There's lots of literature out there. I have what I think is working at the time for us with some fundamental outcomes that I want, which is you better understand the position that you're trying to achieve, you better be able to explain the value proposition that you're providing to your clients, you better understand

that you have a responsibility for the organization to be sustainable . . .(CC3-P, Interview)

The president also discussed his views on traditional steps in strategic planning processes. He stated that innovative processes do not come from the typical large group strategy teams. "You can imagine that didn't come about by calling 200 people in a room and saying, "What do you want to do?" It came about by a process we use which I call small group large" (CC3-P, Interview). CC3's DIR explained small group large.

[Small group large is] visioning in a small group, and taking that out for feedback, and then we're visioning in a small group. It's more of an accordion - small group visioning, larger feedback, small group refinement, large group feedback. When I say large group, I'm talking 50. I'm not talking 700. That's what's worked well for our top leadership. That's the style. (CC3-DIR, Interview)

CC3's president also noted that the idea of best practices is contextual. He cautioned institutional leaders about adopting practices without probing more deeply into why the practice works.

I think what we do is we take a look at what's happening within the higher learning commission and best practices in the field and so our strategic planning - that is those things that we want to move forward - are often influenced by what we find in other schools. And I've always said you can learn more by looking at somebody that's not in your industry than someone who's in your industry. I hate all the language of best practices. There are no best practices. There are effective practices given the environment in which they were applied. And we blindly, as an industry, say, 'Those are the best practice that everybody is going to do that.'

Without ever looking at, 'Okay, so what was that made that work and not work?'

(CC3-P, Interview)

CC3's president also spoke about his leadership style especially with respect to large group engagement.

You would be surprised how many people still believe that's how leadership works. [For example.] I ask a question. 'He's got to have a hidden agenda. He already knows what he wants to do.' Our midyear town hall meetings where it's supposed to be, everybody can come in and ask me anything you want. I have three rules. If I know the answer and I think I can tell you, I will. If I know the answer but for some reason I can't, I'll say that. If I don't know the answer, I'll ask if anybody else knows. And if they don't in the room, then we'll try to figure it out. That's the rule. You would be amazed how many people still don't take advantage of it, or show up. And then they'll say, 'Nobody told me about it.'

(CC3-P, Interview)

Organizational Design – CC3. Another system supporting CC3's strategic planning process is organizational design. CC3 seems to clearly delineate strategic oversight from operational planning. The board appears to clearly delineate between strategic and operational level planning. The chief academic officer for CC3 explained the reasoning behind pairing down the plan.

The entire plan doesn't go to the board. In our first year, we took the entire plan to the board, and the board said, 'This is way too much, way too much detail, too much administrative decisions being made.' We would like to do a review and decide, 'What are the ones that we are most strategic in reviewing?' So there was

some selection process, and so the much lengthier strategic plan that was

established, was paired back for the board. So we have in essence a board level

series of goals that are designated within the plan. . . . So not everything on the

strategic plan is reviewed by the board, because the board is basically saying, 'We

have some key ones we want to check. The others, we trust that the president will

just handle it at his level.' (CC3-CAO, Interview)

Strategic Planning Perspectives – CC3. CC3's Systems portfolio and participant

interviews were coded using Mintzberg et al.'s broadened perspectives. The broadened

perspectives were then aligned with Mintzberg et al.'s 10 strategic perspectives using the

crosswalk in Appendix B. Table 10 summarizes which of Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10

strategic perspectives appear to be used at CC3.

Table 10

Strategic Planning Perspectives in Use – CC3

Mintzberg et al., broadened perspectives	Scale based on literature	Mintzberg et al. (1998) 10 perspectives
Central Actor	Board, president, and top management	Learning and cultural
Decision making direction	Top-down and bottom up	Learning and cultural
Embedded Approach to strategic planning	Initially intended but emerging courses of action	Configuration
External environment	Unpredictable	Configuration
Premise of the strategy	Emphasize organizational values	Configuration
Formality	Formal process with informal norms	Configuration
Frame of reference	Imaginative	Configuration
Leadership background	Business	N/A
Level of complexity	Complex	Configuration
Organizational structure	Organic	Learning
Primary focus of the strategic plan	Initially intended but emerging courses of action	Configuration
Role of external actors	Active	Configuration
Strategic choice	Broadly defined	Configuration
Strategy formation	Descriptive	Configuration

Central actor. CC3's "board of trustees is the authority for strategic decision-making" (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 70). CC3's "leadership group are the primary authors of their operational plan" (CC3-DIR, Interview). Top managers as central actors in formulating the strategic plan is indicative of Mintzberg et al.'s entrepreneurial and configuration perspectives. Top management as a central actor appears to be more closely aligned with the configuration perspective as top managers are responsible for choosing the structure and processes to formulate strategy.

Decision making direction. CC3 utilizes a formal decision making process. CC3's Systems portfolio explains the four-stage process and states that "all members of the campus community are encouraged to identify new opportunities and to bring them forward . . . the executive leader for the area in which the idea originated then assists that individual/team in moving through the decision-making process (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 70). CC3's DIR elaborated on the four-stage decision making processes stating that both external and internal decision influencers were considered in the decision making process (CC3-DIR, Interview). Despite a formal process of decision making, "all organizational strategies and action plans flow vertically and horizontally across the organization" (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 100). Based on the flow of information at CC3, it appears that Mintzberg et al.'s learning or cultural perspective are most consistent with the decision making direction at CC3.

Embedded approach to strategic planning. At CC3 the embedded approach to strategic planning appears to be both intended and emergent. CC3's strategic planning process is fed by their decision making process. This decision making process "provides repeatable steps with clear deliverables and enough information to move to the next step"

(CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 3). Additionally, CC3 has worked to make "'plan, do check adjust' part of their lexicon when designing processes" (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 96). The decision making process and the business model suggest that CC3's embedded approach to strategic planning is intended.

However, several interview participants (i.e., CC3-CAO and CC3-DIR) indicated that many aspects of CC3's approach to strategic planning are emergent. CC3-CAO stated that CC3's embedded approach to strategic planning is fluid.

> I don't think we have the system in place that is rigid-- if something doesn't quite work, then we'll change it. I really think that the plan-do-check-adjust model is embedded throughout all we do. So if there was a process that wasn't working, the effective people would come together and say, 'This is not working. Let's go in this direction.' People are pretty flexible in shaping it to a situation that requires it. I frankly think part of the fluidity of that is that our faculty is not unionized, and so we have a lot of conversations, but sometimes this lack of having things set leads some people to say, 'So, how do we do that? What's the process for that?' Because we don't keep to a very rigid set of rules and regulations, folks find it sometimes difficult to work in a gray area. (CC3-CAO, Interview)

Portions of CC3's approach to strategic planning are intended, and some portions are emergent. This information suggests the configuration perspective is most consistent with CC3's embedded approach to strategic planning. Organizations using this approach use an emergent or intended approach.

External environment. At CC3, leaders view the external environment as unstable. CC3's Systems portfolio states that CC3 "operates in a volatile, uncertain complex, and ambiguous environment (VUCA) . . . (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 104). A complex and unpredictable environment is best depicted by Mintzberg et al.'s learning perspective. Leaders utilizing the learning perspective view their external environment as demanding, complex, and unpredictable (Mintzberg et al., 1998).

Premise of the strategy. To determine if the focus of CC3's strategy was to establish a distinctive competence, capitalize on organizational resources, or emphasize organizational values, I performed word frequency queries with source documents (i.e., CC3's Systems portfolio and leader transcripts). To determine if a distinctive competence was the most frequently cited term I searched for the terms, "competence" or "opportunity." To determine if the premise of the strategy was to capitalize on organizational resources, I searched for the terms, "resources." To determine if the premise of the strategy was to emphasize organizational values I searched for the term, "values." Table 11 illustrates the number of times these terms appeared in CC3's Systems portfolio or CC3's interview transcripts.

Table 11

Word Frequency Results – CC3: Premise of Their Strategy

Search Term	Number of times referenced in source documentation
Value	297
Resources	155
Opportunity	84

As depicted in Table 11 the term, "Value" was cited most often (i.e., 297 times), followed by the term, "Resources" (i.e., 155 times). This information suggests that the focus of CC3's strategy aligned was closely with Mintzberg et al.'s configuration, entrepreneurial,

or learning strategic perspectives.

CC3-P indicated that with the changing nature of higher education he must transform his organization from a public enterprise to a private entity based in knowledge application.

> So what was happening is we're moving into a competency-based, content-based. You can tell me what you want, but we're really not a public good anymore. We're operating and I've always operating much more like, 'It's my job to operate more as a private entity to lead in public good because I can't rely on this.' And it's not so much about transfer knowledge. It's about knowledge and application. So if this is what you need to become but you're built this way, and this is what your portfolio looks like, a logical economic outcome is a lot of what our current portfolio goods is going to become a commodity. It has to be. And if it's going to become a commodity. The only people that win in a commodity are big organizations. (CC3-P, Interview)

After considering the remarks by CC3-P the configuration perspective best represented the focus of CC3's strategy. This perspective was chosen because the goal of the configuration perspective is to preserve stability, adapt to change as needed, and to be able to manage transformation without damaging the organization.

Formality. The broadened perspective of formality sought to address the level of formality of an institution's culture. There are formal components to CC3's culture (e.g., PDCA business model, decision making process, and the Z6 data requirements). These components suggest that CC3's culture may be formal.

However, CC3-CAO discussed the level of formality of CC3's strategic planning

process. "As this process [i.e., strategic planning] has evolved, I would say it has become less formal in year two, in year three, and so on" (CC3-CAO, Interview). CC3's Systems portfolio states, "CC3 is committed to shared governance and the representative voices across the organization" (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 109).

Because CC3 relies on both informal and formal cultural systems the Mintzberg et al.'s configuration strategic perspective best illustrates strategy as practice at CC3. The configuration perspective indicates that the level of formality under the strategic plan could be formal or informal depending on which other perspectives are being utilized at the institution.

Frame used to craft strategy. Like many of the other broadened perspectives, the frame used to craft strategy at CC3 appears to be both logical and imaginative.CC3's use of the Z6 to require "operational plan authors to identify to which institutional effectiveness criteria and/or strategic direction the goal or activity relates and using that information to link strategy an operational goals" is logical (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 101). CC3's business model, and embedded culture of PDCA has established institutional dashboards and performance targets are logical ways to monitor strategy.

Yet, CC3 also uses more imaginative frames in crafting strategy. CC3-P spoke about infusing innovation into CC3's formal processes.

> If I want people to take risks, I have to give them processes that let them do that. And I have to tell them, 'You know what? The discovery component of innovation is going to fail most of the time. That's okay. The answer is fail early, fail often, and fail cheap.' So, I have all their business things, but they apply and they're lessons for people to learn. (CC3-P, Interview)

CC3 has also created three different innovation funds, outside of the normal budget, to allow CC3 to "act in an agile manner in responding to opportunities requiring resources" (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 30).

The Mintzberg et al.'s configuration perspective seems to more closely align with CC3's frame used to craft strategy. The configuration perspective states that the frame used to craft strategy may be either analytical or imaginative depending on the organization's strategy, organizational structure, and processes.

Leadership background. This broadened perspective suggested that an institutional leader's background may signify which of Mintzberg et al.'s 10 strategic perspectives were used to formulate strategy. As discussed previously CC3-P had a background in business. None of Mintzberg et al.'s 10 strategic perspectives directly aligned to CC3-P's background.

Level of plan's complexity. This broadened perspective proposed that the level of complexity of CC3's strategic plan (e.g., simple to complex) may signify which of Mintzberg et al.'s 10 strategic perspectives CC3 used to formulate their strategic plan. CC3-P discussed the importance of ensuring that CC3's internal membership understands CC3's strategic plan and the PDCA business model.

> Each time we bring a new person in, the potential is there. We've made huge investments in on-boarding employees, on talent development. . . . First of all, [new employees] better understand what the college is. So it's a full day on boarding, which still is in a lot by corporate terms. But they go to our campuses and they have the people doing these things, talk about it, and they see their energy, and they see their passion. (CC3-P, Interview)

CC3-DIR commented that although substantial training is conducted on the Z6, some individuals find project management very complex.

> We have varying levels of skill when it comes to project management. Some people have a lot of skills. They'll use Gantt charts to track progress on a timescale. But, not everybody does that. And in fact, it's something we want to improve upon. Especially the goals that are in the strategic plan, we'd love to have a Z6 for each-- that's basically our planning document. For each of those goals, we should really have drill down project plans. Here's what we're trying to accomplish. . . And we're not good at that [project management] either yet. There's things that we are not good at. We have processes in place, but there are things that we are not yet very good at. One is that next step down - that project management step - and being disciplined about the documentation of that. Because if we were disciplined about the documentation, we would know exactly if we were off track or not, if we're going to accomplish something by the end of the year or not, or if we have the resources or not to do that. (CC3-DIR, Interview)

Despite the apparent complexity of CC3's process, the institution remains steadfast to improvement based on its PDCA business model. . This information suggests that the Mintzberg et al.'s configuration perspective best illustrated the level of complexity of CC3's strategic plan. The configuration perspective articulates a plan that addresses the organizational domain, information gathering and dissemination, formulation and implementation of processes that will sustain innovation and subsequent growth.

Organizational structure. CC3's organizational structure appears to be both mechanistic and organic. In terms of the formal decision making process there are specific steps.

> We now have documented sign offs showing the documentation of the decision at each stage. The process also allows stages to be skipped if it is determined that the information is not needed to move forward. We also recognized recently that we have not been using the process enough. We have become more disciplined in insisting on using the process when important decisions are needed. (CC3-CAO, Interview)

Another example of a mechanistic process is the Z6. However, with any AQIP institution creating processes and documenting such processes is inherent in being a quality institution.

CC3's values include a statement on innovation and thoughtful risk taking. "We will continuously improve the learning experience and its global relevance to those we serve through innovation, agility and thoughtful risk-taking" (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 77). CC3-P discussed thoughtful risk taking.

> You've set up a conflict within the institution because you have a very intelligent population of employees who, in part, are trained to preserve things the way they are as opposed to experimenting great things that could be. So a couple of the pieces in there are we want you to participate in thoughtful risk-taking, we want you to exceed people's expectations. (CC3-P, Interview)

Based Burns and Stalker's (1961) definitions of mechanistic or organic organizational structures, it appears that CC3 is both mechanistic than organic. Organic

organizations are characterized by fewer rules, participatory decision making, cross-organization communication, and a less ridged hierarchy. Based on this information the Mintzberg et al.'s contingency perspective best illustrates the organizational structure at CC3.

Primary focus of the strategic plan. To determine if the primary focus of CC3's strategic plan was either the external environment, individual, or organizational, I performed word frequency queries with source documents (i.e., CC3's Systems portfolio and leader transcripts). I queried the terms, "external environment," "individual," and "organization" with related synonyms. Table 12 illustrates the number of times these terms appeared in CC3's Systems portfolio or interview transcripts.

Table 12

Word Frequency Result – CC3: Primary Focus of Their Strategic Plan

Search Term	Number of times search terms used in source documentation
Organization	385
Individual	188
External environment	23

Table 12 illustrates the number of times that the search terms (i.e., organization, individual, or external environment) were used in CC3's Systems portfolio or leaders' responses. The most frequently used term was "organization" used 385 times, followed by "individual" used 188 times, and "external environment" used 23 times. CC3-P also indicated that the primary focus of the strategic plan was the organization. and its responsibility to rebuild "pathways to a middle class existence" (CC3-P, Interview). Based on the word frequency queries and CC3-P statements it appears that the primary focus of CC3's strategic plan is the organization.

Despite the use of KPIs, CC3's primary focus of the strategic plan appears to be

the learning perspective. In the learning perspective the primary focus is the organization. Learning takes place at the organizational levels where individuals learn by examining past successes and failures.

Role of external actors. This broadened perspective discussed whether external individuals (i.e., four-year institutions, advisory committees, and community members) took an active or passive role in strategy formulation. At CC3 long-term strategies are guided by the board with input from at least six external groups. "Community conversations happen quarterly and provide a direct link to external stakeholders and facilitate a dialogue on CC3's objectives (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 29). CC3-DIR discussed how the board of trustees fulfills both an internal and external role. "I would say that the influencers are the leadership of the college, the Board of Trustees. If one considers it internal rather than external, they're a bridge to both" (CC3-DIR, Interview).

Data suggests that at CC3 the role of external actors is active. Active participation by external actors in strategy formulation is indicative of Mintzberg et al.'s learning, power, environmental, and configuration perspectives. In the configuration perspective external actors may be active or passive depending on organizational context.

Strategic choice. Strategic choice at CC3 appears to be broadly defined. CC3-P is an advocate for innovation and creativity. He recanted a conversation with one individual who was afraid to try something new.

> I asked them, 'Show me the list of all the people who have been fired for taking the risk.' They don't exist. It's not there. . . One of our units that we started [has a] little cling-on sticker [which] says, 'Proceed until apprehended.' That's what I want them to think. (CC3-P, Interview)

Three of Mintzberg et al.'s strategic perspectives (i.e., cognitive, learning, and configuration) utilized a broad approach to strategic choice. The cognitive perspective uses a broad strategic choice based on interpretive filters of the external environment. The learning perspective states that strategy is broadly and chaotically defined. CC3-CAO indicated that their strategic planning process "enabled CC3 to follow a more routine process that isn't this frantic crush at the end but smooth out the work" (CC3-CAO, Interview). Clearly the learning perspective was not aligned with CC3's strategic choice.

The configuration perspective was most akin to CC3's choice of strategy. This perspective states that strategy can be narrowly or broadly defined dependent on the organization's structure, context, and processes.

Strategic formation. This broadened perspective grouped strategic perspectives according to whether CC3's formulation process was descriptive or prescriptive. Although CC3 has some prescriptive formation practices (e.g., decision making templates and the Z6), most of these practices are "to prepare the organization in advance of plans" (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 103). Because CC3 utilizes the PDCA business model most strategic formation activities are descriptive. Organizational members review their Z6 to determine if adjustment is needed. Through a collaborative process adjustments are made to the process and then rechecked. According to CC3-DIR this is an "accordion process." These adjustments to the plan were not intended but arise as plans are realized (CC3-DIR, Interview).

Like many of the other broadened perspectives, CC3 appeared to encompass both prescriptive and descriptive methods of strategy formulation. The strategic planning

processes depicted in CC3's Systems portfolio was prescriptive. Yet, due to continuous quality improvement the entire process appeared to evolve in a descriptive nature. The only Mintzberg et al.'s strategic perspective encompassing both descriptive and prescriptive strategic formation was the configuration perspective.

Value of Strategic Planning – CC3

I asked each of the leaders of CC3 how strategic planning has benefitted their institution. Themes that emerged from respondent answers were that strategic planning provides CC3 with alignment of priorities, perception, perspectives, processes, and personnel.

Alignment of priorities. One of the value added components of CC3's strategic planning process is that it aligns "strategic, operational, and individual levels." (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 98). The chief academic officer for CC3 stated, "I think [our strategic planning process] has been very important in helping us adopt a model that's less about check-offs, and more about framing the work that we do" (CC3-CAO, Interview).

Processes are aligned at CC3. According to CC3's Systems portfolio, all operational goals can be viewed through three different lenses (i.e., strategic direction, IE criteria, and department).

> One way we check on alignment is to create a summary of all operational plan
> goals which can be filtered by strategic direction, institutional effectiveness
> criteria and department. This is known as a "leadership tool" (i.e., Z6) at CC3 as it
> allows leaders across the organization to see the alignment both vertically and
> horizontally. IR creates this summary each year and posts it along with all

operational plans on the intranet for access campus-wide. (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 99)

CC3's DIR expanded on the statements in their Systems portfolio adding that the strategic planning process gives CC3 better alignment with projections and communication between personnel.

We have better alignment- that is direct alignment- that we can document. I would say we have better outcomes because we have specific targets with a point of contact assigned. We could do better, of course, in all of this. We have established a mid-year check and an end-of-year check. I think that's a big deal because not everybody does that. We have alignment laterally because we have put in place mechanisms for units to talk to each other. (CC3-DIR, Interview)

The chief academic officer for CC3 indicated that the value of strategic planning is that it provides focus to the institution.

I think the most important is that it has helped us to focus on the things that we determine to be most important. There is so much to be done in an institution and we're a small community college, and so that usually creates a certain jacks-of-all-trade approach to it. And the community, I think for the most part, expects that we will be doing lots of different things, which means, of course, one of our challenges is how we rein it in, how we focus. And the strategic plan - and again, I think AQIP has been a critical part of that - has really helped us to focus. And we need to focus because, as you know, higher education doesn't have unlimited funding. And so we have to focus our resources, especially our people's time on what things are most important for us to accomplish. And the strategic plan helps

us to do that, not only in documenting what is most important, but choosing what not to do as well as what to do. Also we take a look at the full docket and ask how are we going to manage to do it all? (CC3-CAO, Interview)

Perception. CC3's strategic planning process is driven by the leadership. Because the leadership believes in the benefit of strategic planning, they convey this message to the larger membership. Belief in planning can help to encourage buy-in at all levels.

Part of [my role] is demonstrating to people that [our strategic planning process] really has value. I think that's where we are in our own reflection point is - does all of this stuff we're doing in terms of planning really have value to people, or is it something that they have to do because we tell them they have to do it? And like any organization, there are parts of the organization that I know it has value. I have seen it have value and I see it there. There are other parts where they are not convinced, and so the question is - is it more education that we have to do, or is it process change that we have to do? But we have to build that into the system and I think we have, built [it] into the system. My expectation is there is a plan-do-check-adjust [that needs to be done]. (CC3-P, Interview)

The director of institutional research at CC3 explained that her perception of CC3's strategic planning process is that it has value because feedback is frequent and the process is transparent.

I have pitched this process to other places. I've pitched it at national conferences and poster sessions, and I've pitched it to other universities, even. The feedback I've gotten in those settings of why this is good is that it's frequent and transparent. The frequency of it and the transparency of it. And - this is related to

the frequency - but the constant use of data, any type of data, feedback in any way should perform. Those are at least two things that stand out of my mind is reasons why this is a good process. (CC3-DIR, Interview)

Perspectives. Another benefit to CC3's strategic planning process is that it integrates differing perspectives into the overall processes. CC3's President analyzes the external environment and identifies organizational assumptions about the future of that environment (i.e., environmental perspective). He then positions CC3 accordingly.

My perspective is that we [community colleges] are in decline. And I was saying this back in the early 2000s and in the 2006 - 8 where everybody was growing leaps and bounds and people are going, 'How can you say you're in decline? You've got all these new students coming in?' I said, 'Were in decline because the underlying principles, the fundamentals that drove the industry have changed or are changing dramatically. . . .So what was happening is we're moving into a competency-based, content-based. You can tell me what you want, but we're really not a public good anymore. . . . So if this is what you need to become but you're built this way, and this is what your portfolio looks like, a logical economic outcome is a lot of what our current portfolio goods is going to become a commodity. It has to be. And if it's going to become a commodity. The only people that win in a commodity are big organizations. (CC3-P, Interview)

CC3's DIR's perspective on planning is to ensure that input comes from all constituencies and that planning initiatives stay on task.

You're getting personal perspective. At this point, you're getting my personal perspective. The way I try to describe our office in terms of the planning process

is that we have this big institution setting up here. It's like moving the space shuttle to the launch site. Our office is that there's the cog, there's the wheels. And we are slowly moving the space shuttle to the launch site . . . We're the coordinators of the process, and we act like the cog to keep it going. We are also the data providers. That is massive. That's a massive undertaking. Not only are we doing the environmental scanning and driving that, the whole grasp of the situation that's at the center of plan-do-check-adjust, which is the way we have framed that is listening to students, listening to the community, and listening to employees. (CC3-DIR, Interview)

Processes. In May 2010 in response to HLC reaccreditation feedback, CC3 "chartered an AQIP Action Project to . . . better align college strategy with operational plans" (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 98). According to CC3's Systems portfolio the previous planning system random, did not fully integrate data into the decision making process, and did not provide evidence of an "integrated and shared approach to communication" (CC3 Systems Portfolio, 2013, p. 98). CC3's DIR stated, "We didn't really have a strategic planning process. . . . Before he [the president] got here, the strategic plan was a list of activities that were completed in a year and a half. It really wasn't strategic" (CC3-DIR, Interview). According to CC3's DIR the change in strategic planning process coincided with CC3 changing their institutional values and changing their accreditation pathway to AQIP.

In 2007, we went through a pretty traditional strategic planning process - pulling a lot of constituents together, meeting for hours on end - pretty traditional SWOT analysis type stuff. At that time, we changed our values. We didn't change our

mission, but we may have made word tweaks on the vision, and we did change all of our values to make them more action-oriented. Also, at that time, or right before that time, we changed our accreditation path. . . . I think that the accreditation tradition regarding strategic planning is traditional. (CC3-DIR, Interview)

CC3's DIR explained why "traditional strategic planning" did not work for CC3. (CC3-DIR, Interview).

