ASSESSING LEADERSHIP SKILLS OF COLLEGE STUDENT LEADERS: WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THEIR EXPERIENCE?

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A great deal of emphasis is placed on the development of leaders on the campuses of Christian colleges and universities. This is evidenced in the recent proliferation of academic programs designed to offer majors and minors in leadership. These new programs, coupled with the traditional method of training students in leadership through their participation in student groups and organizations, provide ample opportunities for students to cultivate their skills. In spite of this great investment, the problem exists that there is little done to assess or document the student leader’s progress in this important endeavor. This study was conducted to examine which person descriptors, programmatic interventions, or areas of leadership involvement could be related to the leadership skill development of student leaders on Christian college campuses. The study also served to begin the development of an assessment tool to measure the leadership skills in college student leaders. The Leadership Skills Assessment Questionnaire (LSAQ) was designed using the 10 leadership qualities outlined in John Maxwell’s (1995) book *Developing Leaders Around You* as a theoretical framework. The LSAQ scale and 5 subscales of Influence, Positive Attitude, Excellent People Skills, Evident Gifts, and Proven Track Record were used to determine if there were personal descriptors, programmatic interventions, or leadership involvements that could be identified as predictors of leadership skill development in student leaders. The research was conducted during the spring semester of the 2003 academic year using a convenience sample of student leaders at 36 colleges and universities (26 liberal arts colleges, 7 Bible colleges, and 3 comprehensive universities) across the continental United States. There were 1,348 student leaders surveyed. The results of this research indicate that there are personal descriptors, programmatic interventions, and leadership involvements that make a significant contribution to the leadership skill development of students. The results helped to further support the reliability of the LSAQ as a useful instrument for the assessment of student’s leadership skills. This research provided encouragement for the continuation of the present leadership development efforts on college campuses. More research is needed to determine other significant predictors affecting the leadership development of students.
Enhancing students’ strengths and psychological resources provides an opportunity to address the precipitous rise in the prevalence of psychological problems on college campuses. This study assessed the effectiveness of a brief intervention focused on building students’ Psychological Capital (PsyCap; Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007), comprised of hope, resilience, optimism, and efficacy to provide students with useful tools and techniques that would positively impact their psychological well-being. Using an experimental posttest-only waiting-list control group design, 41 students from a private, faith-based institution were randomly assigned to either a treatment (N = 19) or a control (N = 22) condition. Students in the treatment condition participated in an intervention composed of 2 face-to-face 60-minute sessions. The dependent variable was students’ scores on Ryff’s (1989b) psychological well-being scales, comprised of self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. A MANCOVA with pretest PsyCap scores as covariates was conducted to determine treatment fidelity and provided evidence that participants in the treatment condition scored significantly higher in PsyCap and its components of hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism after the intervention than did the control group (Wilks’ Λ = .633, F(4, 32) = 4.635, p < .01, partial η2 = .367). A MANCOVA to assess the effect of the intervention on hope, resilience, optimism, efficacy, and psychological well-being demonstrated that although there was a significant multivariate effect (Wilks’ Λ = .507, F(10, 26) = 2.526, p < .05, partial η2 = .493), there were no significant group differences in total psychological well-being scores as a result of the intervention. However, univariate analyses revealed that the intervention significantly affected students’ scores on the environmental mastery aspect of psychological well-being, as well as their psychological capital, hope, resilience, and optimism; and this effect was relatively sustained over time. The major implication for practice is that a brief PsyCap intervention can bolster students’ ability to manage their time, resources, and environmental challenges during the college years, enabling institutions to provide preventive tools through advising, the co-curriculum, and outreach programs to enhance psychological well-being.
EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN ETHIOPIA: PERCEIVED NEEDS OF PROMINENT ETHIOPIAN LEADERS TO DEMONSTRATE EFFECTIVE IN THE COUNTRY AND THE FORMATION OF A RELEVANT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM TO MEET THE NEED

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When high responsibility is placed on leaders, there is a natural tendency for leaders to make efforts to meet the expectations. When that happens, leaders are more conscious and focus to demonstrate effectiveness in their organizations. Prominent Ethiopia leaders are not different from this reality. When a responsibility was placed by a higher body to run top level leadership offices, they try to make every effort to bring change and progress in their organizations. This dissertation explores the perceived needs of prominent Ethiopian leaders to demonstrate effective leadership in the country. These leaders are identified from government, nongovernmental, business and church communities to help understand their needs. The study outcome is intended to contribute to the formation of a leadership development training program in the country. A phenomenological qualitative approach is used to understand the lived experience of these leaders. The findings of this study reveal the leadership need of the participants as they took their leadership responsibility in their organizations. The need expressed goes beyond their needs and addresses the leadership needs of future leaders in general. There are suggestions offered toward the formation of a relevant leadership program in the country. The conclusion of this study focuses on leadership needs of prominent leaders, needs of future leaders and recommendation to the formation of a leadership program in the country. The study outcome also reveal that there are needs that can be met by formal education, by short-term training and by consultancy service to help leaders define their needs before designing a training to meet it. There are priorities identified for the purpose of training needs by the study participants.
THE IMPACT OF SUMMER INTERNATIONAL SHORT-TERM MISSIONS EXPERIENCES ON THE CROSS-CULTURE SENSITIVE OF UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE STUDENT PARTICIPATIONS

Paul Blezien

The research conducted for this study attempted to answer this question: To what extent, if any, is the cross-cultural sensitivity of undergraduate college students influenced by participation in summer international short-term mission experiences? The literature review examined summer short-term missions and cross-cultural sensitivity though there was little research literature that links the two. Both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies were employed to answer the research question. The quantitative portion of the research involved pretests and posttests of 159 students from five different Christian colleges that are members of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. The instrument utilized in this portion of the study was the entire Quick Discrimination Index (Ponterotto & Bukard, 1195; Utsey & Ponterotto, 1999) and a portion of the Crown-Mueller (1960) Social Desirability Scale. A control group of 151 students also completed the pretest and posttest. Appropriate statistical techniques were used to determine if there were any significant changes in the cross-cultural sensitivity of the summer short-term missions participants. Other independent variables that were considered include sex, age, family income, political orientation, school attended, length of project, and previous international travel. Four independent variables were found to be statistically significant predictors of posttest scores. Generally speaking, the higher the posttest scores were achieved by students claiming to be politically liberal, possessing more experience with overseas travel, female, and younger in age.