We knew that the traditional model wasn't going to work for us. That's right. . . . AQIP - the feedback from AQIP, and then just being in AQIP, and just cultivating a culture of continuous improvement, led us on this path of, 'Look, we need something that's more frequent, more often. We really want a dynamic, living strategic plan-- strategic planning process because we need to be more agile than every three years, every five years.' And we are more agile. We have so many people. We're doing environmental scanning. We're responding to industry needs. We're constantly asking for feedback from our constituencies in order to be responsive, which is a little more passive, but also to lead in program areas and just to be agile. The result from the systems appraisal, the feedback from the higher learning commission, but also what we knew we needed to do, [and the] dissatisfaction with the traditional strategic planning process led us to develop an action project for AQIP called the 'Aligned Planning Project'. We had to create a dynamic, strategic planning process. But, it wasn't just strategic. We also needed alignment with operational planning. (CC3-DIR, Interview)

CC3's PDCA strategic planning process is now in its 4th year. The DIR explained

that it is time to check on the process, and then take corrective action where needed. One area of concern for the DIR is with the internal project management skill level.

> And it's basically time that we check our own process. Are we really-- it sounds great. It sounds like a great process, and it is if we can implement it right. And it's working for people. We have varying skills across the institution, just like every institution. Some areas are using it, and they can use it as a management tool. Some are just doing it on an annual basis, because people work what they have to do. If that 20% is just doing it because they have to do it on an annual basis, and they may never look at it again, that's fine. But, at least they're doing it on the annual basis and not an every three-year basis. (CC3-DIR, Interview)

She further explained that the strategic planning process adjusts and evolves based on the internal departments and personnel.

> It's an evolution. We're always constantly talking about, 'Okay, they didn't do this.' - proverbial 'they.' 'They didn't do this at this time period. How does that impact the schedule? And if they can't do it at this time period, August, but they can do it in January, then let's change the process. Let's change the calendar to reflect their review in January, and then see what the trickle down effect is of all the other steps in the process. Does this make better sense?' Part of it is just post hoc analysis of the situation. (CC3-DIR, Interview)

Personnel. Another component to CC3's strategic planning system that adds value to the institution is the recognition that people are vital to the process. CC3's president stated that "it's people and it's culture" (CC3-P, Interview).

The president of CC3 indicated that they were facing a "talent shortage." "I have people

really stretched in terms of management and leadership on the because we've always run lean" (CC3-P, Interview).

> Because traditionally, you bring somebody into a college, and their affinity triangle goes-- because again, I do believe they were trained this way. Okay, my first affinity is towards my major. My second is towards my school. My third is towards my department. My fourth is maybe to the college. Probably the students should be away up here, but I think it's really down here. And then the last is the college as itself, or the institution. (CC3-P, Interview)

Yet when new "talent" is brought into the institution they spend an entire day learning about "what CC3 is, and what it wants to be known for" (CC3-P, Interview).

> First of all, you better understand what the college is. So it's a full day on boarding, which still is in a lot [even] by corporate terms. But they [new employees] go to our campuses and they have the people doing these things, talk about it, and they see their energy, and they see their passion. (CC3-P, Interview)

> CC3 spends considerably on professional development to not only gather information about change, but to ensure that the college is ready for the future of higher education. The chief academic officer said, "I'm proud of that we are in the top 6% of community colleges in terms of how much funding we provide for professional development for our faculty and staff. And so we send our faculty and staff to a number of conferences where we glean this information" (CC3-CAO, Interview).

> CC3's president also views professional development as a way to prepare the college for the future.

> Again, you may not like [the change in HE] but this is what's coming. And so

what are we going to do about it, folks? And just saying here's the problem

doesn't help, so we invest heavily in professional development. We send people to

lots of conferences and I'll continue to do this as long as I'm here because I have

confidence that people can learn, and I have confidence that people can see there's

a real change. (CC3-P, Interview)

Another part of CC3's strategic planning system that adds value to the institution

is a dedicated position for coordinating planning and environmental assessment. The DIR

explained the position and why it is vital to CC3's process. "She came into that position

after we basically institutionalized the planning process because we didn't have anybody

who was designated to be the driver of the planning process. She came into that role right

after we decided to institutionalize the process" (CC3-DIR, Interview).

CC3's strategic planning process has a number of supporting systems.

Communication ensures that assumptions are evaluated and information is shared. CC3's

culture embeds the principles of PDCA. CC3's decision making process identifies risk,

assumptions, in a formalized process. CC3's leadership envisions change in HE and then

positions the institution for those changes. Lastly, CC3's organizational design delineates

between strategic and operational planning. All of these systems support CC3's

distinctive approach to strategic planning. The president of CC3 summarized their

strategic planning process.

I view colleges as we are a business, and we are an industry, and we are very

complex, and the only one that is more complex than us is health care. So I watch

health care a lot and I wrote an article on the similarities between the two. So in

2007, those values came into place. And they really talk about doing things

differently. One of the characteristics of colleges and universities are they're full

of risk-averse people. I don't think lots of people go into education to take risks.

They come in because of the perceived stability, and the things are known, and

they operate in a certain way. But I believe that that's not really the case and it's

never going to be the case again. You've set up a conflict within the institution

because you have a very intelligent population of employees who, in part, are

trained to preserve things the way they are as opposed to experimenting great

things that could be. So a couple of the pieces in there are: 'We want you to

participate in thoughtful risk-taking, we want you to exceed people's

expectations.' So again, if you read those statements, it's trying to give a

description of this is how we want the place to work. (CC3-P, Interview)

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of my study was to explore distinctive community colleges and those factors that affected a community college's strategic planning perspective, how such perspectives influenced the institution's strategic planning process, and to what extent an institution's strategic planning processes and perspectives were perceived to have added value to the institution. More specifically my study hoped to determine what strategic planning processes were being used at these distinctive institutions and to what extent community college strategic planning perspectives aligned with Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives framework.

My study relied on expert sampling to identify those AQIP accredited institutions that utilized a "distinctive" method of strategic planning formulation. Of the 14 AQIP accredited institutions in this one Midwestern state, five were contacted to participate in my study, and three agreed to participate in my study. The institutional leadership (i.e., president, chief academic officer, and director of institutional research) agreed to participate in semi-structured interviews, and document analysis also occurred. Pseudonyms were used for the community colleges to protect the confidentiality of the participants (see Chapter IV, Table 3).

All three institutions in my study were public, 2-year community colleges with one college, CC3, granting a bachelorette degree in one programmatic area. Each represented a different size classification using IPEDS data. CC1 was a rural community college with total enrollment of 6,328, CC2 was a midsize community college with total enrollment of 17,448 students, and CC3 was a remote community college with a total

enrollment of 4,846 students.

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section presents how participating institutions' strategic planning definitions and processes align with Hax and Majluf's (1986) definitional themes discussed in the literature. A discussion of how participating institutions' defined strategic planning is important for providing the context for my study. This section also provides an overview of the institutional leaders in my study.

The second part of this chapter focuses specifically on the common and distinctive elements of strategic planning processes (i.e., the actions, changes, or functions that these community colleges engaged in to achieve strategic planning) by discussing Research Question 1. Subsections include a cross analysis of institutional participants' strategic planning processes and the extent to which these processes align with the stages of strategic planning processes in higher education as found via the review of the literature.

The third part of this chapter focuses exclusively on participating institutions' strategic planning perspectives. This section presents an analysis by research question. The perspective portion of Research Question 1, and Research Question 2 (i.e., to what extent do the strategic planning perspectives of distinct community college leaders' align with Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 strategic perspectives) are discussed. Sections include a discussion of the institutional systems that support strategic planning and how those systems align with Mintzberg et al.'s 10 perspectives.

The fourth part of this chapter discusses Research Question 3 (i.e., to what extent do leaders in distinctive community colleges perceive that their strategic planning

perspective and process have added "value" to their institution). Sections include a discussion of the benefits described by my study's institutional participants.

The fifth part of this chapter provides a synopsis of my study. Sections will include limitations of my study, recommendations for further research, and implications of my findings.

Definition of Strategic Planning and Leadership

As discussed in Chapter II, the literature contains numerous definitions of strategic planning. Although exploring institutional definitions was not a formal part of my study, I thought an understanding how participating institutions defined strategic planning might give me insight into an institution's strategic planning process and its leader's strategic planning perspectives.

Strategic Planning Definitional Themes

My study relied on the definitional themes advanced by Hax and Majluf (1986), and following the review of literature, I wanted to determine the extent to which the participating institutions aligned with Hax and Majluf's definition categories. These categorical themes included: establishing the organizational purpose, defining the competitive domain, providing a coherent, unifying, and integrated blueprint for the organization, offering the organizational response to external opportunities and threats, as well as, internal strengths and weaknesses, furnishing the organization with a central vehicle for achieving a competitive advantage and providing a motiving force for stakeholders (Hax & Majluf, 1986).

Establishing an organizational purpose. Each of the community colleges under investigation used strategic planning to accomplish "ends." Consistent with Goodstein et

al. (1993), ends are a set of outcomes that are based on the institution's mission, vision, and values. Ends are comparable to what Tromp and Ruben (2004) defined as an institution's vision, whereby ends "clarify the purposes, directions, and aspirations of the organization as a whole" (p. 39). In my study institutional ends defined the organization's purpose and determined how institutional leaders would accomplish their strategic agenda.

Defining the competitive domain. The participating community colleges did not use strategic planning to define a competitive domain. Rather, they used strategic planning to monitor the competitive domain ensuring that decision makers were attentive to the changing forces impacting higher education.

Similar to Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (1998), participant leaders (i.e., CC1-P, CC1-DIR, CC2-P, CC3-P, and CC3-DIR) agreed that higher education is continually changing. As such, the institutions in my study devoted resources (e.g., specific committees to monitor the competitive domain) to remain keenly aware of industry changes.

One explanation for the divergence from Hax and Majulf's (1986) definitional theme may be the rate of change in higher education. Drawing from research (i.e., (Mintzberg et al., 1998; Whittington et al., 2006), as soon as an institution defines its competitive domain, that domain now has changed. Many participants (i.e., CC1-P, CC1-DIR, CC3-P, and CC3-DIR) expressed frustration over the rate of change in higher education and the length of time it takes to position colleges to meet these changes.

Providing a coherent, unifying, and integrated blueprint for the organization.
The institutions in my study were consistent with the views expressed by Mankin and
Glueck (1976) as well as March, Olsen, Christensen, and Cohen (1976), who viewed
strategy as an aligned set of processes. One might argue that institutional alignment may
be a byproduct of institutional accreditation (i.e., AQIP accreditation pathway). However,
CC2's strategic planning process predated the AQIP accreditation pathway. This finding
may suggest that CC2's strategic planning process was not an outcome of accreditation
but rather, a concerted effort to create a coherent, unifying, and integrated blueprint for
the organization to follow.

According to Goodstein et al. (1993), strategic planning as an integrated blueprint
for strategy is more akin to business modeling with integrated measurements. All of the
institutions in my study used business models and corresponding KPIs. Again, this may
be a result of an institution following the AQIP accreditation pathway. What was clear
was the fact that these business models and corresponding KPIs have become deeply
embedded in each institution's strategic planning processes.

**Responding to external opportunities and threats and internal strengths and
weaknesses.** Contrary to Lumby's (1999) research, which found that organizations often
start strategic planning with different activities, all three of my participating institution's
strategy formulation process began with scanning the environment and conducting a
situation analysis (i.e., SWOT). What differed among organizations was the department
or individuals responsible for situation analysis. At CC1, situation analyses are conducted
by college departments. At CC2, IR gathered external information and gave it to the SPC
who conducted the situation analysis. At CC3, information about the environment was

gathered by CC3's Scan Team who performed the situation analysis in conjunction with campus leaders.

Central vehicle for achieving competitive advantage. The concept of using strategy to achieve competitive advantage was not found in my data, but was used instead to achieve institutional ends. The president of CC3 did imply that the traditional competitive advantages of a community college (i.e., value propositions) were no longer viable. Likewise, CC1-P spoke at length about the changing nature of post-secondary education and the myriad of nontraditional threats to the conventional community college enterprise. Both of these presidents (i.e., CC1-P and CC3-P) have a background in business administration. Consistent with Locke's (1690) representative realism, their background may explain why their perception of higher education were more akin to for-profit strategists (Lacewing, 2008).

Motivating force for stakeholders. The definition of strategy as a motivating force for stakeholders was observed at all three participating institutions. The HLC defines a stakeholder as anyone who directly or indirectly receives the benefits or costs derived from an institution's actions (Higher Learning Commission, 2011). Stakeholders fell into two groups (i.e., internal and external). Internal stakeholders included students, faculty, staff, administration and the board. External stakeholders included area employers, 4-year transfer institutions, and the community. CC3-P also included the international arena as one of CC3's external stakeholders.

What remains unclear is whether strategy truly motivated these internal and external stakeholders. Internally, institutional leaders spoke extensively about how their strategic planning processes had positively impacted stakeholders. But impacting

stakeholders may be different than motivating stakeholders. Both CC1-P and CC3-P discussed how their strategic planning process had influenced their organization's culture. Influencing an organization's culture may be different than motivating internal stakeholders. According to Ketchen et al. (2008), research to date has tended to focus on strategy – performance relationships. The extent to which an institution's strategy motivates internal and external stakeholders (i.e., strategy – motivational relationships) may be a topic for later research.

Overall, each of the community colleges in my study defined strategy differently. Yet when institutional definitions are coupled with strategic planning processes and viewed with the categorical definitions advanced by Hax and Majluf (1986), there are many similarities.

Institutional Leadership: Strategic Planning Process by Institution and Position

As explained in Chapter IV, the institutional leaders that were chosen for my study included the president, chief academic officer, and the director of institutional planning. I assigned these generic titles to participants to ensure both institutional and individual confidentiality. Participants' backgrounds, tenure with the institution and study pseudonyms are listed in Chapter IV, Table 4.

After grand tour questions, each participant was asked to describe their institution's strategic planning process. To determine consistency of description across institutional positions, responses were analyzed by source document (i.e., responses to interview question 2.1) according to classification source (i.e., position at institution). Figure 13 illustrates the word summary cluster diagrams along with the corresponding Pearson correlation coefficient between groups.

Community College 1			Community College 2			Community College 3		
Source A	Source B	Pearson correlation coefficient	Source A	Source B	Pearson correlation coefficient	Source A	Source B	Pearson correlation coefficient
CC1-DIR	CC1-CAO	0.442645	CC2-DIR	CC2-CAO	0.620053	CC3-DIR	CC3-CAO	0.51928
CC1-P	CC1-CAO	0.390029	CC2-P	CC2-CAO	0.403399	CC3-P	CC3-CAO	0.507438
CC1-P	CC1-DIR	0.383853	CC2-P	CC2-DIR	0.387159	CC3-P	CC3-DIR	0.390594

Figure 13. Participants describing institutions' strategic planning processes.

As depicted in Figure 13, each institution's director of institutional research and chief academic officers gave the most similar descriptions of their institution's strategic planning process. To ensure trustworthiness, I reran the source clusters (responses to Question 2.1) by coding summary. The sources clustered by coding similarity were consistent with those of word similarity. These results suggested that when participants were asked to describe their strategic planning process, presidents gave different responses than those given by the institution's director of institutional research or chief academic officer. This finding is supported by Hutzschenreuter and Kleindienst's (2006) research that found strategists make decisions based on their cognitive models which are a function of their characteristics. "Strategists' characteristics provide an important source in explaining how strategists and, consequently, organizations behave" (Hutzschenreuter & Kleindienst, 2006, p. 698)

Strategic planning process by position – president. As I reread the participants' responses pertaining to interview Question 2.1, I noted that the community college presidents tended to explain their college's strategic planning process in terms of

the benefits it provided to the institution. For example, after giving a broad overview of higher education strategic planning, I probed CC1-P for more details about their process, he responded citing the advantages of their process.

> So we do our focus - our scan - on one topic every month, and we gather this information from all over: research reports, essays, studies, whatever, conferences you've attended. We bring that together, we distill that into a comprehensive document, and then we use that as a basis of discussion in making sure that our strategic plan still represents relevance, that it represents the possibility for innovation and creativity. And that has been a pretty successful process. (CC1-P, Interview)

In a similar manner, CC2-P described his institution's strategic planning process in general terms. CC2-P's responses focused on how CC2's strategic planning process aligns all of the internal initiatives so the institution can move forward in achieving the college's ends.

> Because everything has to be linked-- I don't want anything that's not linked, so strategic plan has to link to ends. Strategic plan has to link to HLC in college action projects, and every employee's performance plan for the year has to link to the strategic plan, and every departmental plan has to link to strategic plan. Okay, so we start at a high level, the framing documents, we move to the metrics that we're trying to move under the ends, and then we move to, what are the initiatives or college action projects as an institution we will embrace to move us there? And then departments now, you do your plan and individual employees, you now do

your plan. So there's no repetitive work. Everything has to be part of the system

that drives it forward. (CC2-P, Interview)

CC3-P also gave an overview of his institution's strategic planning process. His

responses were indicative of champions of the incremental approach (i.e., Alfred, 2007)

who sought to change the institution's cognitive frame from "'what is' to 'what could

be'[to] enable colleges and universities to more fully understand the value they deliver to

stakeholders" (p. 70).

I brought that person in to help us with the board not so much with the campus.

And what I did was I took things to the campus and then asked them to react. I

took it to do it with a small group then bring it out to a larger group, and we have

shared governance so we have those groups and we also have a leadership group

that involves about 50 people. The answer I got - going back to 2007 when I said,

'What do you want to be known for?' They said, 'Well, we just want to be a good

community college.' If you believe that stuff, just being a good community

college of what it is in 2007 means you're going to die. But I also recognize that I

can't expect people who don't have experience doing anything other than what

they're doing to be able to come up with something like this. Part of my job as a

leader is not to sell this, but to teach. (CC3-P, Interview)

Strategic planning process by position – CAO and DIR. When I compared the

president's responses with those of the chief academic officers and directors of

institutional planning, the responses by the CAO and DIR were extremely detailed. The

responses by the institution's DIRs encompassed every facet of the institution's process.

This is not to say that the president did not have the same level of understanding as the

institution's DIR or CAO about the college's strategic planning process. Rather, because DIRs and to a lesser extent, CAOs work with the institution's strategic planning process on a daily basis they may be more intimate with the overall process (i.e., availability heuristic). Another explanation may be that the DIRs and CAOs are actors in the strategic planning process as opposed to presidents who are directors of these processes. Therefore each has a different perspective of the institution's planning processes.

Another point of divergence between the responses of presidents and those given by DIRs and CAOs was the level of assurance in the strategic planning process. Although presidents spoke about the continuous improvement in their strategic planning processes, the DIRs mentioned the shortcomings of their planning systems far more than CAOs or presidents. To track these shortcomings, one of the latent codes that I developed during data analysis was "improvements to the process." Improvements to the process were points in the transcript when the participants' responses indicated that the institution's current strategic planning process needed improvement in one or more areas. For example, one CAO stated, "As I said, we were a little behind the eight ball this year." Table 13 illustrates the number of coding references for the improvements to process node.

As indicated by Table 13 only CC2-P discussed improvements that were needed to the current strategic planning process. CC2-DIR made the most references to the need for improvement (18), followed by CC1-DIR, (14), and CC3-DIR (11). This finding may indicate that because DIRs are the main drivers of strategic planning at these distinctive institutions, they have a unique vantage point from which to view both the strengths and weaknesses of their institution's strategic planning processes.

Table 13

Number of Times Leaders Discussed Improvements to Their Institutions' Processes

College	Respondent's pseudonym	Number of references
Community College 1	CC1-P	0
	CC1-CAO	6
	CC1-DIR	14
Community College 2	CC2-P	3
	CC2-CAO	0
	CC2-DIR	18
Community College 3	CC3-P	0
	CC3-CAO	2
	CC3-DIR	11

Moreover, their perception of their institution's processes may be adversely influenced because they are dealing with the strategic planning processes on a daily basis.

Common and Distinctive Elements of Strategic Planning Processes

My goal for this section was to examine those common and distinctive elements among the institutional strategic planning processes in my study. I also wanted to examine if these common and distinctive strategic planning practices were considered by strategic planning researchers.

As discussed in the literature the institutions in my study used the common activities indicative of the rational process of strategic planning. Each institution incorporated many of the planning activities discussed in the literature (i.e., environmental scanning, SWOT, etc.). Each institution predicated their strategy on a popular business model and followed the principles of continuous improvement inherent in the AQIP accreditation pathway. At the beginning of Phase I: Archival review, I began

to question the "distinctive" nature of strategy formulation among my study's

participating institutions. Like Prahalad and Hamel (1994), it was not until I examined

the participating institutions at a more granular level with a multiplicity of theoretical

vantage points, and allowing archival data to inform interview data and vice versa, that

differences in strategy formulation begin to emerge. These internal process variations

were consistent with Hax and Majluf (1986) who state that there is a vast amount of

variation in strategy formulation and there are "certain attributes of [strategy planning

formulation] that a firm should adhere to . . . [but] there is no universal formula [for

formulating strategy]" (p. 15).

Common Elements of Strategic Planning Processes

Relying on Penrose's (1959) knowledge-based view (i.e., KBV) of the firm, I first

analyzed each institution's internal strategic processes and routines for similarities and

differences among my study's institutions. Consistent with Pettigrew et al. (2002), I used

the KBV strategic lens by focusing more on the internal workings of the institution. My

study's institutions were similar in that they all started strategic planning with the

institution's vision, applied similar phases to the formulation of strategy, relied on a

particular business model, utilized a specific committee to formulate strategy, employed

activity champions, and harnessed customary activities in strategic planning formulation.

Common element: Vision as the origin of strategic planning. All three of the

presidents in my study indicated that the institution's strategic plan flows from the

college's vision which is set by the board of trustees. For example, when I asked CC2-P

about strategic plan modifications, I wanted to ensure that I understood his response. I

paraphrased what he had said and he quickly added, "consistent with the mission, values,

vision, and ends" (CC2-P, Interview). Likewise, CC3-DIR indicated that all decisions

flow from their Strategic Agenda (i.e., vision) set by the board of trustees. This finding

aligns with Goodstein et al. (1993) who stated ". . . all business decisions are based on

values [and] . . . all organizational decisions are value-based (p. 143). Goodstein went on

to stress that the success of strategic planning is predicated on the congruence between

the organization's values and its strategic plan.

This finding is important to my study. If Goodstein et al. (1993) is correct that all

decisions flow from the institutional values and those values are the basis for the strategic

plan, then it would seem that institutional values may be an important underlying factor

in explaining why an institution uses a particular planning process. It may also indicate

that institutional values are the embodiment of the leader's strategic planning

perspectives. Being that all three of the community college presidents are part of the

board, the institutional values may be an indicator of the leader's (i.e., presidents')

strategic planning perspectives. Because my study was exploratory, and participants were

limited to the president, chief academic officer, and director of institutional research

future studies could explore the extent to which the board's strategic planning

perspectives align with institutional values or top institutional leaders as defined in my

study.

Common element: Phases of strategic planning. Each institution described their

strategic planning process as consisting of four phases. Table 14 presents the phases used

by the participating institutions.

Table 14

Phases of Strategic Planning Processes among Participating Community Colleges

	Phases of Strategic Planning Process			
Community College	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
CC1	Visioning	Planning	Deploying	Monitoring
CC2 (2008)	Visioning	Planning	Deployment	Evaluation
CC3	Grasping the situation	Strategy Direction	Strategy Integration	Strategy Execution

As described in Table 14, both CC1 and CC3's strategic planning processes are comprised of four phases. CC2 also used four phases but redesigned their formulation processes in 2009 and added additional phases to reflect the PDCA process.

Common element: Business model. I analyzed interview transcripts and AQIP Systems portfolios to determine the number of times a particular model was referenced. Table 15 presents the business models along with the number of references to such models for the community colleges in my study.

Table 15

Business Models Referenced by Participating Community Colleges

Community College	Number of references	Business model
CC1	16	Balanced Scorecard
CC2	1	PDCA
CC3	12	PDCA

As indicated by Table 15 each institution in my study relied on a particular business model. Based on the number of references there appeared to be a stronger reliance on a business model among CC1 and CC3. CC2-P mentioned the PDCA model during the interview, but this was the only reference to PDCA that CC2's leadership or Systems portfolio made throughout my study. Therefore, I determined that CC1 and CC3 reliance was more directly tied to either the Balanced Scorecard (i.e., CC1) or the PDCA (i.e., CC3) models than CC2.

Common element: Strategic Planning Committee (SPC). I analyzed interview

transcripts and AQIP Systems portfolios to determine if the institution used a specific

committee (i.e., SPC) to formulate and monitor the community colleges' strategic

planning process. Table 16 illustrates if the institution uses such a committee and the

number of times that the committee was referenced in the data.