The qualitative portion of the research involved three separate inquiries. There were photo journaling, open-ended survey questions on the posttest, and photo elicitation interviews. Qualitative findings included themes of actual impact and stimuli for the impact. It was clear that students’ understanding of God and their relationship with Him was enhanced. They also reported being impacted cross-culturally in both cognitive and affective ways. Students felt that their values and long term mission calling were also clarified. Catalysts for impact included relationships formed during the service, exposure to the host culture, moments of crisis, and the ministry activity itself. A discussion of the findings along with recommendations for action and further research conclude this paper.
RECIPROCAL ENGAGEMENT: THE PROCESS OF PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATION AMONG FACULTY AT RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

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Research Universities: very high research activity (RU/VH) faculty often emphasize research as compared with teaching or service in their work. However, some faculty still endeavor to be excellent teachers by innovating pedagogy to enhance student learning. This qualitative study focused on developing a theory to describe the process that faculty undergo to innovate pedagogy. Charmaz’s grounded theory methodology provided framework to conduct this study of nine participants from eight different RU/VH institutions. Semi-structured interviews were conducted on each participant’s campus in addition to follow-up interviews to verify results. The overarching theory is defined as Reciprocal Engagement that includes two categories to describe the innovative process—Practice and Presence. First, Practice identifies the innovative process as three subcategories—Cycle of Innovation, Cycle of Feedback, and Gradation of Innovation. Cycle of Innovation indicates a continuous development of pedagogical change resulting in a cumulative effect over years of teaching. Input from students through a Cycle of Feedback input provides faculty with information to innovate. Faculty gauge learning through reading students’ affect, evaluating their questions, and responding to faculty evaluations. Gradation of Innovation distinguishes degrees of innovation—adoption, modification, and creation. Second, Presence identifies two subcategories—Knowing Self and Engaging Others—as the motivation and force behind the Cycle of Innovation. Knowing Self suggests faculty who are self-aware of their characteristics and values such as vocation, intellectual curiosity, risk-taking, growth and development, and longitudinal knowing and who are able to inform their innovation practices. Engaging Others describes the relationship faculty have with informal mentors and students. Faculty develop academic and social relationships with students to assess knowledge comprehension in order to enhance their learning. The findings suggest the importance of faculty to build on their pedagogical strategies and practices continuously throughout their academic career, develop growth mindset and emotional intelligence skills, and engage students both academically and socially to increase effectiveness in their teaching.
This research study sought to determine if certain characteristics of peer leaders who functioned as strengths counselors were predictive of their effectiveness in providing strengths counseling to first-year students. Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were used to determine which peer leader characteristics were significant predictors of first-year students’ changes in strengths awareness, changes in academic self-confidence, cumulative first-year GPA, and perceived peer leader effectiveness. Additionally, the peer leaders were split into quartiles in terms of first-year students’ perceived effectiveness and the extreme quartiles were compared using analysis of variance. The results from the hierarchical multiple regressions analyses indicated that the only characteristic that was a significant positive predictor of the peer leaders’ effectiveness was their comfort with their level of preparation. This characteristic positively predicted changes in first-year students’ strengths awareness over the course of the semester. The analysis of variance revealed that the most effective peer leaders were significantly better at fostering positive changes in first-year students’ changes in strengths awareness and academic self-confidence than the least effective peer leaders. The implication from the findings in this study is that effective peer leaders appear to be able to foster an increase in the first-year students’ beliefs about their capabilities, which promotes first-year student success in academics and how they approach the future.
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS-BASED VERSUS TRADITIONAL TEACHING METHODS IN A FRESHMEN PUBLIC SPEAKING COURSES: IMPACTS ON STUDENT LEARNING AND ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

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Because the ultimate goal of higher education is for students to learn, this study used a quasi-experimental, pretest-posttest nonequivalent control group design to compare 2 methods of facilitating student learning: a traditional method (control) versus a strengths-based method (experimental) to teaching in 2 sections of an Introduction to Public Speaking course. The sample included 55 first-time college freshmen (312 males and 24 females) who were full-time, traditional, residential students between the ages of 18 and 225, the majority Caucasian (89%) and admitted in good standing (86%). The independent variable was the strengths-based teaching methodology. Both sections met 3 days each week for a 50-minute session across a 14-week semester for a total of 42 class periods and were taught by the same instructor using the same textbook, class presentations, requirements, and tests. Four sessions were devoted to the strengths-based treatment (intervention) and integration of Gallop’s StrengthsFinder. There were 3 dependent variables: average exam scores as measured by objective in-class examinations, blind ratings of videotaped speeches as measured by The Competent Speaker Speech Evaluation Form (Morreale, Taylor, Surges-Tatum, Hulbert-Johnson, 1993), and levels of academic engagement as measured by the Academic Engagement Index (Schreiner, 2004). A multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses. The null hypotheses were rejected for all research questions; significant difference between groups were found in engagement (Pillai’s Trace=.826, F(19,31)=7.736, p<.001, multivariate r^2=.826), videotaped speeches (Pillai’s Trace=.363, F(8,45)=3.209, p<.010, multivariate r^2=.363), and average exam scores (Wilks’ Λ=.806, F(2,50)=6.019, p<.005, multivariate r^2=.194), after controlling for pre-existing level of engagement, course-specific skills, and knowledge. Students in the experimental group also experienced significantly higher levels of overall satisfaction with the college (F(1,52)=8.578, p<.005, partial r^2=.142). Results of a multiple regression analysis indicated that academic engagement significantly predicted student learning (R^2=.092, F=(1,53)=5.346, p<.025).
This dissertation was a qualitative research study regarding two small private universities and their process of transformation from an institution headed toward closure to a successful turnaround. The primary questions that guided the study included the factors and persons that contributed to the institutional turnaround, the issues and circumstances that led to the need for a turnaround, and the extent to which presidential leadership created a turnaround culture at the institution. The study included a review of the literature regarding the turbulent times in higher education and factors that led to decline or closure of institutions. Accordingly, the literature identified institutions that have been revitalized and elements of a successful turnaround. Specific research included recommendations from higher education leaders of turnaround schools, campus publications, news articles, and website content. Additionally, the research included 18 detailed interviews of presidents, board members, administrators, and faculty members on the campuses of the two institutions. Literature review, personal interviews, and document analysis revealed that entrepreneurial, presidential leadership was critical factor to the transformation. Additionally, it was necessary for the president and the leadership team to promote the uniqueness of the institution, communicate the vision for the plan, and implement the plan in a timely manner. The impact of fundraising revenue was something not often noted in previous studies regarding turnaround schools and was a major factor toward success for the two institutions. In these cases, the fundraising support helped to build momentum and provide an infusion of much needed resources. The stories of these universities represent the resilience of small private colleges. Presidents, board members, and faculty members would benefit from the many inspiring lessons that can be learned from these turnaround schools.
A GENDERED PERSPECTIVE ON THE PREDICTORS OF STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN COLLEGIATE CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

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The theory of student involvement (Astin, 1984) acknowledges that as students devote sufficient time and energy to educationally purposeful activities, they can expect to make desirable gains throughout the college years. Participation in campus clubs and organizations is one form of involvement found to be associated with a host of learning and developmental gains. Uninvolved students may be missing a readily available opportunity for added learning and development. Compared to other demographic groups, male college students may be more at risk of missing some of these learning and developmental gains due to lower participation rates in co-curricular activities (Pike, Kuh, & Gonyea, 2003). This study joins a larger body of emerging scholarly research focused on understanding gender gaps in higher education, thereby attempting to illuminate gender’s role within the college experience of women and men (Sax, 2008). Hierarchical multiple regression and logistic regression analyses were used to investigate the predictors of men’s and women’s involvement in collegiate clubs and organizations. Samples consisted of senior-year men (N = 554) and women (N = 991) who attended faith-based liberal arts institutions and completed the 2002 Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) and 2006 College Senior Survey (CSS) instruments (Higher Education Research Institute). Blocks of variables related to students’ entry characteristics, goals and aspirations, use of time, and campus experiences were examined. Four significant predictors of involvement in clubs and groups were shared by men and women: previous high school involvement, anticipated collegiate involvement, working on campus, and student-faculty interaction. Living on campus in the first year of college, ethnicity (being White), public service goals, career goals, and satisfaction with a sense of community uniquely predicted involvement for women, whereas participation in intercollegiate athletics was a unique predictor for men. Program design, recruitment, outreach to specific student groups, and maximizing campus experiences are avenues through which the findings of this study can be leveraged to promote the involvement of men and women in co-curricular clubs and organizations. A discussion of the findings, limitations of the study, and directions for future research on gender and involvement are offered.
The purpose of this study was to help students who are enrolled in a first-year experience program increase their academic motivation through identification, development, and application of their personal strengths. An experimental design was implemented with 220 college freshmen involved in a freshman seminar program in an attempt to answer the research question: How is the academic motivation of freshmen college students influenced by participation in a self-assessment process designed to assist them in identifying their personal strengths? The Academic Motivation Scale (Vallerand et al., 1992) was administered as a pretest and posttest measure of the dependent variable, academic motivation. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted for analysis of the data. After controlling for gender, degree aspirations and pretest there were no significant differences. Analysis of the data indicated that academic motivation tended to decrease across subjects in both the experimental and control groups, though this decrease was not statistically significant.
The majority of college students across the country have identified spirituality as an important part of their life (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011), and many evangelical Christian colleges are committed to facilitating such growth (CCCU, 2009). Although a variety of factors contribute to spiritual growth among students (Astin et al., 2011), this study identified the campus climate for diversity as another important contributor to spirituality for all students. The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between the campus climate for diversity and spirituality among students at faith-based schools. The following research question guided the study: What are the relationships among spirituality (religious behaviors and spiritual well-being) and (a) certain demographic variables (race/ethnicity, gender), (b) compositional diversity, (c) the behavioral campus climate for diversity (positive and negative cross-racial interactions), and (d) the psychological campus climate for diversity (sense of belonging, overall satisfaction) among traditional undergraduate college students at evangelical, faith-based institutions? Structural equation modeling (SEM) was utilized to test the theory that campus climate for diversity contributes to the variation in religious behaviors and spiritual well-being among college students. The participants for this study were 3,501 (N = 3501) senior undergraduate students from 21 faith-based schools. The findings indicated that the climate for diversity accounted for 25% of the variance in spirituality for students of color and 15% of the variance for White students. The difference in the explanatory power of racial climate demonstrates that the climate for diversity has a greater potential impact on the spirituality of students of color, raising a significant concern for faith-based schools that are committed to the spiritual development of all students. This study also identified that the direct causal paths to spirituality were different for students of color and White students. Sense of belonging emerged as the single direct predictor of spirituality for students of color, whereas overall satisfaction emerged as the single direct predictor for White students. Additionally, results from an analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the indicator variables demonstrated that White students had significantly higher sense of belonging and satisfaction than students of color.
THRIVING IN COLLEGE: PREDICTORS OF HONORS STUDENT ACADEMIC, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING

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Resources are invested to recruit the best and brightest students into honors programs and colleges across the United States, yet little is known about honors students’ holistic success and well-being. Although honors students often perform well academically, there is evidence they may experience challenges to their psychological and social well-being (Walker, 2012). The conceptual framework of thriving, defined as academic, psychological, and social well-being (Schreiner, 2010a), provided the context of this study of honors students. The purpose of this study was to determine how well a national model of thriving fit an honors student sample and the extent to which a psychological sense of community, campus involvement, student-faculty interaction, spirituality, and student demographic characteristics contributed to the variation in honors students’ thriving. The Thriving Quotient (TQ; Schreiner, 2012) was administered to participants in this longitudinal study to explore pathways to honors student thriving over the course of an academic semester. Participants included 945 traditional-aged college students enrolled in 11 honors programs or colleges, representing a variety of United States private and public institutions with differing Carnegie classifications. The sample was predominantly White (92.9%) and female (76.3%). Structural equation modeling (SEM) indicated that the existing model of college student thriving among traditional undergraduates was a poor fit; therefore, an alternative model was created that evidenced an acceptable fit to this sample of honors students ($\chi^2_{(173)} = 711.721; p < .000; CFI = .895; RMSEA = .057$). In this model, a psychological sense of community was the strongest predictor of the variance in honors student thriving, followed by campus involvement, student-faculty interaction, and spirituality. Recommendations for practice to help honors students thrive in college include (a) establishing a sense of community on campus, (b) encouraging honors students to become selectively involved on campus, (c) engaging faculty in appreciative advising with honors students, (d) recognizing spirituality as a potential pathway to honors students’ thriving, and (e) expending resources on programming to support and enhance honors students’ psychological well-being.
HOW FEMALE PROFESSIONALS SUCCESSFULLY PROCESS AND NEGOTIATE INVOLUNTARY JOB LOSS AT FAITH-BASED COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES: A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY

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Using a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006), this qualitative study examined how 8 female senior-level professionals employed at faith-based colleges and universities processed and navigated the experience of involuntary job loss and successfully transitioned to another position. The purpose of this research was to contribute to the field of positive psychology. As such, the theoretical framework of psychological capital (PsyCap; Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007) was foundational in creating the interview protocol. Questions were designed by the researcher to reveal if indicators of the 4 PsyCap capacities of hope, self-efficacy, resiliency, or optimism were evident in women’s responses. Analysis of these findings revealed that PsyCap capacities were present yet supported and propelled by 2 central tenets—the participants’ expression of faith (Pargament & Mahoney, 2009) and the ethic of care, based on the ethic of care theory introduced and developed by Noddings (1984). In addition, all of the participants recognized an atmosphere of supportive relationships and acknowledged that the encouragement and love extended by family, friends, and colleagues contributed to their ability to move forward. Results from this study suggest that spirituality is a viable capacity to be considered by proponents of the PsyCap construct. Recommendations include broadening this same study to women who do not work at faith-based colleges and universities, as well as extending the study to include men to gain a clearer understanding of the gender differences that may arise between males and females in navigating the experience of involuntary job loss.
COGNITIVE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AMONG INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS 
STUDYING AT HIGHLY SELECTIVE 
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For centuries, students have sought postsecondary education outside of their home countries. What has changed is the number of international students who are seeking an education abroad (Bista & Foster, 2011). For the sixth consecutive year, higher education institutions in the United States have experienced an influx of international students (Open Doors, 2012). This unique student population has created a need for university officials to better understand its benefits and challenges. Furthermore, if the academic goals of these international students are to be met, then effective student support programs are needed. International students have reported that they consider academic achievement an important factor when choosing to study in the United States (Grey, 2002; Heggins & Jackson, 2003; Lee & Rice, 2007; Mamiseishvili, 2010; Misra, Crist, & Burant, 2003; Otten, 2003) and expect positive educational outcomes (Arkoudis, 2009; Grey, 2002; Heggins & Jackson, 2003; Mamiseishvili, 2010; Misra et al., 2003). Although many factors contribute to academic achievement, this research study identified cognitive skills development as an important contributor to ensuring that international students reach their educational goals. The following research questions guided the study: What are the relationships among cognitive skills development and (a) background characteristics, (b) pre-college experiences, and (c) college experiences among international students studying at highly selective institutions in California? And, what are the direct and indirect effects of writing proficiency on cognitive skills development among international students studying at highly selective institutions in California? Structural equation modeling (SEM) was utilized to test the hypothesis that background characteristics, pre-college experiences, college experiences, and writing proficiency contribute to the different rates of cognitive skills growth experienced among international students. The participants for the study were 875 international students from 9 high research universities in the United States. The findings indicated that the background characteristics, pre-college experiences, and college experiences accounted for 57% of the variance in cognitive skills development among international students and that writing proficiency had both indirect and direct effects (total standardized effect: .622) in the growth in cognitive skills among international students. Implications for practice are included to underscore the need to support this population group.
This 3-year narrative study tells the stories of 5 women leaders working within the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU). Women leaders are under-represented within this sector of higher education compared to other religious and/or private higher education institutions. Two of the participants hold positional leadership within academic affairs, 2 within student life, and 1 within college financial services. From the women’s stories, 10 themes emerged. Those 10 themes clustered into 3 broader headings resonating with existing gender and leadership research (Ayman & Korabik, 2010), authentic leadership development theory (Avolio & Luthans, 2006), and guidelines for narrative analysis (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000): (a) the landscape or cultural setting, (b) leadership identity or the internal journey of leaders, and (c) relationships with others or interpersonal dynamics. Landscape includes the following themes connected to the women’s leadership context: (a) personal and institutional theological commitments, (b) generational differences, (c) family-work balance, and (d) consequences of role incongruence. The discussion of leadership identity contains an exploration of transformational and androgynous leadership, (f) impostor syndrome, and (g) psychological capital. The final prevalent theme, relationships with others, consists of (h) the women’s commitment to relationships, (i) the complicated nature of those relationships, and (j) the role of mentoring in their lives. The findings urge Christian higher education institutions to consider 5 recommendations: (a) Be attentive to Christian culture for both positive and negative forces impacting leaders; (b) expand leadership development programs to include building personal, psychological capacities and adopting fluid leadership behaviors based on context; (c) adopt and reward collaborative practices to encourage efficiencies and build on traditional strengths noted in female leaders; (d) explore and create family-friendly policies and programs to attract and retain talented leaders; and (e) cultivate mentoring cultures to develop and sustain mentors and protégés.
Numerous studies have demonstrated the positive correlation between employee engagement and organizational performance (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1997; Lopus, 2007). However, research on employee engagement within the context of higher education is limited. This dissertation was an attempt to study employee engagement within the distinctive context of faith-based higher education through combining The Gallup Organization’s workplace and employee engagement focus, the “Great Colleges to Work For” categories that The Chronicle of Higher Education found to be unique to higher education, and the characteristics distinctive of faith-based non-profits identified by the Best Christian Workplace Institute (BCWI) survey. For this project, an exploratory comparative case study research design was used to study two universities that are atypical examples of excellence as measured by the BCWI survey. Through 53 interviews with university employees and document analysis, the following research question was explored: What are the institutional characteristics that foster employee engagement at 2 faith-based universities that exhibit consistently high ranking based on employee self-reported results on the Best Christian Workplace Institute (BCWI) survey? Coding and analysis of the interview transcripts was conducted using NVIVO 10 software, first through coding words and phrases, then grouping similar language, and finally arranging the data into broader meaning units. The primary themes and sub-themes emerged from these broader meaning units, which were then compared and analyzed to better understand the experiences of the university employees, the motivations and leadership styles of their administrative leaders, and the overall campus culture. Cross-case synthesis was used to identify the common characteristics and patterns, as well as the significant differences and unique attributes of each case study institution. Despite substantial differences between the 2 institutions, many of the characteristics that fostered employee engagement on the 2 campuses overlapped. The findings revealed that the shared contextual theme of presidential alignment with culture; the shared primary themes of mission, community, and faith influence; and the shared sub-themes of engaged human resource departments and limited policy all contributed to the atypically high engagement levels on both campuses.
For-profit colleges are under scrutiny with questions about quality of curriculum, quality of faculty and instruction, and the value of the degree for the high-priced tuition. The high debt-load and low levels of persistence among students who enter for-profit institutions raise the level of concern for these students, many of whom are older and are from under-represented minorities. However, there is little in the literature about the characteristics of student success and persistence in the for-profit sector. Because many students in the for-profit sector approach their education process as consumers, establishing a link between student satisfaction and persistence could provide for-profit colleges with strategies for enabling more students to complete their education. The purpose of this study was to examine this relationship between student satisfaction and persistence using the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI; Schreiner & Juillerat, 1993). Data were collected on 5,718 students who completed the Two-year Career and Private School SSI Form B online at 21 for-profit schools. Additionally, persistence data were collected one term and one year after the administration of the SSI. Models to predict persistence were developed using structural equation modeling, which demonstrated a small relationship between SSI scales scores and term persistence \( R^2 = .03 \) as well as year persistence \( R^2 = .07 \). A third model was developed with intent to choose the institution again as the outcome; this model exhibited a much stronger relationship between satisfaction and intent to persist \( R^2 = .36 \). Although student satisfaction with institutional factors such as commitment to student welfare and integrity were hypothesized to have a significant effect on persistence in this student population, the findings indicate that the majority of the predictors of actual persistence in the for-profit environment remain unknown. However, based on the predictors of intent to choose the institution again, satisfaction does play a significant role in students’ perceptions of institutional effectiveness and word-of-mouth reputation. Thus, the regular assessment of student satisfaction provides relevant information administrators can use to manage school reputation, admissions, and alumni relations. Further research is needed to continue defining the characteristics that affect actual student persistence in the for-profit sector.
The California Community College (CCC) system has faced many challenges over the years but has been able to prove its success and durability by annually producing educated students. One challenge that faces the community college in California is reduced funding from the State. The colleges have continued to exist and expand through financially flush as well as fiscally strict budget years. The CCC has persisted through complex state and government changes particularly to the funding system, tuition increases, and state-wide hiring freezes. The purpose of this study was to identify the components of budgetary differences among thriving, maintaining, and struggling institutions within the CCC system. An additional purpose of this study was to create, based upon the findings of this study, an effective financial model for CCCs to assist them in successfully handling tough budget years. This research focuses on the components that comprise a successful budget for CCCs. Through this research there were a number of significant findings based on criteria that were determined to be components of the annual budgeting process. These findings presents the significance levels of the criteria and found that the mission of the institution and maintaining an excess reserve are vital to an institution’s success in budgeting.
FOSTERING RESILIENCE IN LATINA STUDENTS