Table 16

Number of Times Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) Referenced by Participating
Community Colleges

Community College	Data source	Reference to SPC
CC1	CC1 Systems portfolio	16
	CC1-P	2
	CC1-CAO	0
	CC1-DIR	0
CC2	CC2 Systems portfolio	28
	CC2-P	2
	CC2-CAO	7
	CC2-DIR	41
CC3	CC3 Systems portfolio	0
	CC3-P	0
	CC3-CAO	0
	CC3-DIR	0

As indicated by Table 16, both CC1 and CC2 used a specific committee to

formulate and monitor the strategic planning process. At CC3, these functions were

performed by the Institutional Research Department who had an assigned individual who

was responsible for oversight of strategic planning. This is consistent with researchers

(i.e., Abramson & Lawrence, 2001; Rossotti, 2005) who found that organizational change

is dependent is dependent on change leaders but also the ability to communicate and

involve as many stakeholders and participants as possible. It should be noted that CC3 is

classified as a rural community college and may not have adequate human capital

available to serve on a specific planning committee.

It should also be noted that all three community colleges had initially used a strategic planning consultant to either create or redesign their strategic planning process. These findings might suggest, similar to the findings of Rumelt et al. (1994), that consultants may initially have had substantial influence on strategy formation among these community colleges. Perhaps the work of these consultants gave rise to accusations in HE strategic planning literature that colleges are simply copying strategy or adopting for-profit strategy without any regard for context. My study clearly refutes those researchers (i.e., Maassen & Potman, 1990) accusations. As indicated in many of the semi-structured interviews, among my study's participants institutional processes have undergone substantial revision since they were implemented. Therefore, they currently possess many common activities but have modified these activities for their particular organization, environment, and structure.

Common element: Activity champions. I analyzed all of the data sources to determine if the institutions assign individual champions to strategic goals, initiatives or cascading departmental goals and initiatives. The use of "idea champions" to lead strategic initiatives is consistent with strategic planning research (i.e., Beer & Eisenstat, 1996; Fernandez & Rainey, 2006; Pellegrinelli, 2011).

Although the use of activity champions was a common element among my study's participating institutions, who qualified to be activity champion differed. At CC1, and to a lesser extent, CC3 anyone could be a champion. At CC2, champions were members of top management.

To determine if a champion was assigned to a strategic or department level activity, I performed an additional query and retrieved results where "champion" was

within 10 words of "department." I then reviewed the results to ensure that they were

consistent with earlier findings. Table 17 illustrates the results of the queries.

Table 17

Number of Times "Champion" Referenced Among Participating Community Colleges

Community College	Number of references to "champion"	Number of references where department and champion within 10 words
CC1	120	18
CC2	169	0
CC3	197	0

As illustrated by Table 17 all three community colleges assigned a champion to

strategic goals and initiatives. Every participant and data source mentioned the use of

these champions in strategic planning processes, and involving a broad base of managers

is consistent with strategic planning literature (i.e., Vila & Canales, 2008). In terms of

departmental champions, only CC1 mentioned departmental level champions in their

Systems portfolios. One explanation for this result may be that departmental leadership

(i.e., department chairs) are expected to champion any effort that pertains to their

department, and as in the case study by Vila and Canales (2008), then institutions may

not specify these individuals as champions as it is already assumed in their job duties.

Common element: Customary strategic planning activities. I analyzed the data

to determine if the participating institutions utilize any of the customary activities found

in traditional strategic planning. Relying on Davies and Walters (2004), these customary

activities include engaging in a situation analysis, scanning the environment, identifying

best practices, and key performance indicators. Table 18 illustrates the extent to which

these activities were discussed in the data sources. The subsection which follows looks at

each of the three customary strategic planning activities: SWOT, environmental scanning,

best practices, and key performance indicators.

Table 18

Common Strategic Planning Activities among Participating Community Colleges

Community College	Data source	Common strategic -Planning activities				
		Situation analysis (SWOT)	Environmental scanning	Best - Practices	Key - Performance indicators (KPIs)	**Total**
CC1	Systems - Portfolio	50	12	1	14	63
	CC1-CAO	1	0	1	0	2
	CC1-DIR	1	1	4	0	6
	CC1-P	14	4	0	0	18
	Total	**66**	**17**	**6**	**14**	**103**
CC2	Systems - Portfolio	8	6	0	0	14
	CC2-CAO	1	1	1	0	3
	CC2-DIR	5	5	0	0	10
	CC2-P	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	**14**	**12**	**1**	**0**	**27**
CC3	Systems - Portfolio	44	13	0	0	57
	CC3-CAO	6	0	0	0	6
	CC3-DIR	9	9	2	0	20
	CC3-P	5	0	1	0	6
	Total	**64**	**22**	**3**	**0**	**89**
Total		**144**	**51**	**10**	**14**	**219**

SWOT. As described in Table 18 the most used common strategic planning

activity was SWOT/situation analysis. All three institutions used situation analysis.

CC1's Systems portfolio and institutional leaders used the term situation analysis or

SWOT 66 times, CC2's Systems portfolio and institutional leaders used the term

situation analysis or SWOT 14 times, and CC3's Systems portfolio and institutional

leaders used the term situation analysis or SWOT 64 times. With the exception of CC1-P,

all institutional leaders discussed how their institution used SWOT analysis to uncover

internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats. This

finding is consistent with Chandler (1962) who advanced that organizations must be responsive to external stimuli.

As discussed previously, CC1-P may not have discussed SWOT as the presidents in my study gave a more broad based depiction of their institutions' strategic planning processes. Indeed, CC2-P did state that strategic planning at community colleges ". . . was not rocket science" (CC2-P, Interview), and thus may not have mentioned the basic element of strategic planning.

Environmental scanning. Table 18 also illustrates the extent to which each institution used the term, "environmental scanning" or "monitoring the external environment." CC1's Systems portfolio and institutional leadership discussed these terms 17 times, CC2's Systems portfolio and institutional leadership discussed "environmental scanning" or "monitoring the external environment" 12 times, and CC3's Systems portfolio and institutional leadership cited these terms, 22 times. Although all three institutions discussed monitoring the external environment, the frequency with which individuals within each institution spoke about this activity differed. At CC1, the president mentioned environmental scanning more often (i.e., 4 times) than the DIR (i.e., 1 time) or CAO. Not surprisingly at CC2 and CC3, each institution's DIR spoke more often about environmental scanning than did other institutional leaders. In fact, at CC3, only the DIR discussed environmental scanning. I thought this was an interesting finding as CC3's strategic planning process has an additional step specifically designed to address the assumptions which underlie both the environmental scanning and situation analysis activities. These findings are consistent with representativeness bias as well as the findings of Lyles and Thomas (1988) who determined that bias and assumptions exist

in each strategic planning formulation model.

Best practices. Table 18 also examines the number of times that the institution's Systems portfolio or leadership discussed integrating best practices into the strategic planning process. Each institution cited best practices but CC1 cited the practice (i.e., 6 times) more often than both CC1 (1 time) and CC3 (3 times). It should be noted that the one time that CC3-P discussed best practices he was referring to the fact that best practices are only superlative when considering the environment. "I hate all the language of best practices. There are no best practices. There are effective practices given the environment in which they were applied" (CC3-P, Interview). CC3-P's view on best practices is consistent with Alstete's (1997) last step in adopting benchmarking procedures, which involves "adapting the findings to the home institution" (para. 4).

Table 18 also illustrates which one of the three common practices used in my study (i.e., situation analysis, environmental scanning, best practices, and KPIs) distinctive community colleges cite most often. Overall, institutional Systems portfolios and leaders discussed situation analysis (i.e., SWOT), 144 times, followed by environmental scanning, 51 times, KPIs 14 times, and best practices 10 times. I approach this finding with caution as it appears that situation analysis and environmental scanning are most used among my study's institutions. This may not necessarily be the case as institutions have their own unique terms for such processes and institutional vernacular may have distorted these results. Additionally, one should not assume that situation analysis is a more important activity than environmental scanning. More research on how institutions use situation analysis or environmental scanning would need to be conducted.

Key performance indicators (KPIs). Consistent with Alstete's (1997) research who found that internal benchmarking is increasingly being used among higher education institutions, all three institutions in my study had developed standards to measure the cost and quality of internal activities. Although performance indicators have been akin to autocratic management controls that did not seem to be the case among the participating institutions. Contrary to Birnbaum's (2001) assertion that benchmarking is "a major tool for management control and decision making in nonprofit organizations" (p. 81), the key performance indicators adopted at the participating institutions were created internally and their purpose was to not only guide decision making, but to monitor the quality of the strategic planning process. Additionally, the institutional leaders (e.g., CC2-DIR) in my study spoke favorably about performance indicators.

> Then we have a whole series of indicators. The indicators work on several layers. But when we first started brainstorming particular projects. At that same time, each of those three Ends teams also talked about what data would tell us that we were making improvements on this end. (CC2-DIR, Interview)

Consistent with Dolence and Norris (1994) and Lattimore, D'Amico, and Hancock (2012), my results indicate that strategic planning aids in accountability. The use of KPIs "measure outcomes of the various phases and steps in the strategic planning process" (Dolence & Norris, 1994, p. 15). When asked about the value of strategic planning, CC2-P pointed directly to the college's KPIs.

> First year out, and the first plan we had-- so we had a dashboard, and there were 26 metrics. And on that dashboard, 3 were green, and 11 were yellow, and 12

were red, and when we finished 3 years later, we had 3 reds, and we had 2

yellows and everything else was green. (CC2-P, Interview)

Distinctive Elements of Strategic Planning Processes

After comparing the common elements of strategic planning processes within and

across institutions, I wanted to parse out the differences in strategic planning processes

among the institutions in my study. The main differences between the community college

strategic planning processes in my study were the frequency of planning, decision

making, and budgetary alignment.

Distinctive element: Frequency of planning. Although each institution in my

study had continuous planning to some degree, each institution in my study had differing

time lines with respect to strategic planning. This is consistent with research in strategy

as practice (i.e., Huff & Reger, 1987). Every spring at CC1 the "Board of Trustees

reviewed, affirmed, or recommended modification to the institution's mission, vision, and

values statements" (CC1 Systems Portfolio, 2014, p. 67). At this time the Board also

updates the five-year strategic agenda. However, CC1-P indicated that CC1 has "realized

that we should have a continuous strategic plan. Even though our plan speaks out to now,

three years into the future, it is actually renewed in a pretty significant way every year"

(CC1-P, Interview).

When the current president arrived at CC2, CC2-DIR stated that the president did

not like the rolling plan process. "I'm used to plans with beginnings, middles, and ends,

so it's hard for me to do this rolling thing" (CC2-DIR, Interview). CC2's DIR explained

We have gone through one complete cycle. . . So 2011 to 2014, we spent almost

two years preparing the plan and then implementing it for three years. And we

have a nice report that says, 'This is what we accomplished in this strategic plan.'
I had looked for those kind of closure report on plans. I haven't found another one.
So, I think we might be a bit unique in terms of-- we actually did a report that
said, 'This is what we said we're going to do three years ago and this is we are
today.' (CC2-DIR, Interview)

Aside from the Board's annual review it was difficult to discern when CC2's strategic
planning process started and ended. According to CC2-DIR the planning is continuous.

The plan is not static. Over the course of the three years, we added new College
Action Projects and some of them we finished either because they were finished
or because we just couldn't pull it off or for some reason we are no longer
interested in doing that.(CC2-DIR, Interview)

Like CC1, CC3's strategic planning process is conducted annually. The process
begins in August with planning for the subsequent fiscal year. CC3's DIR indicated that
the timeline is "very challenging for people - to come in in August and talk about
planning for the next fiscal year. We're not very good at it. We're not very good at
thinking like that" (CC3-DIR, Interview). She explained that the goal for CC3's strategic
planning process is to move toward a "dynamic strategic planning process. We really are
looking at this on an annual basis, and coming up with those targets, basically, what are
the outcomes we want to see by the end of this year constantly. And those can change"
(CC3-DIR, Interview). She further explained that in continuous strategic planning the
institution, at some level, is always planning for the next fiscal year.

[After operational level planning we are] refining, and then you're implementing,
you're doing. Of course, at that point in time, the new strategic planning cycle is

starting over. You're trying to think about the next year - that sort of the planning,

or the schedule anyway, in a nutshell throughout the year. (CC3-DIR, Interview)

Two of the three community colleges in my study used a continuous method of

strategic planning. Although the institution was continuously planning, they had to

remain cognizant with timing of the calendar.

[My colleague] and I struggle with the calendar of the process. We're like, 'Well,

we know what it should look like, but instead of forcing the institution into what it

should look like, let's tweak the process, so that it better reflects what we're doing

in practice. And then, we can decide if that's a best practice or not.' If this is

where they're going to be in practice, let's see how we can make the best out of

this instead of trying to force them into a situation that is uncomfortable and

frustrating for everybody. (CC3-DIR, Interview)

Distinctive element: Decision making and ownership of environmental

scanning. Another difference among institutions in my study with respect to their

strategic planning processes is who conducts environmental scanning and SWOT. At

CC1, both environmental scanning and situation analysis are conducted by departments.

Information gathered by departments is then given to CC1's SPC. At CC2, IR is

responsible for coordinating external information that will be analyzed and assessed

during SPC meetings. At CC3, a scan team which is different than their SPC conducts

environmental scanning. CC3's scan team "includes the president, includes a couple vice-

presidents. It includes the head librarian or the director of the library, [and an individual

from IR]" (CC3-DIR, Interview). Once a direction has been set at the Board level (i.e.,

ends), both the IR individual responsible for strategic planning and the "director of the

library. . . use electronic devices to do the scanning, so articles that come in, they get stored and highlighted in DIIGO" (CC3-DIR, Interview). CC3's DIR went on to explain how information is rated and shared in DIIGO to determine if it would warrant discussing at the SPC meeting.

Two interesting findings arose from comparing how institutions gather external environmental information. The first finding was that CC1, unlike the other participating institutions, have individuals closest to the source (i.e., departments) conduct information scanning. By having departmental members gather information about the external environment CC1 reaps the benefit of déformation professionnelle. This cognitive bias is where one's profession (i.e., departments) "acts as a lens which affects how we see and understand the world" (Shorrock, 2013, para. 8). An allegiance to one's profession benefits environmental scanning as long as the member of the SPC are cognizant of this blind spot. Participants did not discuss how the information is relayed by departments to the SPC. Other biases (i.e., framing, mere exposure, status quo, and anchoring) could all occur at the SPC level. However, to determine the extent to which these biases are present at the SPC additional research is needed.

The second interesting point with respect to decision making was that CC2's environmental scanning and situation analysis were framed around institutional ends. This delimitation was probably necessary due to time and resource constraints. However, consistent with strategy as practice researchers (i.e., Mintzberg et al., 1998; Whittington, 2001) by defining the scope of environmental scanning and situation analysis the institution is limiting the information that can be gathered. Limiting these activities may cause vital information to be overlooked. Although some institutions (i.e., CC2 and CC3)

had earmarked innovation funds, information contrary to informational ends may influence newly created projects or initiatives. Because this information had been previously disregarded it may be difficult to recall at a future date.

Another distinctive element among strategic planning processes at participating institutions was that CC3's decision making process was a part of the strategic planning process. CC3-CAO stated, "If it gets on to the [strategic] plan, there's been a decision made to put it there" (CC3-CAO, Interview). He went on to explain that CC3's decision making process was actually part of the strategic planning process.

> We have a decision-making process as well. It's a multi-step process, particularly used for new programs and services. And sometimes, our plan is a result of that decision-making process, but the plan in and of itself cannot anticipate every new venture that we're going to engage with. So we have a four step decision-making process that begins with an idea summary, which is a couple of pages. A proposer lays out what is to be accomplished. . . . A proposer provides a two-page Idea Summary. If adopted, a marketing plan is developed. If adopted, a business plan is designed. If approved, the last stage is an implementation plan. Within the last year we determined it was necessary to strengthen the decisions made at each stage. We now have documented sign offs showing the documentation of the decision at each stage. The process also allows stages to be skipped if it is determined that the information is not needed to move forward. We also recognized recently that we have not been using the process enough. We have become more disciplined in insisting on using the process when important decisions are needed.

By integrating the decision making process into the strategic plan, CC3 has a record of where initiatives originated. CC3-DIR indicated that the business plan is an important part of the decision making process because it gives the SPC an idea of how much each initiative will cost.

Distinctive element: Budgetary alignment. Another distinctive element among the participating institution's strategic planning processes was the extent to which budgeting was built into the process. Higher education prescriptive research (i.e., Hunt et al., 1997; Keller, 1983; Tromp & Ruben, 2004) had previously ignored the role that the budget plays in strategic planning formulation. Therefore I wanted to delve more deeply into how institutional participants viewed the role of the budget in the strategic planning process.

The Systems portfolios for CC1 and CC2 mentioned that their budget process was tied to their strategic plan. CC1's CAO indicated that the budget and the strategic planning process must be linked.

> Well, timing has to be driven by it being connected to your budget. So we start
> our budgeting process January-- well, probably early February. This is another
> thing. At my last institution, we would be approving all of these plans. Faculty
> would review their program. Okay, this is where I need to improve next year. This
> is what I want to do. We'd be like, "Okay, great." Then later we put the budget
> together, but not approved - the money, that thing it needs to do that. I mean like,
> 'What's wrong with this picture?' So we flipped that around here so that we're for
> starting the budget in February. (CC1-CAO, Interview)

CC1-P discussed how CC1's previous budget was the strategic plan, and how the

relationship between the two processes has changed.

> I would say-- especially when I first got here, that the budget was really the
> strategic plan, not so much the main strategic plan. . . [The plan] is tightly aligned
> with the budget. . . .And it's not the budget comes first. It is the strategic plan
> comes first - that informs the budget. (CC1-P, Interview)

According to CC2's Systems portfolio, "CC2 allocates its resources to align with
the mission and college priorities as outlined in our Strategic Plan. . . Financial resource
needs are fed into the budget process. The College's strategic plan is the filter through
which all funding requests are prioritized" (CC2 Systems Portfolio, 2012, p. 47). CC2's
Systems portfolio went on to describe how the budget process is tied to the strategic plan.

> As budget decisions are made, priority consideration is given to CAP-related
> requests to ensure that all, or at least the high priority CAPs, are resourced. If a
> CAP is unable to be funded due to budget limitations, it may be placed in "long-
> term" status. It will always be considered for supplemental funding in December
> of the plan year, when excess funds often become available if tuition revenue
> exceeds the forecasted conservative budget amounts. Since budgets have been cut
> to historically low levels due to statewide funding shortages, it has been very
> difficult to fund new initiatives. (CC2 Systems Portfolio, 2012, p. 47)

Both CC2-P and CC2-DIR spoke about the need to have additional funds allocated for
innovative projects. These funds are outside of the normal budget process.

> We also create for the strategic planning group a seed money account of
> $250,000. And the thinking when I did that was, if we're serious about the work,
> then we needed to fund [that work]. The charge is [to] fund [strategic initiatives],

but if you can't fund it, come back to [the SPC] committee. That committee is not run by me or my administration, it's a committee within the strategic planning committee. They vet their proposals and they determine who is going to get seed money up to $20,000 with various initiatives that are going on. And I think it says a lot to people when you're willing to invest and you're thinking outside of the normal budgetary process. And they don't spend it all of the year. Some years they've spent 80. I don't think they ever spent over 150 of the 250, but it's much more of the principle than the actual money. (CC2-P, Interview)

CC3-DIR discussed how the budget process works at CC3. She indicated that sometimes it is difficult because initiatives are unable to be funding because budgeting is not embedded in strategic planning.

Anyway, planning, and then budgeting, and refinement as the budget gets refined, and then the expectation would be once the budget gets approved by the board of trustees in June, then whatever you need to do to make revisions to [the strategic plan].

To overcome the disconnection between the budget and the plan, CC3-P has created financial reserves to ensure that initiatives can still be funded.

We built a different financial structure. The structure that we built was its not just savings. Any area of the budget that has a predictive probability for variation, I have a reserve . . . I can tell you that I have a reserve for health care. I just started a reserve for retirement because I don't believe that the state is going to continue to give us this extra piece, and I sit on the retirement board so I know what's here, what it really is, and what's coming. We have a reserve for working capital. We

have a reserve if we ever move away from being self-insured to being purely

insured. We have a new reserve for new building construction. We have a new

reserve for traditional plant fund things. . . .So everything that's in a reserve is

there. It can be moved around. And then we have this reserve for the strategic

fund, which is your development capital. So we've changed the structure such, I

think, that most people see the wisdom in that now including the board. (CC3-P,

Interview)

The budget is an important component in the planning process. The budget cycle

may not coincide with formulating the strategic plan (Meisinger, 1994). However, the

presidents in my study have found unique ways of aligning the budget with the strategic

plan or creating fiscal reserves that can assist the organization in achieving their strategic

agenda.

Analysis by Research Question

The first research question that I examined was "Within community colleges,

identified as distinct with reference to their strategic planning formulation, what strategic

planning processes and perspectives are being utilized?" Embedded in my study were two

separate, yet interconnected phenomena (i.e., strategic planning processes and

perspectives). To ensure a comprehensive analysis, these phenomena were disentangled.

Research Question 1 was then analyzed using one lens (e.g., Research Question 1.1. -

strategic planning process) and then the other (e.g., Research Question 1.2 - strategic

planning perspective).

Research Question 1.1: Process

Research Question 1 sought to examine what type of strategic planning processes were being utilized among participating institutions. To answer this question I compared the institutional formulation strategies with those described in the literature. Researchers state that strategic formulation consists of three separate phases (i.e., foundation, position, and direction). Prior to data collection and analysis I relied on the strategic planning literature (i.e., Andrews, 2003; Dalrymple, 2007) to develop the phases and the common supporting activities of strategic planning formulation. These phases and supporting activities were represented in Chapter II: Figure 3 (offered to the reader again below).
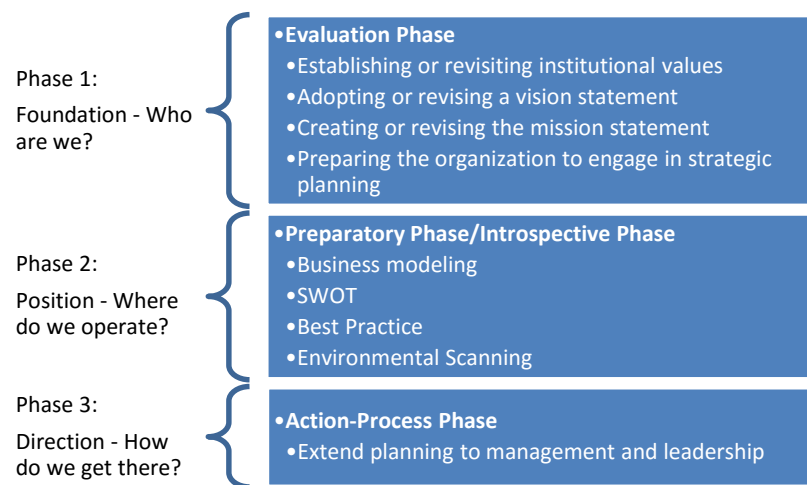
Figure 3: Phases and activities of the formulation phase of strategic planning.

My findings are consistent with the overarching phases (i.e., foundation, position, and direction) identified in the literature. My findings revealed that among distinctive community colleges, there are additional phases and supplementary activities under the traditional phases that were identified in the literature. Additionally, many of the supporting activities (i.e., SWOT, environmental scanning, etc.) among participating institutions did not occur in the phases as originally suggested. After analyzing each

institution's strategic planning process including their common and distinctive elements, I developed a new, more robust, strategic planning framework to answer Research Question 1.

Figure 14 presents the modified strategic planning process. Figure 14 is the culmination of each institution's strategic planning process. In addition to the three phases identified in the literature, there appears to be two additional phases (i.e., alignment and monitoring). Although my study focused specifically on strategic planning formulation, as formulation trickles down into divisional and department level planning there are formulation activities (i.e., departments developing strategic initiatives, and formulating alternative courses of action) taking place during the strategy's implementation (i.e., the alignment and monitoring phases).

Phase I: Foundation. During the foundation phase the institution tries to answer the question, "Who are we?" Leaders within all three participating institutions agree that the foundation phase is done by the board in conjunction with senior leadership. Consistent with higher education strategic planning research (i.e., Alfred, 2007; Martinez & Wolverton, 2009; Rowley et al., 1998; Tromp & Ruben, 2004), Phase I begins with review/revision of the institution's mission, vision, and values (i.e., MVV). As discussed in the literature review for-profit mission statements are static. This may also be true of a community college's vision and values but not necessarily the institution's mission. The findings of my study are consistent with Dougherty and Townsend (2006) who stated that "the community college is not a static institution and neither are its missions. They have changed over time, with new missions appearing and older ones changing in importance" (p. 8). Relying on the comments by CC3-DIR, it is important to have an established

procedure for the board and senior leadership to review/revise the institution's MVV. The timing of this review can vary, but institutions in my study appear to suggest that this review should occur at least every three years.

Phase 1:
Foundation - Who are we?

- **Phase 1A (Every three years)**
  - **Review/Revise mission, values, vision (Board and senior leadership*)**
    - Establishing or revisiting institutional values
    - Adopting or revising a vision statement
    - Creating or revising the mission statement
- **Phase 1B Institutional preplanning**
  - Create/update SPC
  - Assign board champions
  - Establish or revise institutional communication venues

Phase 2:
Distillation-Where are we now and where are we going?

- **Phase 2A (Yearly)**
  - Identify and vet planning assumptions
  - Review environmental scans
  - Institutional situation analysis (SWOT)
  - Board establishes/revisits institutional ends
    - Identify end champions (senior leadership)

Phase 3:
Direction - How are we going to get there?

- **Phase 3A (Yearly)**
  - Establish SPC subcommittees based on institutional ends
  - Establish strategic agenda (long-term goals)
    - Establish supporting strategic initiatives
    - Align goals and initiatives with HLC AQIP categories
- Budget cycle integrates strategic agenda and initiatives
- Establish KPIs, targets, and timelines
- Board approval of 3A activities

Phase 4:
Alignment - Who is going to power our institution?

- **Phase 4A (Yearly)**
  - Departments develop supporting strategic initiatives
    - Assign departmental champions
  - End champion approves departmental initiatives
  - Develop individual performance plans in support of departmental initiatives
    - Set KPIs, targets, and timelines

Phase 5:
Monitoring - Are we moving toward our destination?

- **Phase 5A (Yearly)**
  - Department champions reporting to ends champtions (monthly)
  - Ends champions reporting to SPC
  - Bi-annual review of individual performance plans
  - Adjustments as needed
    - Debrief for need for alternative courses of action

Figure 14. Modified strategic planning process (created by Augustyniak, 2015).

The second part of the foundation stage is preplanning. My findings indicate that the SPC is a vital part of a distinctive institution's strategic planning process. Therefore, in the modified strategic planning framework, the membership of the SPC should be

reviewed and revised on a yearly basis. Additionally, many of my study's participants (i.e., CC2-DIR and CC3-CAO) indicate that having a board member as part of the SPC helps to ensure that the work of the SPC is consistent with the board's MVV.

The SPC is also responsible for communicating the strategic plan to the broader institutional community. Consistent with CC1 and CC2's strategic planning process during the preplanning phase it may be beneficial to ensure that all communication venues are consistent and are reaching the specified target audiences (i.e., internal and external institutional members). Consistent with CC1 and CC3's strategic planning process, these communication venues must also solicit individual reactions and comments from the internal stakeholders. Consistent with organizational development research (i.e., Rowley & Sherman, 2001), by involving all levels of the institution everyone has the opportunity to be heard and participate in the change process. Although strategic planning researchers have traditionally viewed organizational development techniques as separate from strategic planning, "a more adaptive organizations [means] getting the organization ready for change by employing a systematic approach of data gathering, analysis, and intervention" (Rowley & Sherman, 2001, p. 221).

Phase II: Distillation. For the distinctive institutions the second phase of strategic planning is gathering of information from several venues and distilling that information through a process that recognizes both the biases and assumptions on which the information was predicated. Of the three participating institutions only CC3 had a separate process for vetting assumptions. Hunt et al. (1997) agreed that identifying the "fact gap" is an essential part of transforming data into information.

After information is gathered and assumptions clarified, leaders of distinctive

institutions along with their board determine where the institution is going. The strategic destination are the institutional ends. Consistent with CC1 and CC2's strategic planning process, end's champions are then appointed. Relying on Rowley and Sherman's (2001) statement that idea champions should be campus leaders, end's champions are typically members of top management. The reason for using institutional leaders as champions is two-fold. Institutional leaders have the positional power to garner both the fiscal and human resources which may be needed to accomplish a particular institutional end. Additionally, end's champions are part of the president's cabinet and through such membership they are able to communicate regularly with other top institutional leaders. This ensures that the entire institution is aware of how institutional ends are progressing and like CC2 and CC3 if adjustment to plans is needed.

Phase III: Direction. Based on the findings of my study, once the institution has defined the institutional ends, members of the SPC should be assigned to those ends to develop and inform the strategic agenda for the institution. From the strategic agenda, members of the SPC along with departments impacted by the strategic agenda can begin to craft strategic initiatives. My study indicates that by aligning strategic initiatives with the longer-term institutional strategic agenda, the microcosm of strategic initiatives move the institution toward its ultimate strategic agenda.

During Phase III the SPC can determine which of the strategic initiatives are aligned with the nine AQIP categories. Relying on CC2-CAO and CC3-DIR who stated that projects need to be congruent, it is important to not add on projects to fulfill HLC accreditation requirements as suggested by Birnbaum (2001), but to first identify strategic initiatives and then align them to the nine AQIP categories. This appears to be an

important part of successful strategic planning processes among distinctive institutions in that they do not have a lot of disconnected projects which do not further their institutions' strategic agenda.

All three of the participating institutions in my study are AQIP accredited. Therefore, they have all adopted measurements of effectiveness. All institutional leaders felt that having KPIs, targets, and outcomes were an important determinant in identifying which initiatives were "progressing" and which needed "adjustment." This finding is consistent with Morrill (2007) who stated that monitoring the process is important to success. Another important finding about KPIs, targets, and outcomes was that they needed to be obtrusive, simple, and continually referenced. For example, CC3's Z6 summarized the process of the strategic plan and were easily referenced as all measurements of effectiveness fit onto one sheet of paper.

My findings indicate that that budgeting and strategic planning have a reciprocal relationship. Therefore, to the extent possible, the "ask" budget should begin during the third phase of the strategic planning process. Consistent with the statements by CC1-P and CC-P the strategic plan should drive the budget. Therefore the budget planning cycle should either be a part of, or be closely aligned with the institution's strategic planning process.

Phase IV: Alignment. In addition to HLC recommendations, much of the literature (i.e., Rowley & Sherman, 2001; Tromp & Ruben, 2004) recommended aligning the strategic plan across institutional levels to increase completion of institutional goals. Moreover, the HLC expects AQIP institutions to have a "coordinated planning process" (Higher Learning Commission, 2011 p. 3.1-3).

CC3, unlike other institutions in my study, has a specific step in the strategic planning process which directs departments to create supporting strategic initiatives. This is another important step in the strategic planning process as it distills the strategic agenda throughout the institution. Relying on Ericksen and Dyer's (2004) findings, the engagement of subsystems in the larger institution increases task identification and can create positive change agents.

Like CC1, assigning a departmental champion to departmental initiatives may increase the likelihood of movement toward supporting departmental initiatives. If an individual is tasked with monitoring whether a particular plan is on target and the individual's pay increase is linked to such targets, departmental goals may be more likely to be either attained or adjusted. However, additional research is necessary to determine if in the higher education arena that pay-for-performance systems positively impact goal attainment.

Phase V: Monitoring. Hinton (2012) found, that it is critical to have information flow upward from the operations level. Department plans are one of the venues that she suggested for this upward flow of communication. The institutions in my study appear to have this upward communication flow during the monitoring phase where communication about system effectiveness flows upward allowing departmental champions to report progress to the ends champions. Subsequently the ends champions would then report to the SPC. Because systems feedback is needed to keep the system on target and identify areas for adjustment communication must be clear, frequent, and without judgment (Mohr & Spekman, 1994).

Hinton (2012) also stated, "the key to keeping a strategic plan flexible and

continuously updated is a regular schedule of assessment and revision" (p. 20). She

suggested that the plan be reviewed twice annually, and then at the end of the planning

cycle (Hinton, 2012). Consistent with Rowley et al. (1997) who determined that colleges

should have "ongoing evaluation built into their strategic planning processes" (p. xv), the

institutions in my study use the monitoring phase to make adjustments as needed. Relying

on systems' data (i.e., KPIs) and using the principles of continuous quality improvement,

what Goodman and Willekens (2001) referred to as "trigger points," the institutions in

my study are able to take alternative courses of action when the outcomes are less than

intended. These institutions appear to be aware of Keller's (1983) findings which stated

that the number one cause of planning failure was a lack of "persistent monitoring of

divisional plans" (p 166).

Research Question 1.2 and Research Question 2: Perspectives

The second part of Research Question 1 explored what strategic planning

perspectives were used among the participating institutions. During my study's point of

interface I used Research Question 1.2 and Research Question 2 (i.e., "To what extent do

the strategic planning processes of community colleges, identified as distinct with

reference to their strategic planning formulation, align with Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10

strategic perspectives?") as a guide for identifying strategic planning perspectives. If a

strategic planning perspective was used in either the institutions' Systems portfolio or by

an interviewee, I probed more deeply on that information to determine to what extent the

perspective aligned with Mintzberg et al.'s strategic perspectives. Table 19 illustrates how

I used the Mintzberg et al. (1998) broadened perspectives that I created to determine

which strategic planning perspectives were being utilized among participating

community colleges. These broadened perspectives were then cross walked to determine if the broadened perspectives aligned with any of Mintzberg et al.'s 10 strategic perspectives. Table 19 lists which of Mintzberg et al.'s strategic perspectives were used by participating community colleges.

As identified in Table 19, each community college used at least three different strategic planning perspectives in strategic planning formulation. This is consistent with many strategy as practice researchers (i.e., Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009; Whittington & Cailluet, 2008), who state that most organizations will combine one or more perspectives to formulate strategy. The most frequently used perspective was the configuration perspective. According to Mintzberg et al.'s (1998), the configuration perspective allows organizations to integrate varied perspectives into one "configuration" that typifies the organization's environment, structure, leadership and strategy.

The use of the configuration perspective in higher education is consistent with Peterson and Dill (1997) who found that higher education processes were primarily impacted by an institution's environment, the institution's relationship to its environment, and the focus of the organization's strategy and structure.

Central actor. Consistent with Miller, Hickson, and Wilson (2008) who stated that central actors were analogous across organizations, the central actors among my study's participating institutions were also similar.

Table 19

Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 Strategic Perspectives Used by CC1 – CC3

Mintzberg et al. (1998) broadened perspective(s)	Mintzberg et al. (1998) 10 perspective(s)		
	CC1	CC2	CC3
Central Actor	Learning and cultural	Learning	Learning and cultural
Decision making direction	Learning and cultural	Learning and cultural	Learning and cultural
Embedded Approach to strategic planning	Configuration	Configuration	Configuration
External environment	Configuration	Learning	Configuration
Premise of the strategy	Configuration	Configuration	Configuration
Formality	Configuration	Configuration	Configuration
Frame of reference	Configuration	Configuration	Configuration
Leadership background	N/A	N/A	N/A
Level of complexity	Configuration	Configuration	Configuration
Organizational structure	Learning	Configuration	Learning
Primary focus of the strategic plan	Configuration	Design	Configuration
Role of external actors	Configuration	Configuration	Configuration
Strategic choice	Configuration	Configuration	Configuration
Strategy formation	Configuration	Configuration	Configuration

Although the board of trustees set the MVVE, strategic planning formulation was the result input by several groups. This mixed scanning approach of developing a long-term strategic agenda while incrementally approaching the strategic initiatives is consistent with strategic planning research (i.e., Cyert & March, 1992).

At CC1 and CC3 the top management (i.e., board of trustees or president) were one of several actors that shared responsibility for strategy formulation. At these two institutions Mintzberg et al.'s learning and cultural perspectives appeared to capture which individuals were responsible for strategy making (i.e., central actor).

The learning perspective is based on a dynamic perspective of strategy that allows for multiple cognitive schemes and idea processes. The organization is seen as a collective system with specific subsystems. This is very similar to the CC1's and CC3's SPCs. According to Child (1972) and Mintzberg et al. (1998) voluntarism is indicative of

the learning perspective with decisions made at the group level.

The cultural perspective also appeared to align with the central actor broadened perspective at CC1 and CC3. Although strategic choice is limited by internal organizational factors, the cultural perspective develops a common perspective where decisions are based on the group's shared vision and belief system. According to Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity (2008), in the cultural perspective the organization's culture is linked to strategy by influencing the ways the organization analyzes information and by encouraging people to act consistently.

At CC2 strategy formulation was also a shared responsibility, but based on interview transcripts, strategy formulation is primarily a function of infrastructure and mode of control as opposed to organizational culture or participants. Therefore, CC2 appears to be more closely aligned with Mintzberg et al.'s learning perspective.

One explanation for these results may be accreditation. AQIP Criteria one indicates that AQIP institutions must fulfill their missions using "structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students" (Higher Learning Commission, 2003, p. 3.1-1). Strategy formation becomes a highly inclusive process where each stakeholder is allowed to share their collective wisdom about the strategic agenda.

Drawing from previous research (i.e., Cyert & March, 1992; Hambrick & Mason, 1984; Miller et al., 2008) what remains unclear is whether central actors at participating institutions are allowed the same degree of inclusion, or have the same amount of influence, in strategy formation. Do some central actors wield power and politics in the strategy formation process? How does positional power influence the role of the central

actor (i.e., upper-echelons, middle-management perspective, or organic perspective)? Do student views garner the same attentiveness as those of trustee members (i.e., dominant coalitions)? Future studies would be needed to determine how central actors influence strategy formation among shared governance institutions.

Decision making direction. All three community colleges allowed decision making to flow multiple directions (i.e., top-down or bottom-up) (Mintzberg et al., 1998). The learning and cultural perspectives best reflect the iterative decision making processes among participating community colleges.

The multidirectional decision making among community colleges may be a result of how decisions are formulated among AQIP institutions. As discussed earlier, although final decision making is the purview of top management, all participating institutions use decentralized, collaborative decision making to arrive at final decisions. This finding is consistent with researchers (i.e., Fernandez & Rainey, 2006; Vila & Canales, 2008) who state that bringing key stakeholders into the decision making process is critical for successful business strategies. Hinton (2012) is a bit more specific about the benefit of stakeholder involvement in decision making stating that "Commitment is the reason it is important to ensure all stakeholders have an opportunity to participate in the process, and that their participation is recognized" (p. 24).

Embedded approach to strategic planning. All three community colleges had a traditional process for formulating strategy. According to Higher Learning Commission (2011), AQIP's high performing organizations will have a systematic approach for embedding the principles and benefits of continuous quality improvement into their institution. This systematic approach (i.e., strategic process) meant that the embedded approach to strategic planning was intended.

Additionally, all strategic plans were based on institutional MVVE. However, Systems portfolios and institutional leaders indicated that they were willing to deviate from intended plans based on systems feedback or changes in the environment.

All three community colleges' embedded approaches to strategic planning were indicative of Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) configuration approach as strategy formulation was both intended and emergent depending on context. This notion of an intentional yet flexible planning is commonplace in today's rapidly changing environment (Dooris, 2002; Swenk, 1999). Giraudeau (2008) states that "the formal planning sequencing appears to be too ridged, too bureaucratic for contemporary firms in their rapidly changing environments" (p. 293). According to Gouillart (1995), "Strategic agility" is becoming more important than following a preordained (i.e., intended) strategy. Organizations must continually transform or tweak strategies strategy depending on the organization and the environment.

External environment. All three institutions and participating leaders indicated that the external environment for their colleges was unstable. This finding is consistent with previous research on strategic planning in higher education (i.e., Colleges, 2004; Cope, 1981; Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010; Rowley et al., 1997; Smith, 2013).

CC1-P and CC3-P indicated that the traditional higher education environment had been marked with periods of instability in an otherwise stable industry. The ideology that higher education has been marked with periods of instability is consistent with previous research (i.e., Mintzberg & Waters, 1982).

It is interesting to note that when volatility in the external environment increases the necessity for strategic planning increases (Brews & Purohit, 2007). What remains to be determined is which type of strategic planning increases with increased instability in the external environment. Does rational planning among community colleges increase to the same extent as emergent planning? Because the external environment is so dynamic does this mean that emergent planning becomes more important than rational planning? Future studies could explore what type of planning increases as external environmental factors change.

Based on the presidents' views of their external environments the configuration perspective seemed to best represent CC1 and CC3. Because CC2's leaders did articulate the need for institutional transformation, CC2 appeared to align more closely with the learning perspective. Like Elfring and Voberda (2001) CC2's leadership viewed the environment as demanding, complex, and unpredictable but did not specifically state that this dictated that the institution needed to transform to meet such predictability. However, CC2-P did state that remaining aware of external environments did mean that they would have to adjust to changing environments, but they would do so in conjunction with their MVVE.

Premise of the strategy. The broadened perspective of "Premise of the strategy" was the goal of an institution's strategy. These goals may be either to establish a distinctive competence, capitalize on organizational resources, or emphasize organizational values. Determining an institution's particular focus can be difficult due to mission creep (Fugazzotto, 2009; Lake & Mrozinski, 2011). Initially it appeared that all three goals could be the focus of strategy among participating institutions. Upon further review, the description that most closely described strategy in practice at the community colleges in my study was the configuration perspective. The focus of strategy among followers of the configuration perspective is a by-product of the organization and the context in which the organization operates. Organizations using configuration are called upon to preserve stability, adapt when necessary, and manage transformation all without damaging the institution (Miller, 1986; Mintzberg et al., 1998).

During the investigation of this broadened perspective, one of the significant limitations of my study became clear. Because my study was limited to specific institutional leaders (i.e., president, chief academic officer, and director of institutional research), my data only reflected certain organizational leader's perceptions. Different members of the participating community colleges (i.e., faculty, staff, students, and community members) may identify the institution's Premise of the strategy differently than those individuals who participated in my study. My study was exploratory in nature. Future studies could examine whether the focus of the institution's strategy is perceived differently at various levels in an institution.

Formality. This broadened perspective addressed the level of formality in an institution's culture. Relying on the sub-system of culture which supports strategic

planning it appeared that the formality of strategic planning formulation was both formal as described in the design, planning, positioning, and environmental perspectives, and informal as explained in the entrepreneurial, cognitive, learning, power, and cultural perspectives. Because each institution had a formal strategic planning formulation process, formality was evident. However, like the entrepreneurial and learning perspectives, experience and intuition were also valued when formulating strategy at the participating institutions.

The perspective that was most closely aligned with the community colleges in my study was the configuration perspective. This perspective stated that strategy formulation may be formal or information depending on what perspectives have been combined to compose the overall strategy.

Another limitation of my research became apparent as I examined institutional formality. My study relied on archival data submitted to the HLC for reaccreditation coupled with semi-structured interviews with institutional leaders. Although this data was appropriate for exploring strategic planning processes and perspectives, I was skeptical about this exploratory data.

HLC Systems portfolios are public information. Therefore, they may emphasize the "best" processes while down playing shortcomings. Additionally, representativeness bias was a concern as the participating leaders either worked intimately with strategic planning, or were in charge of the strategic planning process at their institution. Like Miller and Cardinal (1994) who found that informants "may believe that planning does or should impact value, they may consciously or unconsciously attempt to provide data that validates these beliefs" (p. 1661).

These leaders may have crafted their responses based on the belief that strategic planning is a valuable tool, rather than how strategic planning works at their institution. A broader sample of respondents along with longitudinal studies may help quell skepticism over respondents and document reviews simply "stating what the researcher would like to hear."

Frame used to craft strategy. This broadened perspective focused on whether the institution used a logical or imaginative frame to create strategy. This particular theme spoke to whether strategies were simply replications of strategic planning processes from one institution to another (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Relying on each institution's strategic planning process as presented in the Systems portfolios it appeared that these institutional processes were fix, analytical, and logical as depicted in the design, planning, positioning, and power perspectives. Yet, comments made by CC1-P and CC2-P were consistent with Simpson (1998) who stated that strategic planning is about ideas. The comments by CC1-P and CC2-P highlighted the importance of innovation and risk taking similar to Mintzberg et al.'s entrepreneurial, cognitive, learning, cultural, and environmental perspectives. The perspective that most closely aligned with strategy in practice among participating community colleges appeared to be the configuration perspective. Followers of the configuration perspective used either an analytical or imaginative frame to craft strategy.

Having dual frames to craft strategy is consistent with strategy as practice research. Research (i.e., Szulanski & Amin, 2001; Whittington et al., 2006) states that strategy is as much a "craft" as an analytical science. Unlike Mintzberg et al. (1998) who suggested that strategy must be an emergent process, many researchers believe that

strategy is best when the analytical coexists with the unsystematic. Since the 1980s there has been a renewed emphasis among strategy researchers on the role that imagination plays in formulating strategy (Szulanski & Amin, 2001). According to Heracleous (1998) strategic planning is an analytical activity designed to facilitate creativity. He argues that the real purpose of strategic planning is to foster strategic thinking.

Leadership background. This broadened perspective suggested that the background of the leader may signify which of Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 strategic perspectives were used to formulate strategy. As discussed previously two of the three presidents (i.e., CC1-P and CC3-P) had backgrounds in business, and CC2-P had a background in higher education. Although the positioning and entrepreneurial perspectives were based in economics, none of the perspectives directly aligned to the background of the leaders in my study.

Research suggests that the leader's culture, locus of control, experience, and background have a significant influence on how organizations plan (Foo, 2007; Reger & Huff, 1993). With respect to decision making, Shimizu and Hitt (2004) stated that "over time leaders may develop decision rules and heuristics based on their experiences [which they use throughout their careers at differing organizations and industries]" (p. 46).

Additionally, a leader's past successes or failures with strategic planning have an impact on escalation of commitment and how barriers to strategic planning are overcome (Schwenk & Dalton, 1991). Unfortunately, the size of my sample, coupled with the lack of information pertaining to participant's backgrounds did not allow me to delve deeper into the relationship between culture, cognition, experience and background and a leader's strategic perspective.

More research on how strategists' characteristics influence strategy in higher education settings is needed. By exploring strategists' characteristics in various higher education contexts it may help explain why different leaders respond differently to similar strategic events (Reger & Huff, 1993).

Level of plan's complexity. This broadened perspective described the complexity of the strategic plan. The scale of a plan's complexity could range from simple to complex. Relying on institutional Systems portfolios and information gleaned from participants' interviews it appeared that the institutional strategic plans were relatively complex. However, this information had to be viewed in the context of the organization's stakeholders. All three community colleges engaged in significant "on-boarding" to ensure that all internal stakeholders were aware of the strategic processes and the institution's MVVE.

As an external observer, I faced a significant limitation in determining whether the participating institutional strategic plans were simple or complex. I could only view institutional strategic plans as an outsider. To internal constituents who have received significant training in the institution's strategic planning paradigms these plans may be viewed as simplistic. Taking all of this information into account, the Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 strategic perspective that aligned closely to strategy in practice at participating institutions was the configuration perspective. According to the configuration perspective mature organizations must articulate a plan that addresses the organizational domain, information gathering and dissemination, as well as formulating and implementing a process that will sustain innovation and subsequent growth (Miles et al., 1978). This seemed appropriate as all community colleges in my study were at the same place in the

business lifecycle (Miller & Cardinal, 1994).

      Organizational structure. This broadened perspective sought to classify an institution's organizational structure as either mechanistic or organic. Like earlier Mintzberg et al.'s broadened perspectives, the community colleges in my study appeared to have both mechanistic and organic attributes. CC2, and to a lesser extent, CC1 and CC3, appeared mechanistic when viewed through the lens of the entire organization. This is consistent with Brews and Purohit (2007) who found that rational and symbolic types of planning are a function of firm size as they noted, "as firms grow, structure in the guise of formal planning becomes increasingly necessary" (p. 73).

      However, like Gumport and Pusser (1997), the participant interview responses (i.e., CC1-CAO, CC2-DIR, and CC3-CAO) suggested that there were "microcosms" of organic structures (e.g., SPC) embedded in the larger mechanistic organization. Based on this data, the Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 strategic perspective with the closest connection to strategy in practice at participating institutions appeared to be the learning perspective. Like the "planning as learning" approach presented by Schlange and Jüttner (1997), the learning structure specifically identified organic sub units within the larger context of the overall mechanistic organization.

      As discussed earlier, some of the facets of an institution's strategic planning perspective may be outside their control. This may explain why certain aspects of a mechanistic structure appear to be in place at many non-profit organizations. Accreditation agencies and state mandates may prescribe certain components of the organizations' structure. However, the institutions in my study appear to reap the benefit of control from a mechanistic structure, while retaining the benefit of agility from an

organic structure.

Primary focus of the strategic plan. This broadened perspective was created to determine whether the strategic plan's primary focal point was the organization, environment, or an individual. Relying on the MVVE, it appeared that all three community colleges in my study focused strategic efforts on both the organization and the environment. Based on participant interviews (i.e., CC1-P, CC2-DIR, CC3-CAO) institutions were equally concerned with organization and environment. Consistent with the findings of Shimizu and Hitt (2004), the importance of one may be emphasized, but that emphasis would be considered in the context of the other (i.e., changes in the macro environment would create change in organizational processes to ensure sustainability).

The only one of Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 strategic perspectives that encompasses more than one area of focus was the configuration perspective. In the configuration perspective plans have a focus but that focus is dependent on the organization's leadership, environment and organizational structure.

Role of external actors. This broadened perspective discussed whether external individuals (i.e., four-year institutions, advisory committees, and community members) took an active or passive role in strategy formulation. After reviewing the membership of the SPCs, the role of external actors was determined to be active.

All three of the study's participants actively recruited community members as part of their SPCs. Involving external stakeholders as part of strategic planning was consistent with the findings of Fernandez and Rainey (2006) who determined that involvement by multiple external stakeholders helped to overcome barriers to organizational change. Active participation by external actors in strategy formulation was indicative of

Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) learning, power, environmental, and configuration perspectives. To determine which perspective best illustrated strategy in practice at participating community colleges, I reviewed the role of external actors beyond that of informing strategy. Because all three community colleges also used external actors in an advisory capacity to inform programmatic content, there appeared to be elements of passivity among external actors.