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This qualitative study focuses on developing a grounded theory regarding the process involved in fostering resilience in Latina students who succeed in achieving their academic goals. Using purposeful random sampling, eleven participants were selected from three west coast universities: a state university, a private faith-based university, and a private Hispanic serving university. Semi-structured interview protocols were utilized in first and second round interviews, followed by a final focus group for member-checking. Findings suggest key components occur at turning points in life to foster resilience and academic success. The central components for resilience included cultural elements of *las ganas*, *la familia*, *un paso a la vez*, support programs, and the objective to become role models and contribute as positive change agents in their culture and communities. More specifically, *ganas* represented the motivation to act with a strong sense of self-determination; *la familia* extended beyond biological family to include *comadres* (close female friends) and institutional agents; and *un paso a la vez* represented the idea of personal strategies applied to stay focused on their academic goals. The final focus group with participants provided an important methodological benefit that was unique to this study.
PURPOSE IN LIFE: A PATHWAY TO ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT AND SUCCESS

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Through path analysis, the current study sought to further examine the effects of variables that are related to college students’ academic success and to explore the effects of two particular variables, purpose in life and academic engagement, that have been under-researched in the higher education literature. The path model was delineated based on previous research that had supported the relationship of student involvement, faculty student interaction, spirituality, purpose in life, and academic engagement to academic success, when student background characteristics are controlled. An online survey containing numerous measures of each variable in the path was administered to all students who were juniors or seniors at the University of North Alabama. A response rate of 24% resulted in 531 surveys that were used in the multiple linear regression equation to predict self-reported learning gains and 467 usable surveys for the multiple linear regression equation to predict cumulative GPA. The path model was able to explain 43% of the variance in cumulative GPA and 41% of the variance in self-reported learning gains. More specifically, this study revealed that academic engagement is a strong predictor of college student success, and that purpose in life and faculty-student interaction are significantly predictive of students’ levels of academic engagement, after controlling for student background characteristics. An unexpected finding was that there was no direct effect of student ethnicity, gender, or first-generation status on academic engagement, indicating that this variable is one that is amenable to change and can be impacted significantly through faculty-student interaction, campus involvement, and purpose in life. The findings in this study indicate that students are searching for meaning and purpose, that faculty interaction and spirituality predict purpose in life, that purpose in life and faculty interaction predict academic engagement, and that academic engagement predicts academic success. Based on these findings, the implications for higher education are to cultivate the search for meaning, to assist students in finding purpose in life, and to promote the types of faculty-student interaction that lead to academic engagement.
Due to social and economic forces in Cambodia, marginalized youth rarely experience educational mobility without intervention from external organizations. This study presents the results of a narrative study on the educational mobility of seven Khmer international students pursuing higher education in the United States who share the common background of (a) having been orphaned or abandoned as children, (b) having become residents in the same International Non-Government Organization (NGO) orphanage in Cambodia, and (c) at the time of the study, having achieved the educational status of a Junior or Senior at a postsecondary institution in the United States. Findings suggest that the participants’ educational mobility was stimulated by a series of effective interventions, each initiated by the NGO over an extended period of time in the form of meaningful relationships and supportive environments. Findings of this study inform the process of educational mobility for marginalized Khmer youth and are relevant to organizations and leaders focused on the educational mobility of marginalized youth worldwide.
This study presents the results of an attributional retraining intervention on community college students in the Southwest United States. Responses to both the pre-test and post-test were received by 86 students, divided into experimental and control groups. The results of the ANOVA found that Attributional Retraining increases students’ level of Perceived Academic Control. However, an ANCOVA showed that Attributional Retraining did not increase students’ final course grades, while controlling for the students’ first exam score. Higher levels of preoccupation with failure were found to increase the amount of change in Perceived Academic Control for students receiving the Attributional Retraining intervention. Also, students who were low in pre-test levels of Perceived Academic Control benefitted most from an Attributional Retraining Intervention. Finally, change in Perceived Academic Control between the pre-test and post-test was found to increase students’ final course grades.
THE IMPACT OF COLLEGE STUDENT INDEBTEDNESS ON PERSISTENCE