My study, like that of Mohr and Spekman (1994) illustrated the various ways that external actors were active without delving into exactly which external actors were involved and to what extent. Taking this information into account, the configuration perspective appeared to best describe the participating institutions. In the configuration perspective external actors may be active or passive depending on organizational context.

Strategic choice. This broadened perspective grouped institutions according to whether the institutional strategy was either narrowly or broadly defined. Because participating institutions began the strategic planning process by "broadly defining" each institutions MVVE, it appeared that the strategic choice was broadly defined (CC3-DIR, Interview). As the strategy trickled down into department and individual plans the strategies were very narrow (e.g., CC3-DIR, Interview). The only Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 strategic perspective that recognized this delimiting practice was the configuration perspective. Consistent with Peterson (1997), this perspective indicated that strategy can be narrowly or broadly defined depending on the organization's structure, context, or processes.

Strategic formation. This broadened perspective grouped strategic perspectives according to whether formulation processes are descriptive or prescriptive. As discussed previously the prescriptive/descriptive debate has divided strategic planning research. Where process research is focused on "how" strategy is formulated (i.e., prescriptive) and content research is focused on "what" strategy is being described (i.e., descriptive).

Institutions in my study were consistent with Brim (1962) who stated that there is a continued process of prescribing strategy before describing strategy. The strategic planning processes depicted in Systems portfolios along with institutional documentation on how to plan was certainly prescriptive. Yet, there were descriptive nuances especially with respect to the norms of SPCs. Therefore, institutions in my study appeared to encompass both prescriptive and descriptive methods of strategy formulation. The only one of Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 strategic perspectives that encompassed both formats was the configuration perspective.

As discussed earlier, some of the broadened perspectives may be outside the institution's control. Certainly for accreditation purposes some elements of the strategic planning process must be prescriptive in nature. Additionally, measures of effectiveness and data driven decision making are mandatory to being a continuous quality improvement organization. However, the institutions in my study appear to use prescriptive processes as a frame and then work creatively within those processes to work innovatively.

Although all three institutions in my study drew on more than one of Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 strategic perspectives, most institutions appeared to follow the configuration approach to strategic planning formulation. Hutzschenreuter and

Kleindienst (2006) stated that "the benefit of configurational is its potential to offer more useful and complete explanations of complex phenomenon such as strategy processes than that provided by simple bivariate descriptions" (p. 695). Miller (1987) found that the configuration perspective allows the "variables of strategy, structure, and environment interact to form common configurations. Such configurations richly describe organizations revealing their complex, gestalt and systematic nature" (p. 686). Indeed, the formulation of strategy among the institutions in my study was a complex construction of structure (e.g., organizational structure, context, and stakeholders) and environment (e.g., institution's environment and its relationship to that environment).

The result that the configuration perspective was the most used perspective among participating institutions is consistent with previous research (i.e., Dess, Newport, & Rasheed, 1993; 1987; Mintzberg et al., 1998). These researchers found the configuration perspective to be the most dominant among firms. Among higher education researchers (i.e., Peterson, 1997) the configuration perspective is akin to contextual planning. Contextual planning is a more holistic approach to strategic planning which combines long-range planning (i.e., MVVE) with strategic planning (i.e., response to macro environment) with contextual planning (i.e., redesigning organizational context/culture) (Peterson, 1997).

Research Question 3: Value of Strategic Planning

As discussed in Chapter 4, all three of the institutions in my study believed that strategic planning had significantly benefitted their institution. The benefit of strategic planning was that it aligned institutional priorities, perception, perspectives, processes, and personnel.

Priorities. Those institutions without a strategic planning process are susceptible to conflicting stakeholder needs (Fernandez & Rainey, 2006). Institutions who do not plan strategically lack focus. Like Morrill (2010) who stated, "the proposed centrality of identity and vision in the work of strategy may seem obvious, but many institutions failed to capitalize on the significant as a way to transform their [strategic planning] process into a vehicle for strategic leadership" (p. 67). As some of my study's participants (CC3-DIR and CC2-CAO) lamented, institutions without a strategic planning focus may undertake multiple unrelated projects that lack synergy simply for the sake of pursuing a noteworthy initiative or to meet accreditation requirements.

It appeared that the institutions in my study would engage in strategic planning regardless of accreditation mandates. Hinton (2012) discussed the mandate by the HLC that institutions must have a strategic plan. She stated that many institutions fell prey to accreditation mandates and would often create several plans (i.e., academic, facilities, and information technology) and try to pass such plans off as the institution's strategic plan. Without a firm, comprehensive, strategic planning process these "add-on" undertakings often fail (Hinton, 2012; Szulanski & Amin, 2001).

Consistent with Toma's (2010), observation that the loosely-coupled nature of higher education means that different parts of the organization may be pursuing different priorities, the institutions in my study use strategic planning to focus their strategic agendas and avoid dilution of their institution's primary directive (i.e., MVVE). Among my study's participants strategic planning has given the institutions the ability to prioritize endeavors and efficiently leverage resources (Hamel & Prahalad, 1994).

Perception. Contrary to Morrill's (2010) statement that many administrators see

strategic planning as a "colossal waste of time . . [and that strategic planning] . . . fails to make any difference in the way organizations actually do things" (p. xvii). All of the administrators in my study perceive that their institution's strategic planning process is necessary to the sustainability of their institution. In fact, all three CCs believe that strategic planning should permeate every facet of the organization (Kazeroony, 2012). Institutional leaders in my study appear to share Mintzberg's (2004) notion that strategy is embedded and circular in everyday practice and want every stakeholder to be able to see their place in the organization's strategy.

Among my study's participants, strategic planning is integral to their institutional culture. This is an important attribute of planning as "culture forms the superglue that bonds an organization, unites people, and helps an enterprise accomplish desired ends" (Kazeroony, 2012, p. 34). My findings suggest that the distinctive community colleges in my study were able to overcome what Swenk (1999) referred to as the "inconsistencies between the values of the academic culture and the underlying conceptual basis of strategic planning--its business/rational-based process" (p. 1). Perhaps it is because these institutions are not using the business/rational-based process (i.e., design, planning, and positioning perspectives) but rather the configuration perspective.

Perspectives. The internal areas evaluated during the foundation phase of strategic planning appear to align most clearly with Mintzberg et al. (1998) configuration perspectives. Mintzberg et al. (1998) indicated that the configuration perspective is highly contextual. "Organizations functioned effectively because they put different characteristics together in complementary ways—for example, a certain kind of planning with a certain form of structuring with a certain style of leading" (p. 306).

The two main components of the configuration perspective are configuration and transformation. Configuration is concerned with the organization and context while transformation describes the decision making process. In the configuration perspective stable strategy occurs in given "states." These states are occasionally interrupted and the organization adopts "quantum change" to move to a different, more stable condition (Mintzberg et al., 1998). CC3-P, and to a lesser extent, CC1-P spoke about the changing nature of higher education. In fact CC3-P eluded to the fact that quantum change is occurring in the higher education industry. These changes echo Rowley et al.'s (1997), statement that the "unrestricted commercialization in higher education [means that] effective new directions for colleges must be identified" (p. xv). CC2-P appeared to take a more incremental approach to change. Like Gladwell (2008) who sees innovation around the edges, beyond the neat classifications, the community colleges in my study are at the edge of the configuration perspective. The participating colleges appear to fully embrace the configuration portion of this perspective, and may over time, have to welcome the transformation portion of this perspective as well.

Processes. Like Mintzberg et al. (2003) I found that at participating institutions, the ten perspectives were not different parts of the process of strategy, but in actuality different parts of the same process. My findings agreed with Chandler (1962) who indicated that one must understand both internal and external factors to understand an organization's strategic process.

My findings were also consistent with Heracleous (1998) who stated that the process of planning is perhaps more important than the plan itself. This idea of using strategic planning as a venue to strategic thinking and examining and altering courses of

action with double loop learning may actually be the true value of strategy. Indeed, the community colleges in my study seem to agree with Rowley et al. (1997) who stated that strategic planning is a continuous learning process. They state that strategic planning "is iterative; it involves the development of cognition; and it must be a formal method that will help prevent constituencies from being lost" (p. xv).

Personnel. My research confirms that of Johnson et al. (2003) and Jarzabkowski and Spree (2009) who indicated that strategy is not possessed by a firm, but is something that is inherent in people working in the firm. The community colleges in my study appear to value the contributions that their personnel make to strategic planning formulation. All three CCs make significant contributions to onboarding new employees and professional development activities.

Kazeroony (2012) created a list, based on the work of Blanchard, O'Connor, and Ballard (1997) and Reigle (2001) of 13 recommendations for HE leaders leading organizational change. Of the items listed, all three of my study's community colleges in my study appeared to embrace each item. Each institution used a belief system (i.e., MVVE), where leaders were "living symbols" (p. 53) of the organization's culture. I was able to witness leaders together with constituents "celebrating progress and work accomplishments" (p. 54). Additionally, all of the community college presidents discussed the need to engage people who are "highly talented, intelligent, energetic, tenacious, and committed to placing the interests of the organization above their own self-interests" (p. 54). In fact, CC2-DIR and CC3-DIR spoke about the need to ensure that the change agents were "empowered with communication and consultation skills" (p. 54). Moreover, each CC-P indicated that they continually shared their institution's vision

to "convey a sense of urgency by increasing awareness of the need for change" (p. 54), and sought "inclusive involvement and participation" (p. 54) in strategic planning. Both CC1-P and CC3-P spoke about building trust among personnel, and all three CC-Ps spoke of "disseminating information to people in all roles and at all levels throughout the organization" (p. 54). Lastly, all three CC-Ps discussed the need for "imagination, creativity, thoughtful risk taking, and innovative problem solving" (p. 54) among constituents.

I approach the finding that community college leaders perceive that their strategic planning process and perspectives add value to their institution quite cautiously. When asking administrators, who are the individuals responsible for strategic planning, if they find value in their endeavors, a certain amount of showmanship is likely to bias results. Although my study was exploratory and the finding that leaders at distinctive community colleges value their strategic planning process is interesting, it is untrustworthy. The only way to increase the dependability of these results would be to conduct a longitudinal study with these community colleges, incorporate participants outside of administration (i.e., individuals not responsible for strategic planning), and use additional research methods.

Future Studies

My study was exploratory in nature and used one view point. I believe, like Prahalad and Hamel (1994) that "strategy as a field has an abundance of issues which can be studied from a multiplicity of theoretical vantage points" (p. 35). Future studies may be able explore opposing or complementary viewpoints.

Throughout this chapter I have discussed the need for future studies in higher

educational strategic planning. In addition, future studies could examine how underlying processes (i.e., communication, culture, decision making, leadership, and organizational design) impact organizational performance. Future studies could also examine strategy formulation at distinctive institutions using a longitudinal methodology as suggested by Pettigrew et al. (2002).

Limitations

There are numerous limitations based on sample selection, size, and qualitative methodology, and are additional limitations which are too numerous to list. Throughout this chapter I have discussed some of the limitations of my study, this section will those limitations which are most significant to my study.

My study is exploratory in nature and is not meant to be generalized beyond those institutions that participated in my study. My study suffers from the criticism by Huff and Reger (1987) who stated that "researchers have tended to analyze a small cross section of specific individual decisions instead of studying decision making systems or patterns over time." (p. 223). I am fully aware that I traded "generalizability of results for a richer understanding of a few, nonrandom decision situations" (Huff & Reger, 1987, p. 223).

My study, like those of early researchers (i.e., Chandler, 1962) was descriptive of selected industry practices (bounded). Yet my study was able to address the criticism of Rumelt et al. (1991) who declared that earlier strategic planning research was overly prescriptive and never attempted to be analytical.

Another limitation of my study shared by all process researchers is that I relied heavily on secondary accounts. Secondary accounts are susceptible to reconstructive memory errors and as discussed earlier may be susceptible to presenting "best case"

information (Vicente & Brewer, 1993).

I chose to study strategic planning formulation with a micro perspective, with "the close understanding of the myriad, micro activities that make up strategy and strategizing in practice" (Johnson et al., 2003, p. 3). Due to time and resource constraints I was not able to "live with" participants and experience their daily strategic planning activities. Therefore, my research, like many researchers in the process tradition, concentrated on the "organizational level at the expense of the practical activity of those who actually constitute the [strategy] processes" (Johnson et al., 2003, p. 11)

Like earlier synthetic reviews of strategic planning, my study was geographically, historically, and contextually constrained. Longitudinal studies are expensive and time consuming (Ginsberg, 1988; Hutzschenreuter & Kleindienst, 2006).

My study was severely limited by sample selection. In order to more fully explain strategic planning processes and perspectives additional internal constituents (e.g., faculty and lower level administrators) would need to be included. Moreover, I completely disregarded the statements of Fullan and Scott (2009) who stated that students are customers.

Lastly, my study is open to interpretation bias especially with respect to classifying Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) broadened perspectives. As Gharajedagi and Ackoff (1984) determined that there are myriads of social systems which exist between the categories that I constructed. For example, community colleges may have varying degrees of mechanistic and organic cultures. For example, an organization's structure is too complex to be classified as either mechanistic or organic. I agree with Miller (1981) who stated that "Reality is too complex to be explained by simple bivariate relationships"

(p. 235), and to lump organizations into one particular category does not recognize the complexity of organizations. However, as stated previously, this study is exploratory in nature. The goal of this study was to provide higher educational leaders, and perhaps strategy practitioners, insight into how AQIP community colleges, selected as distinctive with respect to their strategic planning processes and perspectives, formulate strategic plans.

Summary and Conclusions

Originally when I proposed exploring strategic planning processes and perspectives at distinctive community colleges I had no idea that my study would evolve into a research project of such breadth and depth. Navigating these complexities proved to be daunting, but not impossible. Despite the involvedness that my study demanded, I uncovered a great deal of information about how distinct community colleges formulate strategy. This section will summarize what I learned throughout my study and discuss some of the conclusions based on my research findings.

Ambiguity of Strategic Planning

My study concluded that strategic planning is ambiguous, even the definition is vague and open to interpretation. According to Hax and Majluf (1995) strategic planning can be identified by particular actions (e.g., establishing the organizational purpose, defining a competitive domain, etc.). Although these actions capture the essence of strategic planning there is no one agreed upon definition of strategic planning.

The idea that "you will know it when you see it," means that by its very nature different individuals interpret strategic planning differently. Interpretations are dependent on an individual's background, experiences, educational background, and culture. For

example, if I asked one individual to imagine a blue sky, the hue and shade of that color is interpreted "in the mind" of the individual. Certainly, they understand the color "blue" but the nuances of the color, due to the lack of specificity, means that the "gaps" must be filled in by the mind of the individual. Strategic planning is such a phenomenon. My study sought to fill some of the "gaps" that exist with respect to strategic planning process and perspectives.

While the ambiguity of strategic planning is familiar, and even debated among the strategy-as-practice and strategy-as-theory researchers, it appears that the cryptic nature of strategic planning has spilled over into the concept of "how" to plan strategically. Is there a best way to plan? If so, what is the recipe? I have concluded that to prescribe how to do strategic planning does not honor the complexities of strategic planning and the uniqueness of each community college, its members, and its leaders.

Process of Strategic Planning

I have concluded that there is no one specific recipe for successful strategic planning formulation. Successful strategic planning is a by-product of individuals, organizations, and context. What works at one community college may not work at another because strategic planning is *dependent* on the organization, its members, and its leaders. These groups in turn embody the organization's leadership, communication, culture, decision-making, mode of control, and organizational design. All of these factors are unique to each community college. Although there are customary strategic planning practices, the "value" that these practices yield will differ across community colleges because each institution has varying types of organizations, members, and leaders. Therefore to prescribe to one method of formulating strategy, does little to advance the

practice of strategic planning.

      I concluded that despite the contextual nature of strategic planning, some community colleges have successfully resolved the ambiguity surrounding how to plan strategically. These colleges approach strategic planning as a process. They study the customary practices and business models and then, and perhaps most importantly, customize these practices and models to fit with their unique organization setting (i.e., organization, leaders, and members). Once organizations customize these practices and models to their organizational setting, they embark on a continuous improvement process to ensure that their strategic processes remain relevant to their organizations' setting. To that end, there are recipes for success, but leaders must evaluate these recipes based on an organization's setting.

Perspectives of Strategic Planning

      I have concluded that the Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) configuration perspective is the most relied upon perspective among distinctive community colleges. Given that each organization is unique, it is consistent that each community college would choose a perspective that does not restrict the organization to a fixed process that cannot adapt to the changes in the organizational setting. The configuration perspective allows for fluidity depending on the organization, its members, its leaders, and its relationship to the macro environment.

Value of Strategic Planning

      The impetus for strategic planning appears to make a difference in the benefit derived from the process. I have concluded that if an institution engages in strategic planning simply to produce a document for accreditation purposes, they will have missed

an opportunity to align their organization's priorities, perceptions, perspectives, processes, and personnel, integrate the principles of continuous quality improvement, and capitalize on their institution's unique organizational context.

Indeed, the type of strategic planning formulation described in my study is not for the strategic planning skeptics. Leaders embarking on this significant organizational development process must be prepared to embed strategic planning into all college processes. They must invest significant resources in the areas of communication, decision-making, and leadership). Likewise, they must be prepared to remain aware of their institution's culture, and change organizational design if needed. All of this investment will take time to pay off. Significant alignment of processes and organizational improvement will take time. But like the institutions in my study I have concluded that the investment is worth the reward.

I recommend that higher education leaders review my study's distinctive community colleges' strategic planning processes and perspectives. These leaders should note that these are not recipes to advance institutions, but rather as ideas that they could acclimatize to their own institutions. Additionally, higher education leaders could evaluate what they perceive to be their strategic planning perspectives, and whether these perspectives are consistent with their organizational context. Lastly, higher education leaders can use what distinctive community college leaders in my study viewed as the benefits of strategic planning to determine if their institutions' processes and perspectives are creating such value.

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APPENDIX A

Modification of the Goodman and Willekins' Matrix

The first theoretical framework that I used in my study was Goodman and Willekens' (2001) Institutional Accreditation/Strategic Planning matrix. The Goodman and Willekens' matrix was used in Phase I of my study (i.e., archival review). Updating the Goodman and Willekens' framework was important to my study because the Institutional Accreditation/Strategic Planning process demonstrates that a document review of accreditation material was an appropriate first step to explore strategic planning processes in community colleges.

As part of a case study of Estrella Mountain Community College, Goodman and Willekens' (2001) found that the strategic planning process at Estrella was closely linked to "NCA's [North Central Accreditation] five Criteria for Accreditation" (p. 294). Appendix A; Figure 1 illustrates the linkage between NCA criteria and components of the strategic planning process.

North Central Accreditation (NCA) criteria	Link to strategic planning	Potential impact on strategic planning
Criterion one: The institution has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education.	Mission Purposes (Goals) Strategy	Serves as a thorough review, and may result in changes to mission and purposes (goals). In extreme cases, changes to mission and purposes may cause the institution to reevaluate the programs and services offered to its publics.
Criterion two: The institution has effectively organized the human, financial, and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes.	SWOT Budget planning Decision making processes Strategy	Identifies the institution's strengths and weaknesses, related to all forms of human, physical, and financial resources. Provides and evaluation of the resource allocation process that may result in changes to budgeting and decision-making systems.
Criterion three: The institution is accomplishing its educational and other purposes.	SWOT Budget planning Institutional effectiveness and assessment	Serves as an internal scan that can identify the institution's strengths and weaknesses related to achievement of the College's Mission Purposes.

North Central Accreditation (NCA) criteria	Link to strategic planning	Potential impact on strategic planning
Criterion four: The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.	SWOT Budget planning Decision making process Strategy Institutional effectiveness and assessment	Identifies strategic issues that may challenge the institution over time. Provides an evaluation of the planning, budgeting, and decision-making process that can result in improvements to program and service delivery.
Criterion five: The institution demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships.	SWOT Values	Serves as a check on the institution's integrity and values system, may result in changes to an institution's values and/or mission.

Appendix A; Figure 1. Linkage between North Central Accreditation (NCA) criteria and strategic planning.

In November 2000, the North Central Association (NCA) became the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The mission of the HLC was to "serve the common good by assuring and advancing the quality of higher education" (Higher Learning Commission, 2003, p. 1.1-2). "In 1999, the Commission received a $1.5 million grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts to assist in its proposal to design and implement an alternative accreditation process based on quality improvement principles" (Higher Learning Commission, 2003, p. 1.1-4). Three years later, the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) accreditation pathway was available to institutions seeking accreditation/reaccreditation with the HLC (Higher Learning Commission, 2003). The AQIP accreditation pathway was based on nine criteria

- helping students learn;

- accomplishing other distinct objectives;

- understanding students' and other stakeholders' needs;

- valuing people;

- leading and communicating;

- supporting institutional operations;

- measuring effectiveness;

- planning continuous improvement; and

- building collaborative relationships (Higher Learning Commission, 2003).

Appendix A; Figure 2 illustrates how the original five North Central Accreditation

(NCA) criteria are reflected in the new Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP)

criteria.

The Commission's Criteria for Accreditation		Covered in AQIP Criteria								
		Helping students learn	Accomplishing other distinctive objectives	Understanding students' and other stakeholders' needs	Valuing people	Leading and communicating	Supporting institutional operations	Measuring effectiveness	Planning continuous improvement	Building collaborative relationships
NCA Criteria	Definition	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Criterion One: Mission and integrity.	The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	

The Commission's Criteria for Accreditation		Covered in AQIP Criteria								
		Helping students learn	Accomplishing other distinctive objectives	Understanding students' and other stakeholders' needs	Valuing people	Leading and communicating	Supporting institutional operations	Measuring effectiveness	Planning continuous improvement	Building collaborative relationships
NCA Criteria	Definition	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Criterion Two: Preparing for the future.	The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Criterion Three: Student learning and effective teaching	The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		
Criterion Four: Acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge	The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			

The Commission's Criteria for Accreditation		Covered in AQIP Criteria								
		Helping students learn	Accomplishing other distinctive objectives	Understanding students' and other stakeholders' needs	Valuing people	Leading and communicating	Supporting institutional operations	Measuring effectiveness	Planning continuous improvement	Building collaborative relationships
NCA Criteria	Definition	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Criterion Five: Engagement and service	As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituents and serves them in ways both value.		✓		✓	✓		✓		✓

Appendix A; Figure 2. Alignment of original NCA criteria in AQIP criteria.

The NCA criteria that were used by Goodman and Willekens' (2001) Institutional

Accreditation/Strategic Planning process matrix were bound by analytic context. Criteria

one and two related to planning, three and four pertained to student learning and research,

and Criterion five addressed stakeholder engagement. Although each of these processes

contributed to the overall mission of an institution, the categorical criteria were

thematically based, which suggested that some of the criteria were more closely linked to

strategic planning than others.

In the AQIP accreditation pathway each of the nine criteria are purposefully

interrelated. Each of the criteria are designed to illicit responses from institutional

members in order to examine how the institution is fulfilling its stated mission. The nine

criteria systematically review an institution's "systems and processes" by posing

questions that relate to the institution's mission (Higher Learning Commission, 2003, p.

6.2-1). Unlike the NCA criterion, different phases of strategic planning (i.e., formulation,

implementation, and evaluation) are equally represented in each of the nine AQIP

criterions.

As part of AQIP accreditation, each institution ". . . assembles a Systems portfolio with broad faculty and staff involvement" (Higher Learning Commission, 2003, p. 6.3-2). A Systems portfolio is similar to an institutional self-study. Institutional members review internal processes by answering specific questions in each of the nine criteria. Because AQIP focuses on continuous quality improvement, the final questions in each criterion ask institutional members to measure and subsequently report on the effectiveness of their processes. Institutional members must also articulate plans on how to improve these processes (Higher Learning Commission, 2003).

Phase I of my study relied on Goodman and Willekens' (2001) assertion that there is a linkage between accreditation and strategic planning. The AQIP accreditation pathway appears more closely aligned to strategic planning processes than the NCA accreditation that Goodman and Willekens' studied. Appendix A; Figure 3 illustrates how the nine AQIP criteria are linked to the specific phases of strategic planning formulation, or those factors that influence strategic planning perspectives and processes.

Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) Criteria	Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) Principles	Link to formulation phase of strategic planning
1. Helping students learn.	Criterion one identifies the shared **purpose** of all higher education organizations and is accordingly the pivot of any institutional **analysis**. This criterion focuses on the teaching-learning processes within a **formal** instructional context, yet also addresses how the **entire organization** contributes to student learning and overall student development. It examines processes and systems related to • Learning objectives • Mission-driven student learning and development • Intellectual climate • Academic programs and courses • Student preparation • Key issues such as technology and diversity • Program and course delivery • Faculty and staff roles • Teaching and learning effectiveness • Course sequencing and scheduling • Learning and co-curricular support • Student assessment • Measures • Analysis of results • Improvement efforts	Phase 1: Foundation Phase 2: Position Influencer: objectives
2. Accomplishing other distinctive objectives.	Criterion two addresses the processes that contribute to the achievement of the major objectives that complement student learning and **fulfill other portions of the mission**. Depending on the **organization's character**, the Criterion examines processes and systems related to • Identification of other distinctive objectives • Alignment of other distinctive objectives • Faculty and staff roles • Assessment and review of objectives • Measures • Analysis of results • Improvement efforts	Phase 1: Foundation Phase 2: Position
3. Understanding students' and other stakeholders' needs	Criterion three examines how the organization works actively to understand **student and other stakeholder needs**. It examines processes and systems related to • Student and stakeholder identification • Student and stakeholder requirements • Analysis of student and stakeholder needs • Relationship building with students and stakeholders • Complaint collection, analysis, and resolution • Determining satisfaction of students and stakeholders •	Phase 1: Foundation Phase 2: Position Influencers: Culture and motivation

Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) Criteria	Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) Principles	Link to formulation phase of strategic planning
4. Valuing people.	Criterion four **explores commitment to the development of faculty, staff, and administrators**, since the efforts of all are required for success. It examines processes and systems related to • Work and job environment • Workforce needs • Training initiatives • Job competencies and characteristics • Recruitment, hiring, and retention practices • Work processes and activities • Training and development • Personnel evaluation • Recognition, reward, compensation, and benefits • Motivation factors • Satisfaction, health and safety, and well-being •	Phase 1: Foundation Phase 2: Position Influencers: motivation, culture, and objectives
5. Leading and communicating	Criterion five addresses how the **leadership and communications structures, networks, and processes guide the organization in setting directions, making decisions, seeking future opportunities, and building and sustaining a learning environment**. It examines processes and systems related to • Leading activities • Communicating activities • Alignment of leadership system practices • Institutional values and expectations • Direction setting • Future opportunity seeking • Decision making • Use of data • Leadership development and sharing • Succession planning	Phase 1: Foundation Phase 2: Position Phase 3: Direction Influencers: Control, culture, decision making, motivation, objectives, and power.
6. Supporting institutional operations	Criterion six addresses the **support processes** that help provide an environment in which learning can thrive. It examines processes and systems related to • Student support • Administrative support • Identification of needs • Contribution to student learning and accomplishing other distinctive objectives • Day-to-day operations • Use of data	Phase 1:Foundation Phase 2: Position Influencer: Decision making

Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) Criteria	Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) Principles	Link to formulation phase of strategic planning
7. Measuring effectiveness.	Criterion seven examines **how the organization collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement**. It examines processes and systems related to • Collection, storage, management, and the use of information and data at the institutional and departmental/unit levels • Institutional measures of effectiveness • Information and data alignment with institutional needs and directions • Comparative information and data • Analysis of information and data • Effectiveness of information system and processes	Phase 2: Position Influencers: Control, decision making, and objectives
8. Planning continuous improvement.	Criterion eight examines the **planning processes and how strategies and action plans are helping achieve the mission and vision.** It examines processes and systems related to • Institutional vision • Planning • Strategies and action plans • Coordination and alignment of strategies and action plans • Measures and performance projections • Resource needs • Faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities	Phase 1: Foundation Phase 2: Position Phase 3: Direction Influencers: Control, culture, decision making, motivation, objectives, and power.
9. Building collaborative relationships	Criterion nine examines the **organization's relationships** – current and potential – to analyze how they contribute to accomplishing the **mission**. It examines processes and systems related to • Identification of key internal and external collaborative relationships • Alignment of key collaborative relationships • Relationship creation, prioritization, and building • Needs identification • Internal relationships	Phase 1: Foundation Phase 2: Position Influencers: Culture, decision making, and power.

Appendix A; Figure 3. AQIP criteria linked to strategic planning.

APPENDIX B

Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's Ten Perspectives Framework/AQIP

Crosswalk

The second theoretical framework that was used in my study was Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives framework. Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel conducted a field review of the literature and practices of strategic planning. Drawing from over 2,000 different literary publications and interviews with consulting firms, Mintzberg et al. (1998) found "ten distinct points of view" on strategy formation (p. 4). Their book, *Strategy safari: A guided tour through the wilds of strategic management* (1989), summarized, examined, and analyzed these 10 perspectives to "extract both their limitations and their contributions" (p. 4). According to Mintzberg et al. (1998) all of the 10 perspectives could "be found in the literature, often in very clear delineated pockets . . . But most were, or have been, equally evident in practice, both within organizations and from the consulting firms that serve them" (p. 7).

Because the work of Mintzberg et al. represented a comprehensive review of strategic planning perspectives, I used the framework as an exploratory tool during the document review phase of my study. During the second phase (i.e., semi-structured interviews) I used the information gleaned from the Systems portfolios to hone in on themes that had emerged.

Many community college leaders were not aware of Mintzberg et al. (1998) 10 perspectives framework. To overcome this significant limitation, I piloted the archival review using one community college's AQIP Systems portfolio. The results of the pilot indicated that Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 strategic perspectives framework needed to be modified for use with a community college's AQIP Systems portfolio. By broadening the 10 perspectives into their underlying themes, I used these broadened themes as a tool to extract information about institutional perspectives (Landrum, 2008). Additionally, by

expanding the 10 perspectives into nominal variable continuums I was able to perform a

document analysis using those widened themes in order to discover if any of Mintzberg et

al.'s (1998) perspectives were used as a basis for strategy formulation. The development

of continuums was prevalent in strategic planning research (Hax & Majluf, 1984;

Landrum, 2008). The broadening of the 10 perspectives framework was also

methodologically sound, as Mintzberg et al. stated that "each of these perspectives is, in

one sense, narrow an overstated" (p. 4). The conceptual framework of how the broadened

Mintzberg et al. themes were used to crosswalk between Mintzberg et al.'s 10

perspectives and the AQIP principles and questions is depicted in Figure Appendix B;

Figure 1.
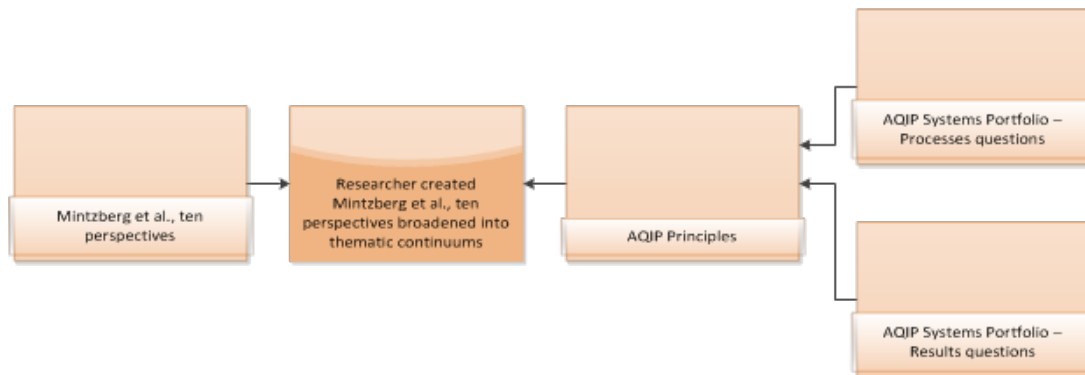
Appendix B; Figure 1. Conceptual framework used to crosswalk Mintzberg et al; 10
perspectives to Academic Quality Improvement Principles and Questions.

The intent of the document analysis portion of my study (i.e., Phase I) was to

explore the research questions. The sole purpose of the document analysis was to provide

me with information about the organization (i.e., leadership, culture, design, strategic

intent and focus). I also uncovered indications of strategic planning perspectives that

were further explored and verified during the semi-structured interviews (i.e., Phase II).

Using the original framework by Mintzberg et al. and updating it to reflect peer

reviewed literature from 1999 to 2012, each perspective differed significantly in 19 areas.

A nominal scale was developed that I used to determine the extent to which an

institution's AQIP Systems portfolio addressed the broadened areas. Appendix B; Figure

2 lists each of the 19 areas, definitions, and scale values.

	Area	Definition	Scale
1	External environment	How is the external environment described in the AQIP Systems portfolio?	Stable – unpredictable
2	Role of external actors	According to the AQIP Systems portfolio how were external actors involved in formulating strategy or action projects?	Passive – active
3	Focus of the strategic plan	According to the AQIP Systems portfolio, what appeared to be the focus of the strategic plan?	1 – Individual 2 – Organization 3 – Environment
4	Level of complexity	According to the AQIP Systems portfolio, what is the level of complexity of the strategic plan?	Simple - complex
5	Organizational structure	What is the organizational design as described by the AQIP Systems portfolio?	Mechanistic - organic
6	Frame of reference	According to the AQIP Systems portfolio what was apparent frame that was used to craft strategy?	Logical – imaginative
7	Central actor	According to the AQIP Systems portfolio who was/were the central actor(s) in strategy formulation?	1 – Board 2 – Board & CEO 3 – Board, CEO, and top management 4. Board, CEO, top management, and internal 5. Board, CEO, top management, internal, and external

	Area	Definition	Scale
8	Embedded approach to strategic planning	According to the AQIP Systems portfolio what is the apparent approach to strategic planning/action projects?	Intended – emergent
9	Cultural artifact	According to the AQIP Systems portfolio which organizational culture best represents this college?	1 – Clan 2 – Adhocracy 3 – Hierarchy 4 – Market
10	Leadership continuity	According to the AQIP Systems portfolio what is the tenure of the institution's president and board of trustee members?	Recent – established
11	Leadership background	According to the AQIP Systems portfolio, what is the leadership background of the college's president?	1 – Architecture 2 – Cybernetics 3 – Military 4 – Economics 5 – Psychology 6 - Mathematics 7 – Political science 8 - Anthropology 9 - Biology 10 – History 11 – Other
12	Premise of the strategy	According to the AQIP Systems portfolio, what appeared to be the ultimate goal of the institution's strategy?	1 Establish a distinctive competence 2 Capitalize on organizational resources 3 Emphasize organizational values
13	Strategy formation	According to the AQIP Systems portfolio, what format does the institution's strategic plan/action projects employ?	Prescriptive – descriptive

	Area	Definition	Scale
14	Strategic choice	According to the AQIP Systems portfolio, how is the institution's strategy defined?	Narrowly – broadly
15	Formality	According to the AQIP Systems portfolio, what is the level of formality used in composing the strategic plan?	Formal – informal
16	Performance indicators	According to the AQIP Systems portfolio, to what extent does the institution rely on single loop or double loop learning?	Single loop learning – double loop learning
17	Evidence based inquiry	According to the AQIP Systems portfolio, to what extent does the institution use evidence and research in strategic planning?	Instrumental view – enlightenment view
18	Ethics or social responsibility	According to the AQIP Systems portfolio, how important does the organization view ethical conduct and/or social responsibility?	1 – Organization 2 - Society
19	Decision making direction	According to the AQIP Systems portfolio, what appeared to be the direction of decision making within the organization?	1 Top down 2 Bottom up

Appendix B; Figure 2. Ten perspectives framework broadened into specific areas.

After delving more deeply into each of the areas, some of the areas (i.e., cultural artifact, leadership continuity, performance indicators, evidence based inquiry, and ethics/social responsibility) were not specifically addressed by the literature that pertained to Mintzberg et al.'s (1998) 10 perspectives framework. These areas were added after the pilot study and were based on AQIP standards. Upon further investigation, these areas appeared to be a byproduct of institutional accreditation mandates rather than a result of a particular planning perspective.

Another area (i.e., cultural artifact) was only addressed indirectly by the literature. Researchers discussed culture as an institutional phenomenon rather than a strategic perspective. To force fit liturgical themes into a particular organizational theory seemed

inconsistent with the care that was used to formulate the other areas.

Both the indirect and institutional mandated areas (i.e., cultural artifact, leadership continuity, performance indicators, evidence based inquiry, and ethics/social responsibility) were removed from the document analysis portion of my study. However, these areas were later integrated into Phase II (i.e., semi-structured interviews) of my study. These areas were later used to examine whether they influenced the perspectives that community college leaders relied upon to formulate strategy.

Appendix B; Figure 3 illustrates how each of the remaining 14 areas (i.e., central actor, decision making direction, embedded approach to strategic planning, external environment, premise of the strategy, formality, frame used to craft strategy, leadership background, level of plan's complexity, organizational structure, primary focus of the strategic plan, role of external actors, strategy choice, and strategic formulation) align with Mintzberg et al. (1998) 10 strategic perspectives. Arranged alphabetically, each of these contextual areas were used a lens to study an institution's Systems portfolio. The results gave me insight into which, if any, of Mintzberg et al. (1998) 10 strategic perspectives institutional leaders used to formulate strategy and provided me with probative information in answering what processes and planning perspectives were being utilized by AQIP accredited community colleges

Areas	Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives	Description from literature
Central actor	Design	The central actors in organizations basing strategy on the design perspective are the leaders of the institution (i.e., Board of directors and President) (Elfring & Volberda, 2001).
	Planning	The central actors in organizations basing strategy on the planning perspective are staff planners (i.e., Board, CEO, top management, and internal individuals) who use systematic forecasting to control processes, with top management approving the final product (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Positioning	The central actors in organizations basing strategy on the positioning are analysts (i.e., Board, CEO, top management, and external individuals) who position the organization against competition, the data gathering may take place by an external entity. (Gregory, 2008; Mintzberg, 1990).
	Entrepreneurial	The central actors in organizations basing strategy on the entrepreneurial perspective are the leaders (i.e., Board, CEO, and top management) of the organization. This perspective focuses on the leader's "most innate of mental states and processes – intuition, judgment, wisdom, experience, and insight" (Gregory, 2008, p. 3).
	Cognitive	The central actor in strategy formation is the individual. However, Janis (1972) indicated, when the mental models are shared by a group it can lead to groupthink during strategy formulation.
	Learning	In the learning perspective there is no central actor, the entire organization (i.e., Board, CEO, top management, internal, and external individuals) create strategy. "Although the top management team is in charge, the organization contributes via the activities of its sub-systems and particularly the activities of its front-line and middle managers" (Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008, p. 46).
	Power	The central actors in organizations basing strategy on the power perspective are those individuals that have deliberate intentions; these individuals could be internal or external to the organization (i.e., Board, CEO, top management, internal and external individuals). As the strategy unfolds, individuals in the organization achieve their political positions (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Cultural	The central actors in organizations basing strategy on the cultural perspective are all organizational members (i.e., Board, CEO, top management, internal and external individuals). Strategy formation is a process of social interactions based on shared beliefs within the organization (Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008).
	Environmental	The central actor in organizations basing strategy on the environmental perspective is the environment. According to Hannan & Freeman (1977), the environment chooses successful strategy. The role of leadership is to interpret the environment and ensure that the organization adapts accordingly (Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008).
	Configuration	The central actors in organizations basing strategy on the configuration perspective are top managers who are responsible for choosing organizational structure and processes (Miles & Snow, 2003).

Areas	Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives	Description from literature
Decision making direction	Design	Strategic decisions in organizations relying on the design perspective to formulate strategy are top down. Strategic decision making is centralized with the strategist who is usually the president or director (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Planning	Strategic decisions in organizations relying on the planning perspective to formulate strategy are top down due to the heavy reliance on formal data analysis and the fact that top management approves all strategic decisions (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Positioning	Strategic decisions in organizations relying on the positioning perspective to formulate strategy are top down. Strategic decisions are selected from "ready-made generic strategies" that would give the organization the appropriate position given their context (Landrum, 2008, p. 129).
	Entrepreneurial	Strategic decisions in organizations relying on the entrepreneurial perspective to formulate strategy are top down. Strategic decisions are firmly based in the vision of the leader.
	Cognitive	Strategic decisions in organizations relying on the cognitive perspective to formulate strategy are top down, and based on the strategist's interpretation of the environment. Strategists may suffer from bounded rationality thereby limiting their potential to make optimal strategic decisions (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Learning	Strategic decisions in organizations relying on the learning perspective to formulate strategy may be either top down, or bottom up based on strategic successes or failures. Management guides strategy by eliminating poor processes and integrating best practices (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Power	Strategic decisions in organizations relying on the power perspective to formulate strategy are top down, but may be heavily influenced by bottom up decision making. Strategic decisions are made by various people pursuing their own agenda. "The organization is able to make decisions but it cannot seem to make strategies" (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 241)
	Cultural	Strategic decisions in organizations relying on the cultural perspective to formulate strategy are bottom up based on the organization's collective cognition. Strategy becomes a "process of social interactions based on shared beliefs that exist within the organization" (Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008, p. 48).
	Environmental	Strategic decisions in organizations relying on the environmental perspective to formulate strategy can be either top down or bottom up depending on who has the information about the environment. Strategic decisions are based on an organization's ability to "acquire economic resources and convert them into symbolic ones" (i.e., reputation, interactions with stakeholders) (Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008, p. 51).
	Configuration	Strategic decisions in organizations relying on the configuration perspective to formulate strategy are top down. Strategic decisions are made by top management who make numerous complex choices as they seek to solve the entrepreneurial, engineering, and administrative problems in strategy.

Areas	Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives	Description from literature
Embedded approach to strategic planning	Design	Organizations employing the design perspective to formulate strategy use an intended approach. Strategy is deliberate with centralized behavior (Andrews, 1971; Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Positioning	Organizations employing the positioning perspective to formulate strategy use an intended approach. Strategy is intended based on an analytical process that is articulated prior to implementation (Elfring & Volberda, 2001; Mintzberg, 1990).
	Entrepreneurial	Organizations employing the entrepreneurial perspective to formulate strategy use either an intended or emergent approach. The "central concept is vision, which is a mixture of deliberate (in its broad lines) and emergent (in its detail)" (Mintzberg et al., 1998; Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008, p. 18).
	Cognitive	Organizations employing the cognitive perspective to formulate strategy use an incremental and emerging approach (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Learning	Organizations employing the learning perspective to formulate strategy use an emergent approach. Strategy making is a "messy process" of incremental steps when reviewed en masse a discernible pattern emerges (Hajipour, Zolfagharian, & Chegin, 2011; Landrum, 2008; Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Power	Organizations employing the power perspective to formulate strategy use an emergent approach that allow strategies to originate from political actions (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Cultural	Organizations employing the cultural perspective to formulate strategy use an intended approach that is rooted in the organization's collective membership (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Environmental	Organizations employing the environmental perspective to formulate strategy use an emergent approach. The embedded approach to strategy is emergent. As the environment changes, the organization must adapt.
	Configuration	Organizations employing the planning perspective to formulate strategy use either an emergent or intended approach.

Areas	Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives	Description from literature
External Environment	Design	Leaders using the design perspective to formulate strategy view the environment as stable. The environment plays a passive role in strategy formulation (Elfring & Volberda, 2001; Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Planning	Leaders relying on the planning perspective to formulate strategy view the environment as relatively stable (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Positioning	Leaders basing strategy formulation on the positioning perspective analyze the environment in terms of economic variables which may be stable or instable (Mintzberg, 1990).
	Entrepreneurial	Leaders predicating strategy formulation on the entrepreneurial perspective believe that the environment is maneuverable through influence and manipulation (Elfring & Volberda, 2001). Entrepreneurs with a vision determine environment, not vice versa (Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008).
	Cognitive	Leaders relying on the cognitive perspective to formulate strategy use their mind to impose stability on the environment. What gets noticed, or acted upon in the environment is dependent on the frameworks in the head of the strategist as they interpret the environment (Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008).
	Learning	Leaders establishing strategy formulation on the learning perspective view the environment as demanding, complex and unpredictable (Elfring & Volberda, 2001; Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Power	Leaders supporting the power perspective to formulate strategy view the environment as clearly malleable.
	Cultural	Leaders endorsing the cultural perspective for strategy formulation view the environment as incidental (Mintzberg, 1990).
	Environmental	Leaders relying on the environmental perspective to formulate strategy view the environment as either stable or instable. Environments can range from "stable to dynamic; simple to complex; integrated to diversified in terms of its own markets; munificent to hostile" (Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008, p. 50).
	Configuration	Leaders following the configuration perspective to formulate strategy view the environment as relatively stable with periods of instability which may require transformation (Mintzberg et al., 1998).

Areas	Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives	Description from literature
Premise of the strategy	Design	The strategic goal of organizations that use the design perspective to formulate the strategic plan is to form a fit between internal opportunity and external circumstances (Elfring & Volberda, 2001).
	Planning	The strategic goal of organizations that use the planning perspective to formulate the strategic plan is to operationalize planning in an effort to control processes (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Positioning	The strategic goal of organizations that use the positioning perspective to formulate the strategic plan is to establish a distinctive competence (i.e., cost-leadership, differentiation, or focus).
	Entrepreneurial	The strategic goal of organizations that use the entrepreneurial perspective to formulate the strategic plan is to establish the organization's strategic vision as a distinctive competence.
	Cognitive	Strategy is very fluid in organizations that rely on the cognitive perspective. The strategic goal of these organizations is most consistent with capitalizing on the organizational resources (i.e., strategist's causal maps) to provide the organization with a strategy.
	Learning	The strategic goal of organizations that use the learning perspective to formulate the strategic plan is to use learning as a core competency that will give the organization a competitive advantage in the industry (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990; Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008).
	Power	The strategic goal of organizations that use the power perspective to formulate the strategic plan is to develop synergistic relationships with outside organizations through the use of macro power (Pfeffer, 1993). These relationships may position an organization to establish a distinctive competence or capitalize on organizational resources (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Cultural	The strategic goal of organizations that use the cultural perspective to formulate the strategic plan is to create a competitive advantage that is based on the uniqueness of the organizational culture. Strategy "makes use of the ways in which the organization's resources or capabilities are protected and used for competitive advantage" (Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008, p. 49).
	Environmental	The strategic goal of organizations that use the environmental perspective to formulate the strategic plan is to adapt to the external environment. There are a myriad of ways that an organization can adapt to the external environment. "Organizations tend to cluster together in niches, where they remain until resources become scarce or conditions too hostile" (Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008, p. 50).
	Configuration	The strategic goal of organizations that use the configuration perspective to formulate the strategic plan is to preserve stability, adapt to change when needed, and be able to manage transformation without damaging the organization. Strategy formation must adapt according to its own way and context and may take one or more of the 10 other perspectives (Mintzberg et al., 1998).

Areas	Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives	Description from literature
Formality	Design	The level of composition formality of the completed strategic plan under the design perspective is formal. The design perspective is analytical in nature and utilizes a highly formalized process (Ansoff, 1965; Knights & Morgan, 1991).
	Planning	The level of composition formality of the completed strategic plan under the planning perspective is formal. The planning perspective is a more formalized version of the design perspective (Mintzberg et al., 1998; Pearce, Freeman, & Robinson, 1987).
	Positioning	The level of composition formality of the completed strategic plan under the positioning perspective is formal with common positions are selected through a formal study of industry conditions (Porter, 1980).
	Entrepreneurial	The level of composition formality of the completed strategic plan under the entrepreneurial perspective is informal. "The process of strategy formation is not conscious or rational, but owes much to the experience and intuition of the leader" (Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008).
	Cognitive	The level of composition formality of the completed strategic plan under the cognitive perspective is very informal. Strategy is a mental perspective based on judgment, intuition, and creativity (Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008).
	Learning	The level of composition formality of the completed strategic plan under the learning perspective is informal. Strategy formation is often small, incremental steps that can be done in any manner (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Power	The level of composition formality of the completed strategic plan under the power perspective is informal due to the heavy reliance on ambiguity. Followers of this perspective believe that it is impossible to create optimal strategies due to the inherent political processes operating in organizations. According to Mintzberg (1998), "the competing goals of individuals and coalitions ensure that intended strategy will be disturbed and distorted every step of the way" (p. 236).
	Cultural	The level of composition formality of the completed strategic plan under the cultural perspective is informal. Mintzberg et al., (1998) criticize the cultural perspective because it is conceptually vague.
	Environmental	The level of composition formality of the completed strategic plan under the environmental perspective is formal. "Organizations may change their goals or develop new practices . . . in the long run, organizational actors making rational decisions construct around themselves an environment that constrains their ability to change in later years"(DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 148)
	Configuration	The level of composition formality of the completed strategic plan under the configuration perspective can be formal or informal depending on which other perspectives have been combined to compose strategy.

Areas	Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives	Description from literature
Frame used to craft strategy	Design	The frame that organizations following the design perspective use is analytical, fixed, and inflexible (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Planning	The frame that organizations following the planning perspective use is analytical (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Positioning	The frame that organizations following the positioning perspective use is logical and analytical (Mintzberg et al., 1998; Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008).
	Entrepreneurial	The frame that organizations following the entrepreneurial perspective use is imaginative. Strategy is "an embedded process in the mysteries of intuition" (Pelling, 2004, as cited in Hajipour et al., 2011, p. 3).
	Cognitive	The frame that organizations following the cognitive perspective use is imaginative. "This perspective stresses the creative side of the strategy process" (Gregory, 2008, p. 3).
	Learning	The frame that organizations following the learning perspective use is imaginative. Chaos and disorder are a natural part of organizations (Stacey, 2007). Through the chaotic process of learning, leaders who learn from their past actions have the capacity to experiment with new and creative strategic initiatives (Mintzberg et al., 1998; Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008).
	Power	The frame that organizations following the power perspective use is analytical but is based on power bases. New and intended strategies are particularly vulnerable to politics as these changes signal internal shifts in power (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Cultural	The frame that organizations following the cultural perspective use is unique and therefore, imaginative. Strategy is formed through perspectives of the organization and are novel (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Environmental	The frame that organizations following the environmental perspective use may be either analytical or imaginative. Strategy is dependent on how the organization reacts to the environment. Strategy is defined as a position within the market. Organizations must change to fit the environment or be doomed to be "selected out" (Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008).
	Configuration	The frame that organizations following the configuration perspective use may be either analytical or imaginative. Followers of the configuration perspective choose from three types of organizational strategies (i.e., defenders, analyzers, prospectors) depending on their strategy, organizational structure, and processes (Miles & Snow, 2003).

Areas	Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives	Description from literature
Leadership background	Design	The literature did not address leadership background.
	Planning	The leadership background in those organizations that rely on the planning perspective is from systems theory and cybernetics.
	Positioning	The leadership background in those organizations that rely on the positioning perspective is from economics.
	Entrepreneurial	The leadership background in those organizations that rely on the entrepreneurial perspective is from earlier writings in economics(Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Cognitive	The leadership background in those organizations that rely on the cognitive perspective is psychology. This perspective later evolved into the interpretive perspective.
	Learning	The leadership background in those organizations that rely on the learning perspective is psychology.
	Power	The leadership background in those organizations that rely on the power perspective is political science.
	Cultural	The leadership background in those organizations that rely on the cultural perspective is anthropology.
	Environmental	The leadership background in those organizations that rely on the environmental perspective is biology.
	Configuration	The leadership background in those organizations that rely on the configuration perspective is history.

Areas	Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives	Description from literature
Level of plan's complexity	Planning	Strategic planning documentation in organizations relying on the planning perspective to formulate strategy is complex. Planning is operationalized with many controls (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Positioning	Strategic planning documentation in organizations relying on the positioning perspective to formulate strategy is simple. Although the analytical data that forms the basis of the strategy may be complex, organizations choose from three generic approaches (i.e., overall cost leadership, differentiation, and focus) (Porter, 1980).
	Entrepreneurial	Strategic planning documentation in organizations relying on the entrepreneurial perspective to formulate strategy is complex. The strategy can be unclear, "usually seen through metaphor" (Hajipour et al., 2011, p. 3). Charismatic founders or leaders motivate followers to follow a vague vision (Gregory, 2008; Mintzberg & Lampel, 1999).
	Cognitive	Strategic planning documentation in organizations relying on the cognitive perspective to formulate strategy is complex. Strategy can only be understood through the cognition of the strategist. Strategy as a concept can be difficult to communicate to stakeholders, and difficult to change (Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008).
	Learning	Strategic planning documentation in organizations relying on the learning perspective to formulate strategy is complex. Strategy is broadly defined because it is derived from group discussions with middle and top management. Some organizations are unable to clearly articulate a strategy because it develops incrementally rather than through one principle directive (Elfring & Volberda, 2001; Landrum, 2008; Mintzberg et al., 1998; Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008).
	Power	Strategic planning documentation in organizations relying on the power perspective to formulate strategy is complex Strategy may be clear but ignore differing opinions and power blocks within the organization (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Cultural	Strategic planning documentation in organizations relying on the cultural perspective to formulate strategy is simple. However, familiarity with organizational culture necessary to understand the strategic plan (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Environmental	Strategic planning documentation in organizations relying on the environmental perspective to formulate strategy may be simple or complex depending on the environment which ultimately dictates strategy.
	Configuration	Strategic planning documentation in organizations relying on the configuration to formulate strategy may be simple or complex depending on the context. Mature organizations must articulate a plan that addresses the organizational domain (i.e., entrepreneurial problem), information gathering and dissemination (i.e., engineering problem), and formulating and implementing processes that will sustain innovation and subsequent growth (i.e., administrative problem) (Miles et al., 1978).

Areas	Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives	Description from literature
Organizational structure	Design	Organizations using the design perspective for strategy formulation are arranged based on a mechanistic structure. Strategy develops in a highly formalized setting (Ansoff, 1965).
	Planning	Organizations using the planning perspective for strategy formulation are arranged based on a mechanistic structure. Strategy formation is a centralized activity that can only be developed in a structured, formalized way (Mintzberg et al., 1998; Pearce et al., 1987).
	Positioning	Organizations using the positioning perspective for strategy formulation can be arranged either in a mechanistic or organic structure. The organizational structure can take any form as long as it "delivers a unique mix of value" (Porter, 2013, p. 43).
	Entrepreneurial	Organizations using the entrepreneurial perspective for strategy formulation can be arranged either in a mechanistic or organic structure. The entrepreneurial perspective is best suited to small owner/operated businesses or start-up organizations, or those that need turning around (Hajipour et al., 2011; Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008).
	Cognitive	Organizations using the cognitive perspective for strategy formulation are arranged based on an organic structure. This perspective draws heavily on the creativity and mental models of the strategist therefore rote interpretations of strategy are not applicable to this perspective (Hajipour et al., 2011).
	Learning	Organizations using the learning perspective for strategy formulation are arranged based on an organic structure. The development within subsystems would suggest that the overall organization may be bureaucratic with organic sub units (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Power	The organizational structure is primarily mechanistic. However, leaders in larger complex organizations may be more likely to follow a power perspective (Mintzberg et al., 1998; Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008).
	Cultural	The organizational structure can take either form. However, consistency of culture is important in order to root strategy in the company's culture (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Environmental	The organizational structure is consistent with an organic structure. The organization must change with the environment.
	Configuration	The organizational structure can be either organic or mechanistic. Strategy, structure, and environment are complementary and mutually reinforcing. Which type of structure an organization will follow is dependent on its strategy, current structure, and external environment (Miller, 1986)

Areas	Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives	Description from literature
Primary focus of the strategic plan	Design	The primary focus of strategic plans formulated using the design perspective is the organization. More specifically, the organization and its "fit" with the external environment (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Planning	The primary focus of strategic plans formulated using the planning perspective is the organization. More specifically, organizational objectives are specifically tied to performance indicators (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Positioning	The primary focus of strategic plans formulated using the positioning perspective is the environment. More specifically, how the organization can position itself to defend against competition (Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008).
	Entrepreneurial	The primary focus of strategic plans formulated using the entrepreneurial perspective is the individual. More specifically, strategic planning takes place in the mind of a visionary leader. Followers of this perspective are "drawn to the personal strategic vision of a single individual" (Landrum, 2008, p. 129).
	Cognitive	The primary focus of strategic plans formulated using the cognitive perspective is the individual. More specifically, foundations of knowledge are the basis of this perspective where strategist's process information either objectively or subjectively (Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008).
	Learning	The primary focus of strategic plans formulated using the learning perspective is the organization. More specifically, learning takes place at the group level. In strategic planning formulation, organizational members arrive at a consensus by examining their past successes and failures (Mintzberg et al., 1998; Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008).
	Political/Power	The primary focus of strategic plans formulated using the power perspective is the individual. More specifically, people maneuver to arrive at a strategy that is favorable to their position or interest (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Cultural	The primary focus of strategic plans formulated using the cultural perspective is the organization. More specifically, strategy formation is a collective perspective developed at the group level.
	Environmental	The primary focus of strategic plans formulated using the environmental perspective is on the environment. This perspective has an extreme sensitivity to industry or environmental factors.
	Configuration	There is no primary focus of strategic plans formulated using the configuration perspective. Although plans have a focus, it is dependent on the organization's leadership, environment, and structure.

Areas	Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives	Description from literature
Role of external actors	Design	In the design perspective external actors are passive. External actors are limited to the Board of directors (Anderson, Johnson, & Milligan, 1999; Elfring & Volberda, 2001; Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Planning	In the planning perspective external actors are passive. External actors are limited to specialists who function as central planners, with the CEO approving the plan (Mintzberg et al., 1998; Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008).
	Positioning	In the positioning perspective external actors are passive. External actors are limited to central personnel who analyze data (Mintzberg, 1990).
	Entrepreneurial	In the entrepreneurial perspective external actors are passive. The leader is the apex of strategy formation (Gregory, 2008; Hajipour et al., 2011; Hitt et al., 2001; Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008).
	Cognitive	In the cognitive perspective external actors are passive; the strategist's mental models form strategy (Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008).
	Learning	In the learning perspective external actors are active. "Strategic initiatives are undertaken by anyone who has the initiative and resources to learn"(Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 208).
	Power	In the design power perspective external actors are active. External actors may be part of strategy formulation as they negotiate with individuals inside the organization (Gregory, 2008).
	Cultural	In the cultural perspective external actors are passive. The primary focus of the cultural perspective are various internal groups and departments that inform strategy formation (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Environmental	In the environmental perspective external actors are active and epitomize the external environment.
	Configuration	In the configuration perspective external actors may be active or passive depending on the organizational context.

Areas	Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives	Description from literature
Strategic choice	Design	An institution's strategy under the design perspective is narrowly defined (Ansoff, 1965; Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Planning	An institution's strategy under the planning perspective is narrowly defined. Followers of the planning perspective believe that "strategy can be developed in a specific, structured, formalized way" (Elfring & Volberda, 2001, p. 60).
	Positioning	An institution's strategy under the positioning perspective is narrowly defined. All followers of the positioning perspective have to choose from the same set of strategies thereby limiting uniqueness (Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008)
	Entrepreneurial	An institution's strategy under the entrepreneurial perspective is narrowly defined. Strategy is limited by the cognition of the leader (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Cognitive	An institution's strategy under the cognitive perspective is broadly defined, based on the interpretive filters used to access the environment (Qualitas Consortium: Quality-Safety-Productivity, 2008).
	Learning	An institution's strategy under the learning perspective is broadly, and somewhat chaotically defined (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Power	An institution's strategy under the power perspective is broadly defined. Strategies emerge from bargaining, negotiation, and jockeying for position (Bolman & Deal, 2003).
	Cultural	An institution's strategy under the cultural perspective is narrowly defined. Time honored routines for strategy formulation limit the number of strategic choices (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Environmental	An institution's strategy under the design perspective is narrowly defined. Once the environment becomes well established, organizational strategies appear to come relatively homogeneous (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Hannan & Freeman, 1977).
	Configuration	An institution's strategy under the configuration perspective can be narrowly or broadly defined depending on the organization's structure, context, and processes.

Areas	Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives	Description from literature
Strategic formation	Design	The design perspective follows a prescriptive format to strategy creation (Calori, 1998; Elfring & Volberda, 2001; Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Planning	The planning perspective follows a systematic, prescriptive format to strategy creation (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Positioning	The positioning perspective follows a prescriptive format to strategy creation (Elfring & Volberda, 2001).
	Entrepreneurial	The entrepreneurial perspective follows a predominantly descriptive format to strategy creation. However, there may be some minor prescriptive components (Mintzberg, 1990).
	Cognitive	The cognitive perspective follows a descriptive format to strategy creation (Elfring & Volberda, 2001).
	Learning	The learning perspective follows a descriptive, implicit format to strategy creation (Elfring & Volberda, 2001).
	Power	The power perspective follows a descriptive format to strategy creation.
	Cultural	The cultural perspective follows a descriptive format to strategy creation (Elfring & Volberda, 2001). Individuals following the cultural perspective can often articulate the existence of strategy but cannot specifically state how the strategy was created (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
	Environmental	The environmental perspective follows a descriptive format to strategy creation.
	Configuration	The configuration perspective follows a either a descriptive or perspective format.

Appendix B; Figure 3. Areas derived from Mintzberg et al. (1998) 10 perspectives.

After the 14 categories were developed, it was necessary to ensure that they were representative of AQIP accreditation criteria. Appendix B; Figure 4 illustrates how each of the 14 areas, derived by broadening Mintzberg et al. (1998) framework were either directly or indirectly aligned with 10 AQIP principles.

AQIP Principles	AQIP principles which underscore all AQIP categories – Principles will inform *14 categories* which were previously aligned to Mintzberg et al. (1998) 10 strategic perspectives	
	Directly	**Indirectly**
Focus. A mission and vision that focus on students' and other stakeholders' needs provide quality-driven higher education organizations with the foundation they need to shape communication systems, organizational and decision-making structures, and planning and improvement processes. An institution earns the trust, confidence, and loyalty of its current and potential students and its other stakeholders — both external and internal, including faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees — by actively developing and regularly employing listening tools essential for gathering and understanding their diverse and distinctive perspectives. The institution interprets and weighs these expressed needs, preferences, hopes, and requirements to frame ongoing communication, discussion, and refinement of a common mission and vision. Faculty, staff, and administrators integrate this shared focus into their individual work goals and decision-making strategies.	5. Premise of the strategy 2. Decision making direction	4. External environment 12. Role of external actors 9. Level of plan's complexity
Involvement. Broad-based faculty, staff, and administrative involvement encourages better decisions and strengthens individual and group ownership of systems, activities, and initiatives. Individuals understand how what they do affects others within and outside the organization, and appreciate how their work helps further the institution's mission. A culture of involvement draws on the expertise and practical experience of those people closest to a situation and helps leaders across the organization anticipate the complex implications of decisions. Such involvement often helps initiate and implement improvements that better meet student's and other stakeholders' needs. A culture of involvement requires ongoing development of people's skills in making fact-based decisions, working with diverse groups, resolving conflicts, and using quality-based tools to build consensus.	12. Role of external actors 2. Decision making direction	10. Organizational structure 7. Frame used to craft strategy 3. Embedded approach to strategic planning 12. Role of external actors
Leadership. Leaders and leadership systems that support a quality culture consistently model those values and behaviors that communicate to all constituents a clear and compelling vision of the future. Leaders have a responsibility to make sure that everyone understands and values the institution's mission, goals, and directions — and uses this understanding to inform individual work goals and decision-making strategies. Leadership must work to help students and other stakeholders share this understanding as well. Further, leadership must ensure that an institution's systems and processes align with its mission and vision, making certain that the necessary resources — people, policies, funds, facilities, equipment, supplies, time, energy, and other assets — are allocated and used to support the overall mission and vision.	9. Level of plan's complexity 3. Embedded approach to strategic planning 5. Premise of the strategy 14. Strategy formation	4. External environment 12. Role of external actors 1. Central actor 10. Leadership continuity 8. Leadership background

AQIP Principles	AQIP principles which underscore all AQIP categories – Principles will inform *14 categories* which were previously aligned to Mintzberg et al. (1998) 10 strategic perspectives	
	Directly	**Indirectly**
Learning. A learning-centered environment allows an institution dedicated to quality to develop everyone's potential talents by centering attention on learning — for students, for faculty and staff, and for the institution itself. By always seeking more effective ways to enhance student achievement through careful design and evaluation of programs, courses, and learning environments, both the institution and its employees demonstrate an enthusiastic commitment to organizational and personal learning as the route to continuous improvement. Seeing itself as a set of systems that can always improve through measurement, assessment of results, and feedback, the institution designs practical means for gauging its students' and its own progress toward clearly identified objectives. Conscious of costs and waste — whether human or fiscal — leadership champions careful design and rigorous evaluation to prevent problems before they occur, and enables the institution to continuously strengthen its programs, pedagogy, personnel, and processes.	10. Organizational structure 3. Embedded approach to strategic planning 5. Premise of the strategy 14. Strategy formation 2. Decision making direction	7. Frame used to craft strategy 13. Strategic choice 6. Formality
People. Respect for people and the willingness to invest in them leads the quality-driven institution to prize and support the systematic development of its individual faculty, staff, and administrators. Recognizing that fully developing and using its people's abilities strengthens its most valuable resource, it consciously invests in all its people as leaders and learners through ongoing education, training, and opportunities for continuing development. Leadership encourages individuals to take responsibility in crafting and following through on professional and personal growth plans aimed at acquiring, practicing, and using new skills and knowledge to better serve students and other stakeholders. It nourishes a sense of responsibility and ownership in which all individuals understand how their role contributes to the measurable success of the institution and how they can become engaged as full participants in its improvement processes.	5. Premise of the strategy	12. Role of external actors 5. Premise of the strategy 10. Organizational structure 3. Embedded approach to strategic planning
Collaboration. Collaboration and a shared institutional focus promote support for a common mission. A quality-driven institutions encourages active collaboration among and within different internal departments and operational areas, and, externally, between the institution and other institutions or organizations. It removes internal barriers to collaboration, such as the constraints individuals often experience within a hierarchical chain of command or when they find themselves working for a sub-unit rather than the larger organization. The institution provides its faculty, staff, and administrators with the training and resources successful collaboration demands, rewarding effective cooperation and celebrating model collaborative efforts with internal or external partners.	12. Role of external actors 10. Organizational structure 1. Central actor 5. Premise of the strategy 2. Decision making direction	5. Premise of the strategy 9. Level of plan's complexity 3. Embedded approach to strategic planning

AQIP Principles	AQIP principles which underscore all AQIP categories – Principles will inform *14 categories* which were previously aligned to Mintzberg et al. (1998) 10 strategic perspectives	
	Directly	**Indirectly**
Agility. Agility, flexibility, and responsiveness to changing needs and conditions allow high performance institutions to transform themselves. Traditionally colleges and universities have enjoyed more reflective and deliberative cultures than organizations, but the rapid development of new knowledge and technologies and the rising expectations of external stakeholders are altering these environments. As the pace of change quickens and competition becomes commonplace in higher education, the quality-driven institution develops the flexibility to respond quickly to opportunities, threats, and shifting needs and practices. It redirects its attention and resources in response to new requirements, and accurately monitors its performance in responding to such demands.	4. External environment 5. Premise of the strategy	12. Role of external actors 10. Organizational structure 14. Strategy formation
Foresight. Planning for innovation and improvement allows quality-driven institutions to think into the future, tracking trends in order to better predict how conditions will change, and anticipating how those changes may affect students and other stakeholders, operations, and performance. In dynamic or trying situations, the institution with foresight can innovate proactively, making meaningful changes to improve its services and processes in ways that create new or additional value for its students and other stakeholders. Open to new approaches and techniques, the institution designs, tests, and improves its planning structures and processes through practical use and experience.	4. External environment 7. Frame used to craft strategy 3. Embedded approach to strategic planning 14. Strategy formation 13. Strategic choice 2. Decision making direction	12. Role of external actors 5. Premise of the strategy 9. Level of plan's complexity
Information. Fact-based information gathering and thinking to support analysis and decision-making give the quality-driven institution and its personnel the ability to assess current capacities and measure performance realistically. Faculty, staff, and administrators track progress concretely and consistently, and use performance results to set ambitious but attainable targets that increase and improve the institution's capability to meet its students' and other stakeholders' needs and expectations. Data-enriched thinking nurtures evaluation and a results-orientation that maximizes the benefits and value produced for students and other stakeholders. The institution develops and refines systems for gathering and assessing valuable feedback and data, and continually seeks better methods for obtaining the most useful information on which to base decisions and improvements	10. Organizational structure 7. Frame used to craft strategy 2. Decision making direction	
Integrity. Integrity and responsible institutional citizenship allow quality-driven institutions to model their values in both words and deeds. In recognizing and fulfilling its public responsibility, the institution treats people and organizations with equity, dignity, and respect. Demonstrating responsible citizenship, it anticipates and takes into account the consequences of its actions upon the various larger communities to which it belongs, and upon the higher education system, regionally, nationally, and globally. Mindful that education serves society, the institution continuously examines its practices to make certain its effects and results actively contribute to the common good.	12. Role of external actors 5. Premise of the strategy 7. Frame used to craft strategy 5. Focus of strategy 6. Formality	

Appendix B; Figure 4. Fourteen areas aligned with Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) principles

As identified Appendix B; Figure 4 the 10 AQIP principles were linked to the nine AQIP criterion (i.e., helping students learn, accomplishing other distinctive objectives, understanding students' and other stakeholders' needs, valuing people, leading and communicating, supporting institutional operations, measuring effectiveness, planning continuous improvement, and building collaborative relationships).

Although initial findings indicated that the 14 derived areas were aligned with the AQIP principles, more analysis was needed to determine if these areas could be used with an institution's AQIP Systems portfolio. As discussed previously, an AQIP Systems portfolio is comprised of an institution's responses to criterion questions that "processes, results, and improvement" (Higher Learning Commission, 2003, p. 6.3-2). I considered questions that dealt with the improvement as a future state. Therefore, questions pertaining to improvement were removed from the analysis because they were inconsistent with the purpose of my study (i.e., strategic planning formulation).

The 14 areas derived from Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (1998) 10 perspectives framework were aligned to the nine criteria and specific questions that dealt with processes and results the 14 areas were then considered a viable pathway for conducting a document analysis. Information gleaned from an analysis of an institution's Systems portfolio through these 14 areas could assisted me in discovering themes that were subsequently probed on during my study's semi-structured interviews (i.e., Phase II). Additionally, these areas provided me insight into the strategic planning processes of the institutions under investigation. Appendix B; Figure 5 lists each of the AQIP criteria, sub questions that addressed processes and results, and how they were aligned with the

14 criteria. For brevity, only those processes and results that were aligned to the 14 areas

are represented.

AQIP category	Processes (P) [ ] denotes 1999 – 2000 edition of the AQIP categories	Results (R)	14 Mintzberg et al. broadened perspectives
Overview Q4: What are your administrative, faculty, and staff human resources? What key factors determine how you organize and use them?			10. Organizational structure 1. Central actor
Overview Q5: What strategies align your leadership, decision-making, and communication processes with your mission and values, the policies and requirements of your oversight entities, and your legal, ethical, and social responsibilities?			9. Level of plan's complexity 3. Embedded approach to strategic planning
Overview Q8: What are the key commitments, constraints, challenges, and opportunities with which you must align your organization's short- and long-term plans and strategies?			4. External environment
Overview Q9: What are the key commitments, constraints, challenges, and opportunities with which you must align your organization's short- and long-term plans and strategies?			12. Role of external actors
Category 1: Helping students learn - Helping students learn focuses on the design, deployment, and effectiveness of teaching-learning processes that underlie your organization's credit and non-credit programs and courses, and on the processes required to support them.			