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With cumulative student loan indebtedness in the United States now exceeding $1.1 trillion and the economy slowly emerging from the Great Recession of 2008, the impact of financial aid on college choice and persistence merits focused research. This study of 1,391 full-time undergraduate students at a private, 4-year institution in the Southwest was based on a modified version of the financial nexus model (Paulsen & St. John, 2002; St. John, Paulsen, & Starkey, 1996) to answer the research question: To what extent do indebtedness and perception of the value of tuition predict fall-to-fall retention, after controlling for student demographic and employment characteristics? Whereas St. John et al. developed the financial nexus model based on 1986-1987 data from 18,836 students from a multi-institutional, national database (NPSAS:87), this study analyzed data from a single institution in a time period during which college costs nationally had escalated significantly and the average total debt by students with bachelor’s degrees increased 23.5%. The major finding from this study is that the addition of amounts borrowed by students in the form of federal or private loans to the persistence equation did not increase the odds of being able to classify students correctly as persisters or dropouts; this finding differs from previous research by St. John et al. and Paulsen and St. John. Whether those variables were related to perception (i.e., the perceived value of tuition) or actual (i.e., actual amounts of federal and private loans borrowed) did not increase the odds of being able to determine whether a student would persist or not at this institution.
Higher education leaders in the 21st century are faced with challenges of affordability, accessibility, and increased demand for postsecondary education. The recent growth of online educational programs in the United States provides institutions with potential solutions to these challenges; yet, persistence rates continue to lag behind traditional face-to-face educational environments. Additionally, academic achievement and positive student development capacities within the online learning environment are questioned by administrators. Despite continued scrutiny of online educational environments, there is little research on interventions to impact student success and persistence. To increase the base of knowledge surrounding student success in online learning environments, the current research examined the impact of synchronous telecommunication interactions between students and institutional support staff. This investigation employed an experimental pretest-posttest control group design to measure the effect of the intervention on a number of student success variables. The study included data from 74 undergraduate students enrolled in a required first-year introductory course at a private liberal arts institution who were randomly assigned to treatment and control groups. The treatment group received weekly telecommunication interactions, and the control group received weekly emails communications over an 8-week academic session. Dependent variables in this study included term-to-term persistence, intent to reenroll, course grades, and college student thriving. Although the results of an ANOVA indicated no significant differences in intention to reenroll between the 2 groups, a chi-square analysis revealed that those in the treatment group were significantly more likely to enroll the following term than those in the control group. An ANCOVA, with incoming GPA as the covariate, determined there were significant group differences in course grades between treatment and control groups, with participants in the treatment group earning higher course grades than those in the control group. Using pretest scores as covariates, a MANCOVA discovered an effect of the intervention on intrapersonal thriving, but not academic or interpersonal thriving. Implications for practice are discussed, providing recommendations for practice beneficial for effective online student success initiatives.
SHIFTING IDENTITIES: THE IMPACT OF THE RESIDENT ASSISTANT EXPERIENCE ON RECENT COLLEGE GRADUATES’ LEADERSHIP CAPACITIES

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This dissertation is a qualitative research study exploring alumni perceptions of their Resident Assistant (RA) servant leadership experience on a Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU) campus; it describes the influence of the RA experience on their servant leadership skills 5 to 10 years post-graduation. Through a series of interviews, the specific aim was to uncover the meaning these individuals have made from their RA experience as it relates to their practice of servant leadership in their current lives. Using a grounded theory methodological approach, this study attempted to ascertain a theory or identifiable construct of experience that related to having been an RA at a CCCU institution. Of significant interest for this study was the servant leadership development that occurred during the RA experience and how that component has impacted their current lives. This study included a comprehensive literature review regarding the positive outcomes associated with being an RA while in college as well as the positive outcomes of college involvement. The study depicted an analysis of servant leadership, due to its wide acceptance and philosophical match with CCCU institutions; it was also the leadership model utilized by the institution where the participants served as RAs. This qualitative study contributed to previous research by presenting a grounded theory with a core theme of three identity shifts. The central theme of pivotal point provided the appropriate description for the change that occurred in the participants’ lives. The former RAs unanimously identified the role as important to their overall identity development. Findings suggest the RA experience caused a significant disruption in self-perception, interpersonal communication, and personal leadership theory. Over time, the experience led to the emergence of a more refined and understood personal, relational, and leadership identity. The five categories of self-awareness, empathy, communication, community development, and stewardship comprised the themes by adding depth and understanding to the participants’ experience. The RA role served as a pivotal point to their current identity as professionals, friends and family members, and community liaisons.
This qualitative research study looked at 13 students who because of their backgrounds and/or family environments were considered to be high risk of educational failure, but against the odds completed a 4-year degree with honors. Analysis of the open-ended interview protocol produced 5 emergent themes: (a) self-described individual attributes that led to participant success; (b) perceived barriers to success: poor mindset, life choices, and finances; (c) support systems that contributed to participant success; (d) sources of internal and external motivation to work toward the desired goal of education; and (e) the influence of personal faith or spirituality.
PREDICTORS OF SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP:
APPLICATION OF THE SOCIAL CHANGE MODEL TO
AN EASTERN EUROPEAN UNDERGRADUATE
POPULATION