AQIP category	Processes (P) [ ] denotes 1999 – 2000 edition of the AQIP categories	Results (R)	14 Mintzberg et al. broadened perspectives
	1P1. How do you determine which common or shared objectives for learning and development you should hold for all students pursuing degrees at a particular level? Whom do you involve in setting these objectives? [1P1]		12. Role of external actors 2. Decision making direction
	1P2. How do you determine your specific program learning objectives? Whom do you involve in setting these objectives? [1P1]		12. Role of external actors 2. Decision making direction
	1P3. How do you design new programs and courses that facilitate student learning and are competitive with those offered by other organizations? [1P2]		4. External environment 12. Role of external actors 2. Decision making direction
	1P4. How do you design responsive academic programming that balances and integrates learning goals, students' career needs, and the realities of the employment market? [1P2]		4. External environment
	1P6. How do you communicate to current and prospective students the required preparation and learning and development objectives for specific programs, courses, and degrees or credentials? How do admissions, student support, and registration services aid in this process? [1P4]		9. Level of plan's complexity
	1P11. How do you define, document, and communicate across your organization your expectations for effective teaching and learning? [1P6]		9. Level of plan's complexity

AQIP category	Processes (P) [ ] denotes 1999 – 2000 edition of the AQIP categories	Results (R)	14 Mintzberg et al. broadened perspectives
Category 2: **Accomplishing other** **distinctive objectives** – Accomplishing other distinctive objectives addresses the key processes (separate from your instructional programs and internal support services) through which you serve your external stakeholders — the processes that contribute to achieving your major objectives, fulfilling your mission, and distinguishing yours from other educational organizations.			
	2P1. How do you design and operate the key non-instructional processes (e.g., athletics, research, community enrichment, economic development, alumni affairs, etc.) through which you serve significant stakeholder groups?		2. Decision making direction
	2P2. How do you determine your organization's major non-instructional objectives for your external stakeholders, and whom do you involve in setting these objectives? [2P1]		12. Role of external actors
	2P3. How do you communicate your expectations regarding these objectives? [2P2]		9. Level of plan's complexity
	2P4. How do you assess and review the appropriateness and value of these objectives, and whom do you involve in these reviews? [2P3]		12. Role of external actors
	2P6. How do you incorporate information on faculty and staff needs in readjusting these objectives or the processes that support them? [2P4]		2. Decision making direction 1. Central actor

AQIP category	Processes (P) [ ] denotes 1999 – 2000 edition of the AQIP categories	Results (R)	14 Mintzberg et al. broadened perspectives
		2R4. How do your performance results of your processes for Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives strengthen your overall organization? How do they enhance your relationships with the communities and regions you serve? [2R3]	12. Role of external actors
Category 3: Understanding Students' and other stakeholders' needs – Understanding students' and other stakeholders' needs examines how your organization works actively to understand student and other stakeholder needs.			
	3P1. How do you identify the changing needs of your student groups? How do you analyze and select a course of action regarding these needs? [3P1]		4. External environment 5. Premise of the strategy
	3P2. How do you build and maintain a relationship with your students? [3P2]		4. External environment
	3P3. How do you analyze the changing needs of your key stakeholder groups and select courses of action regarding these needs? [3P3]		4. External environment 5. Premise of the strategy
	3P4. How do you build and maintain relationships with your key stakeholders? [3P4]		5. Premise of the strategy
	3P5. How do you determine if you should target new student and stakeholder groups with your educational offerings and services? [3P5]		4. External environment
	3P6. How do you collect complaint information from students and other stakeholders? How do you analyze this feedback and select courses of action? How do you communicate these actions to your students and stakeholders? [3P6]		12. Role of external actors 2. Decision making direction

AQIP category	Processes (P) [ ] denotes 1999 – 2000 edition of the AQIP categories	Results (R)	14 Mintzberg et al. broadened perspectives
		3R1. How do you determine the satisfaction of your students and other stakeholders? What measures of student and other stakeholder satisfaction do you collect and analyze regularly? [3P7]	2. Decision making direction
		3R4. What are your performance results for stakeholder satisfaction? [3R3]	5. Premise of the strategy
Category 4: Valuing people – Valuing people explores your organization's commitment to the development of your faculty, staff, and administrators.			
	4P1. How do you identify the specific credentials, skills, and values required for faculty, staff, and administrators? [4P1]		10. Organizational structure 5. Premise of the strategy
	4P2. How do your hiring processes make certain that the people you employ possess the credentials, skills, and values you require? [4P1]		10. Organizational structure
	4P3. How do you recruit, hire, and retain employees? [4P2]		2. Decision making direction
	4P4. How do you orient all employees to your organization's history, mission, and values? [4P2]		10. Organizational structure 2. Decision making direction
	4P6. How do you design your work processes and activities so they contribute both to organizational productivity and employee satisfaction?		5. Premise of the strategy 10. Organizational structure 2. Decision making direction

AQIP category	Processes (P) [ ] denotes 1999 – 2000 edition of the AQIP categories	Results (R)	14 Mintzberg et al. broadened perspectives
	4P7. How do you ensure the ethical practices of all of your employees? [4P3]		10. Organizational structure
	4P8. How do you determine training needs? How do you align employee training with short- and long range organizational plans, and how does it strengthen your instructional and non-instructional programs and services? [4P5]		10. Organizational structure
	4P9. How do you train and develop all faculty, staff, and administrators to contribute fully and effectively throughout their careers with your organization? How do you reinforce this training? [4P4]		10. Organizational structure
	4P10. How do you design and use your personnel evaluation system? How do you align this system with your objectives for both instructional and non-instructional programs and services? [4P6]		2. Decision making direction
	4P11. How do you design your employee recognition, reward, compensation, and benefit systems to align with your objectives for both instructional and non-instructional programs and services? [4P7]		10. Organizational structure
	4P12. How do you determine key issues related to the motivation of your faculty, staff, and administrators? How do you analyze these issues and select courses of action? [4P8]		2. Decision making direction
		4R4. How do your results for the performance of your processes for Valuing People compare with the performance results of other higher education organizations and, if appropriate, of organizations outside of higher education? [4R4]	2. Decision making direction

AQIP category	Processes (P) [ ] denotes 1999 – 2000 edition of the AQIP categories	Results (R)	14 Mintzberg et al. broadened perspectives
Category 5: Leading and communicating – Leading and communicating addresses how your leadership and communication processes, structures, and networks guide your organization in setting directions, making decisions, seeking future opportunities, and communicating decisions and actions to your internal and external stakeholders.			
	5P1. How are your organization's mission and values defined and reviewed? When and by whom?		5. Premise of the strategy 7. Frame used to craft strategy 1. Central actor 3. Embedded approach to strategic planning 8. Leadership background 13. Strategic choice 6. Formality 2. Decision making direction

AQIP category	Processes (P) [ ] denotes 1999 – 2000 edition of the AQIP categories	Results (R)	14 Mintzberg et al. broadened perspectives
	5P2. How do your leaders set directions in alignment with your mission, vision, values, and commitment to high performance? [5P1]		4. External environment
			5. Premise of the strategy
			10. Organizational structure
			7. Frame used to craft strategy
			3. Embedded approach to strategic planning
			5. Premise of the strategy
			14. Strategic formation
			2. Decision making direction
	5P3. How do these directions take into account the needs and expectations of current and potential students and key stakeholder groups? [5P1]		12. Role of external actors
			5. Premise of the strategy
	5P4. How do your leaders guide your organization in seeking future opportunities while enhancing a strong focus on students and learning? [5P2]		4. External environment
			10. Organizational structure
			7. Frame used to craft strategy
			3. Embedded approach to strategic planning
			5. Premise of the strategy
	5P5. How do you make decisions in your organization? How do you use teams, task forces, groups, or committees to recommend or make decisions, and to carry them out? [5P3]		10. Organizational structure
			3. Embedded approach to strategic planning
			5. Premise of the strategy
			14. Strategic formation
			2. Decision making direction

AQIP category	Processes (P) [ ] denotes 1999 – 2000 edition of the AQIP categories	Results (R)	14 Mintzberg et al. broadened perspectives
	5P6. How do you use data, information, and your own performance results in your decision-making processes? [5P4]		4. External environment 9. Level of plan's complexity 3. Embedded approach to strategic planning
	5P7. How does communication occur between and among the levels and units of your organization?[5P5]		9. Level of plan's complexity 10. Organizational structure 6. Formality
	5P8. How do your leaders communicate a shared mission, vision, and values that deepen and reinforce the characteristics of high performance organizations? [5P6]		9. Level of plan's complexity 10. Organizational structure 7. Frame used to craft strategy 3. Embedded approach to strategic planning 14. Strategic formation 6. Formality 2. Decision making direction
	5P9. How are leadership abilities encouraged, developed and strengthened among your faculty, staff, and administrators? How do you communicate and share leadership knowledge, skills, and best practices throughout your organization? [5P7]		10. Organizational structure 2. Decision making direction
	5P10. How do your leaders and board members ensure that your organization maintains and preserves its mission, vision, values, and commitment to high performance during leadership succession? How do you develop and implement your leadership succession plans? [5P8]		10. Organizational structure 3. Embedded approach to strategic planning 5. Premise of the strategy 2. Decision making direction

AQIP category	Processes (P) [ ] denotes 1999 – 2000 edition of the AQIP categories	Results (R)	14 Mintzberg et al. broadened perspectives
		5R2. What are your results for leading and communicating processes and systems? [5R1]	10. Organizational structure
			3. Embedded approach to strategic planning
			5. Premise of the strategy
			14. Strategic formation
			2. Decision making direction
Category 6: Supporting organizational operations – Supporting organizational operations addresses the organizational support processes that help to provide an environment in which learning can thrive.			
	6P1. How do you identify the support service needs of your students and other key stakeholder groups (e.g., oversight board, alumni, etc.)? [6P1,2]		12. Role of external actors
	6P3. How do you design, maintain, and communicate the key support processes that contribute to everyone's physical safety and security?		10. Organizational structure
			2. Decision making direction
	6P4. How do you manage your key student, administrative and organizational support service processes on a day-to-day basis to ensure that they are addressing the needs you intended them to meet? [6P3]		2. Decision making direction

AQIP category	Processes (P) [ ] denotes 1999 – 2000 edition of the AQIP categories	Results (R)	14 Mintzberg et al. broadened perspectives
	6P5. How do you document your support processes to encourage knowledge sharing, innovation, and empowerment? [6P3]		5. Premise of the strategy
			10. Organizational structure
			7. Frame used to craft strategy
			3. Embedded approach to strategic planning
			14. Strategic formation
			2. Decision making direction
		6R2. What are your performance results for student support service processes? [6R1]	2. Decision making direction
		6R3. What are your performance results for administrative support service processes? [6R2]	2. Decision making direction
		6R4. How do your key student, administrative, and organizational support areas use information and results to improve their services? [6P4]	2. Decision making direction
		6R5. How do your results for the performance of your processes for Supporting Organizational Operations compare with the performance results of other higher education organizations and, if appropriate, of organizations outside of higher education? [6R3]	2. Decision making direction

AQIP category	Processes (P) [ ] denotes 1999 – 2000 edition of the AQIP categories	Results (R)	14 Mintzberg et al. broadened perspectives
Category 7: Measuring effectiveness – Measuring examines how your organization collects, analyzes, distributes, and uses data, information, and knowledge to manage itself and to drive performance improvement.			
	7P1. How do you select, manage, and distribute data and performance information to support your instructional and non-instructional programs and services? [7P1]		10. Organizational structure 13. Strategic choice 2. Decision making direction
	7P2. How do you select, manage, and distribute data and performance information to support your planning and improvement efforts? [7P1]		4. External environment 5. Premise of the strategy 10. Organizational structure 5. Premise of the strategy 13. Strategic choice 2. Decision making direction
	7P3. How do you determine the needs of your departments and units related to the collection, storage, and accessibility of data and performance information? [7P2]		5. Premise of the strategy 10. Organizational structure 3. Embedded approach to strategic planning 5. Premise of the strategy 13. Strategic choice 2. Decision making direction

AQIP category	Processes (P) [ ] denotes 1999 – 2000 edition of the AQIP categories	Results (R)	14 Mintzberg et al. broadened perspectives
	7P4. How, at the organizational level, do you analyze data and information regarding overall performance? How are these analyses shared throughout the organization? [7P4]		5. Premise of the strategy
			9. Level of plan's complexity
			10. Organizational structure
			5. Premise of the strategy
			13. Strategic choice
			2. Decision making direction
	7P5. How do you determine the needs and priorities for comparative data and information? What are your criteria and methods for selecting sources of comparative data and information within and outside the higher education community? [7P3]		4. External environment
			12. Role of external actors
			5. Premise of the strategy
			10. Organizational structure
			13. Strategic choice
			2. Decision making direction
	7P6. How do you ensure department and unit analysis of data and information aligns with your organizational goals for instructional and non-instructional programs and services? How is this analysis shared? [7P5]		9. Level of plan's complexity
			10. Organizational structure
			5. Premise of the strategy
			13. Strategic choice
			2. Decision making direction

AQIP category	Processes (P) [ ] denotes 1999 – 2000 edition of the AQIP categories	Results (R)	14 Mintzberg et al. broadened perspectives
	7P7. How do you ensure the timeliness, accuracy, reliability, and security of your information system(s) and related processes? [7P6]		5. Premise of the strategy
			10. Organizational structure
			7. Frame used to craft strategy
			3. Embedded approach to strategic planning
			5. Premise of the strategy
			13. Strategic choice
		7R1. What measures of the performance and effectiveness of your system for information and knowledge management do you collect and analyze regularly? [7P7]	5. Premise of the strategy
			7. Frame used to craft strategy
			3. Embedded approach to strategic planning
			5. Premise of the strategy
			13. Strategic choice
			2. Decision making direction
		7R2. What is the evidence that your system for Measuring Effectiveness meets your organization's needs in accomplishing its mission and goals? [7R1]	5. Premise of the strategy
			10. Organizational structure
			7. Frame used to craft strategy
			3. Embedded approach to strategic planning
			5. Premise of the strategy
			13. Strategic choice

AQIP category	Processes (P) [ ] denotes 1999 – 2000 edition of the AQIP categories	Results (R)	14 Mintzberg et al. broadened perspectives
		7R3. How do your results for the performance of your processes for Measuring Effectiveness compare with the results of other higher education organizations and, if appropriate, of organizations outside of higher education? [7R2]	12. Role of external actors 5. Premise of the strategy 13. Strategic choice
Criteria 8 – Planning continuous improvement –Planning continuous improvement examines your organization's planning processes and how your strategies and action plans help you achieve your mission and vision.			
	8P1. What are your key planning processes?[8P1]		5. Premise of the strategy 9. Level of plan's complexity 10. Organizational structure 7. Frame used to craft strategy 3. Embedded approach to strategic planning 5. Premise of the strategy 14. Strategic formation 13. Strategic choice 2. Decision making direction

AQIP category	Processes (P) [ ] denotes 1999 – 2000 edition of the AQIP categories	Results (R)	14 Mintzberg et al. broadened perspectives
	8P2. How do you select short- and long-term strategies? [8P2]		5. Premise of the strategy
			9. Level of plan's complexity
			10. Organizational structure
			7. Frame used to craft strategy
			5. Premise of the strategy
			14. Strategic formation
			13. Strategic choice
			2. Decision making direction
	8P3. How do you develop key action plans to support your organizational strategies? [8P3]		5. Premise of the strategy
			9. Level of plan's complexity
			10. Organizational structure
			7. Frame used to craft strategy
			5. Premise of the strategy
			14. Strategic formation
			13. Strategic choice
			2. Decision making direction

AQIP category	Processes (P) [ ] denotes 1999 – 2000 edition of the AQIP categories	Results (R)	14 Mintzberg et al. broadened perspectives
	8P4. How do you coordinate and align your planning processes, organizational strategies, and action plans across your organization's various levels? [8P4]		5. Premise of the strategy
			9. Level of plan's complexity
			10. Organizational structure
			7. Frame used to craft strategy
			5. Premise of the strategy
			14. Strategic formation
			13. Strategic choice
			2. Decision making direction
	8P5. How you define objectives, select measures, and set performance targets for your organizational strategies and action plans? [8P5]		5. Premise of the strategy
			9. Level of plan's complexity
			7. Frame used to craft strategy
			5. Premise of the strategy
			14. Strategic formation
			13. Strategic choice
			2. Decision making direction

AQIP category	Processes (P) [ ] denotes 1999 – 2000 edition of the AQIP categories	Results (R)	14 Mintzberg et al. broadened perspectives
	8P6. How do you link strategy selection and action plans, taking into account levels of current resources and future needs? [8P6]		5. Premise of the strategy
			9. Level of plan's complexity
			10. Organizational structure
			7. Frame used to craft strategy
			5. Premise of the strategy
			2. Decision making direction
	8P7. How do you assess and address risk in your planning processes?		4. External environment
			5. Premise of the strategy
			10. Organizational structure
			7. Frame used to craft strategy
			10. Leadership background
			5. Premise of the strategy
			14. Strategic formation
			2. Decision making direction
	8P8. How do you ensure that you will develop and nurture faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities to address changing requirements demanded by your organizational strategies and action plans? [8P7]		10. Organizational structure
			7. Frame used to craft strategy
			5. Premise of the strategy
			2. Decision making direction

AQIP category	Processes (P) [ ] denotes 1999 – 2000 edition of the AQIP categories	Results (R)	14 Mintzberg et al. broadened perspectives
		8R1. What measures of the effectiveness of your planning processes and systems do you collect and analyze regularly? [8P8]	5. Premise of the strategy
			10. Organizational structure
			7. Frame used to craft strategy
			5. Premise of the strategy
			14. Strategic formation
			2. Decision making direction
		8R2. What are your performance results for accomplishing your organizational strategies and action plans? [8R1]	5. Premise of the strategy
			10. Organizational structure
			7. Frame used to craft strategy
			5. Premise of the strategy
			14. Strategic formation
		8R3. What are your projections or targets for performance of your strategies and action plans over the next 1-3 years? [8R2]	4. External environment
			5. Premise of the strategy
			10. Organizational structure
			7. Frame used to craft strategy
			14. Strategic formation
			2. Decision making direction

AQIP category	Processes (P) [ ] denotes 1999 – 2000 edition of the AQIP categories	Results (R)	14 Mintzberg et al. broadened perspectives
		8R4. How do your results for the performance of your processes for Planning Continuous Improvement compare with the performance results of other higher education organizations and, if appropriate, of organizations outside of higher education? [8R3]	4. External environment 5. Premise of the strategy 10. Organizational structure 5. Premise of the strategy 14. Strategic formation 2. Decision making direction
		8R5. What is the evidence that your system for Planning Continuous Improvement is effective? How do you measure and evaluate your planning processes and activities? [8R4]	14. Strategic formation 2. Decision making direction
Criteria 9 – Building collaborative relationships – Building collaborative relationships examines your organization's relationships – current and potential – to analyze how they contribute to the organization's accomplishing its mission.			
	9P1. How do you create, prioritize, and build relationships with the educational organizations and other organizations from which you receive your students? [9P1]		4. External environment 12. Role of external actors 5. Premise of the strategy 1. Central actor 5. Premise of the strategy

AQIP category	Processes (P) [ ] denotes 1999 – 2000 edition of the AQIP categories	Results (R)	14 Mintzberg et al. broadened perspectives
	9P2. How do you create, prioritize, and build relationships with the educational organizations and employers that depend on the supply of your students and graduates that meet those organizations' requirements? [9P1]		4. External environment 12. Role of external actors 5. Premise of the strategy 1. Central actor 5. Premise of the strategy
	9P3. How do you create, prioritize, and build relationships with the organizations that provide services to your students? [9P1]		4. External environment 12. Role of external actors 5. Premise of the strategy 1. Central actor 5. Premise of the strategy
	9P4. How do you create, prioritize, and build relationships with the organizations that supply materials and services to your organization?		4. External environment 12. Role of external actors 5. Premise of the strategy 1. Central actor 5. Premise of the strategy

AQIP category	Processes (P) [ ] denotes 1999 – 2000 edition of the AQIP categories	Results (R)	14 Mintzberg et al. broadened perspectives
	9P5. How do you create, prioritize, and build relationships with the education associations, external agencies, consortia partners, and the general community with whom you interact? [9P1]		4. External environment
			12. Role of external actors
			5. Premise of the strategy
			1. Central actor
			5. Premise of the strategy
	9P6. How do you ensure that your partnership relationships are meeting the varying needs of those involved? [9P2]		1. Central actor
			2. Decision making direction
	9P7. How do you create and build relationships between and among departments and units within your organization? How do you assure integration and communication across these relationships? [9P3]		9. Level of plan's complexity
			10. Organizational structure
			1. Central actor
		9R1. What measures of building collaborative relationships, external and internal, do you collect and analyze regularly? [9P4]	2. Decision making direction
		9R2. What are your performance results in building your key collaborative relationships, external and internal? [9R1]	2. Decision making direction

Appendix B; Figure 5. Fourteen derived areas aligned with Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) Processes and Results questions.

Many of an institutions' responses to the process questions described institutional strategic formulation processes. Likewise, the results questions were designed to determine the extent to which an institution used evidence, measurement, and performance results in decision-making. Therefore, both the process and results categories provided insight into an institution's strategic processes and perspectives.

Of the nine AQIP criteria questions, some appeared to be more closely aligned to the 14 areas that were used to initially explore an institution's strategic planning processes and perspectives. Of the 14 areas, 5 (i.e., organizational structure, strategic choice, decision-making direction, external environment, and Premise of the strategy) were more closely aligned with specific AQIP process and results questions. Six of the remaining areas (i.e., central actor, embedded approach to strategic planning, frame used to craft strategy, level of plan's complexity, role of external actors, and strategy formulation) were cited less than 4 times as aligned with AQIP processes and results questions. The remaining three areas (formality, leadership background, and primary focus of the strategic plan) were not aligned at the AQIP criteria, process, or results level. However, these three areas were evaluated by reviewing the organization's strategic planning documentation that appeared as an appendix to an institution's Systems portfolio.

It did appear that the Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's 10 perspectives framework could be aligned to an AQIP institution's Systems portfolio. However, by broadening the 10 perspectives framework into specific strategic planning content areas, these broadened areas could then be used to explore an institution's Systems portfolio in order to learn about the institution's strategic planning perspectives and processes. However, a document analysis was not enough to determine what community colleges were doing with respect to strategic planning, or whether these leaders believe that their strategic planning processes and perspectives added "value" to their institution.

APPENDIX C

Research Questions and Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Opening Statements: In order to capture all of your answers completely and accurately, I would like to record our conversation today.

Recording release.

Recording release statements: For your information, only researchers involved in my study will be privy to the recordings which will be destroyed after they are transcribed.

HSIRB release.

HSIRB statements: All participants in this study must sign this form that is devised to meet our human subjects requirements. Essentially, this document states that: (1) all of your information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time that you wish, (3) I intend to use this data to explore strategic planning perspectives and processes among Michigan community colleges, and I do not intend to inflict any harm. Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule and agreeing to help me with my research. I want to be cognizant of your time, so let's get started.

Interview parameters: I have planned this interview to last no longer than 90 minutes. During this time I have several questions that I would like to cover. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete this line of questioning.

Focusing participant on formulation:

You have been identified as someone who has a great deal to share about strategic planning in higher education. My research project as a whole focuses on the formulation phase of strategic planning by examining strategic planning perspectives and processes at

selected AQIP accredited community colleges in Michigan. My particular interest is in the strategic planning perspectives that community college leaders have relied upon to formulate their strategic plan, how those perspectives influenced the formulation of the strategic plan, and the extent to which community college leaders perceive that their perspectives and processes have added "value" to their institution. My study will not evaluate your techniques or experiences. Rather, I am trying to learn more about strategic planning in higher education, and hopefully learn about strategic planning practices that will help other higher educational leaders plan for the future.

Handout 1. My study defines formulation as:

- the foundation phase (value, vision, mission statements, as well as preplanning);

- the positioning phase (assessing internal and external environments);

- and the directional phase (pre-implementation phase) (Hutzschenreuter & Kleindienst, 2006).

Interview questions.

1) Interviewee Background

   1) How long have you been . . .

      1) in your present position?

      2) at this institution?

2) How many times have you been involved with strategic planning formulation?

   1) Probe: This institution or others?

   2) Probe: At other types of institutions?

   3) Probe: Differences?

3) Research Question 1.

1) PROCESS: Does your college have a formal strategic planning process?

    1) Probe: How long has the plan been in place?

    2) Probe: Do you feel it is unique among Michigan Community colleges (DeVivo, 2008)?

    3) Probe: Do you write strategic plans because you have to or because you see these plans as essential to the future of your college (DeVivo, 2008)?

    4) Probe: Were there any aspects of the process that you felt did not work well for your institution (Burgess, 2008)?

4) Research Question 1 – 2

    1) PERSPECTIVE: What are the forces that shaped the institution's strategic agenda (Hutzschenreuter & Kleindienst, 2006)?

        1) Probe: Accreditation

        2) Probe: Environment

        3) Probe: Values

5) Research Question 1: Impetus for strategic planning

    1) Why do you think your institution chose to engage in strategic planning (Burgess, 2008)?

6) Research Question 1 – 2: Influence of accreditation

    1) To what extent is your strategic planning integrated with accreditation (Cotter & Paris, 2007)?

        1) Probe: To what extent do accreditation standards influence your strategic planning process?

        2) Probe: Does institutional accreditation influence strategic planning or vice

versa?

7) Research Question 2: Environmental factors

    1) Describe your environment (Mintzberg, 2007).

        1) Probe: What are the key external drivers that this strategy was intended to address (DeVivo, 2008)?

        2) Probe: What were the key internal drivers that this strategy was intended to address (DeVivo, 2008)?

8) Research Question 2, 3: Factors influencing strategy formulation; value of perspectives

    1) PERSPECTIVE: What factors most strongly influenced strategy formulation (Mintzberg, 2007)?

Research Question 1 – 2: Adopted from other sources

9) Have you learned any of your approaches from other institutions or organizations? If so, which ones (Cotter & Paris, 2007)?

    1) Probe: What best-practice strategy processes did you follow (Hutzschenreuter & Kleindienst, 2006)?

    2) Probe: Where do you go to get advice on strategy (DeVivo, 2008)?

10) PERSPECTIVE: Is your institution's strategy influenced by any academic models . . . or authors of strategy (Aleong, 2001)?

    1) Probe: Which ones?

    2) Probe: Any others?

11) PERSPECTIVE: Which description of strategic planning best describes the method that was used by your institution (Young, 2011)?

12) Research Questions 3 – 4: Value of processes

    1) PERSPECTIVE: What results or impact have you seen from your planning process?

        1) Probe: How "valuable" are these results to your institution?

        2) Probe: Data, measurement

        3) Probe: How often do you refer to your college's strategy?

        4) Probe: Decision making

13) Research Questions 1, 3, 4: Discussion of things that did not work

    1) Would you recommend the process used for strategic planning on your campus for other institutions of higher education (Burgess, 2008)?

        1) Probe: Why or why not?

        2) Probe: EMERGENT/DELIBERATE: Are there things that you did not plan for but have changed your strategy (Mintzberg, 2007)?

14) Research Questions 1 – 4: Catchall

    1) Do you have any additional comments or observations that you think are important for making strategic planning successful (Burgess, 2008).

15) Demographics

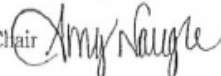   1) Post interview comments or observations:

APPENDIX D

HSIRB APPROVAL LETTER

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Date: July 24, 2014

To: Louann Bierlein Palmer, Principal Investigator
Lisa Augustyniak, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: Approval not needed for HSIRB Project Number 14-07-17

This letter will serve as confirmation that your project titled "Distinctive Community College Strategic Planning Processes/Perspectives" has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB). Based on that review, the HSIRB has determined that approval is not required for you to conduct this project because you are analyzing a process and not collecting personal identifiable (private) information about an individual.

Thank you for your concerns about protecting the rights and welfare of human subjects.

A copy of your protocol and a copy of this letter will be maintained in the HSIRB files.