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The European Union (EU) has identified active citizenship as an essential life skill and universities as key strategic partners in its development. However, little progress has been made toward identifying adequate indicators for active citizenship, despite this being a key item for educational reform. This study assesses predictors of socially responsible leadership within an Eastern European undergraduate student population. The predictors include: a psychological sense of community, self-reported learning gains, faculty-student and student life staff-student interaction, leadership development program, formal student leader position, student council involvement, volunteer program involvement, students’ place of residence, gender, age, class, group identification, ethnic minority status, European Union citizen status, and international student status. Usable responses were collected from 421 students, for a response rate of 76%. Utilizing hierarchical multiple regression analyses to control for student demographic variables, community-level and program-level predictors were analyzed for their contribution to students’ scores on the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale – Revised Version II. Much of the leadership literature assesses leadership development solely on the basis of program participation, missing the larger institutional learning culture of the institution. The findings revealed that a psychological sense of community, a variable unique to research of the leadership development of undergraduate students, was found to be a powerful predictor of socially responsible leadership. Students who had a higher sense of belonging, mattering, emotional connection, and interdependence within the campus community were more likely to be engaged in creating positive social change for others. The findings of this study also reveal that learning gains in critical thinking, interpersonal skills, and understanding the problems facing one’s community are perhaps more important to the development of socially responsible leadership than the development of specific leadership skills. Having accounted for a psychological sense of community and learning gains, much of the power of the remaining variables for predicting variation in socially responsible leadership disappears. Contrary to the findings of other studies, involvement in a formal student leader position was found to be negatively predictive of socially responsible leadership. Discussion of the findings, limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research are provide.
Moving beyond secular boundaries and entering into the narrowly defined area of Christian Higher Education, this research comprehensively explores environments where Christian values are experienced and transmitted, promoting individual faith development in Jesus Christ. Undergraduate and alumni participants identified specific activities taking place at a Christian institution of higher learning that best challenged and supported (Sanford, 1966) faith development in traditionally aged college students. A phenomenological approach provided a logical, systematic, and coherent resource for carrying out analysis and synthesis needed to arrive at essential descriptions of experience (Moustakas, 1994). Standard open-ended interviews were conducted, and wording and question sequence were predetermined (Patton, 2002). The phenomenological approach was identified and then described through subjective experiences of the participants. Recurring words and themes were categorized allowing for the volume data generated to be synthesized. Habitual phrases in the transcriptions implying a fostering or hindrance of personal faith development were charted to establish emerging categories, patterns, and themes. This study has significance for changing the philosophy of current student development programs at Christian colleges. The findings suggest a paradigm shift in current models of student development to provide a holistic approach in the faith development of traditionally aged college students. Specific activities were identified and defined relating to campus involvement, academic experiences, mentoring relationships, and local church involvement promoting individual faith development. The results of this study can provide educators insight into what challenges and supports best initiate individual faith development in Jesus Christ.
This historical narrative analysis traces the emergence of the strengths philosophy and its movement into Christian higher education using data collected between 2009 and 2010. Beginning with a focus on Don Clifton, Lee Noel, and Edward “Chip” Anderson, a theoretical model from social movement literature is used to construct the narrative around the emergence, institutionalization, and diffusion stages of the strengths philosophy into Christian higher education. The emergence considers the individual and collective impact of Clifton, Noel, and Anderson on the strengths philosophy as well as the organizational resources brought to assist in the emergence process. The process leading up to the creation of the StrengthsFinder instrument in the institutionalization stage commoditized the strengths philosophy and distributed the tool to over 8,000,000 individuals, and 1,000,000 educational consumers. This online distribution led to the next phase of diffusion, where the model characterizes the stage with a loss of control and the collective identity moving into the public domain, where factionalism is common. Within the Christian higher education context, a separate narrative is formed in parallel with the larger narrative previously described. In this narrative, the emergence revolves around Anderson and his work to theologically reconcile the strengths philosophy to the Christian higher education environment. Taking advantage of existing networks, the institutionalization phase considers the use of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities as a potential source of alignment with the strengths philosophy. The diffusion phase in this narrative emphasizes the role of the Noel Academy at Azusa Pacific University and a shift from the StrengthsFinder tool to the broader strengths philosophy that predates the StrengthsFinder instrument. The analysis of the narrative includes a reexamination of the emergence, institutionalization, and diffusion stage as well as Schein’s theoretical model of organizational culture of espoused beliefs and values, artifacts, and basic underlying assumptions. From this analysis, additional meaning is made from the historical narrative.
This study surveyed 239 community college students from Southern California to determine if the role of faculty and staff advisors of student clubs and organizations of intercultural, multicultural, and ethnic origin affected student outcomes in multicultural competence and career goals. These students participated in 42 different culturally and ethnically diverse student organizations from 12 different campuses. Multiple regression analyses identified faculty/staff advisors characteristics and how those characteristics enhanced the students’ multicultural awareness and career goals. The results of this study confirm the idea that faculty/staff advisors indeed enhance student goals. The student participation in these organizations also promotes multicultural competence and shows that the cultivation of the multicultural competence has a significant impact in promoting career goals.
Problem-solving skills and complex-reasoning ability are necessary skills for health professionals to not only enter the current workforce but also to become innovative leaders of future practice. Not all doctoral health professions students have strong entering critical thinking skills or gain sufficient skills necessary for clinical reasoning over the length of their program. This study describes how aspects of a learning environment, including active learning strategies and student academic engagement, can influence the variation in students’ levels of critical thinking at graduation. A new instrument to measure Active Learning in health professions (the ALHPS) was developed and demonstrated good fit to the sample data. This instrument was integral to building and testing a structural model of the development of critical thinking in health professions students using structural equation modeling. Critical thinking was measured using the Health Science Reasoning Test (HSRT) at entry to the program and again at graduation for 182 students from four doctoral health professions programs (optometry, dentistry, podiatry, and physical therapy) in one university. The major finding of the study was that active teaching and learning strategies influence the academic engagement of students, which in turn influences their critical thinking ability. Engaged Learning, defined for this graduate sample as meaningfully processing and being energized by the learning process, emerged as the primary predictor of critical thinking among all students; active learning emerged as the largest single contributor to engaged learning and indirectly contributed to the variation in critical thinking skills at graduation. Furthermore, the presence of an engaging learning environment is even more essential for non-native English speakers’ growth in critical thinking. Implications for practice highlight active learning strategies such as collaborative learning pedagogies that support higher-order thinking development in a learning-centered environment.
CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY A STRENGTHS-ORIENTED INTERVENTION ON TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN PRE-EXISTING TEAMS

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This qualitative study spotlights a grounded theory regarding contributions to affect- and cognition-based trust by a strengths-oriented intervention in pre-existing teams. Using purposeful and convenience sampling, eighteen participants in a strengths-oriented intervention from two different regions of the Pacific Northwest were selected. A semi-structured interview protocol was used in interviews conducted within three months of the intervention. Results were verified through an independent evaluation and comparisons to the broader literature on trust development in teams. Findings suggest contributions were made to both affect- and cognition-based trust in the teams that participated in the intervention. The identified components of affect-based trust were increased levels of vulnerability, actions that communicate value, and the ability to resolve conflict. Components identified as contributions to cognition-based trust included self-awareness, the validation of fellow team-members, and an increase in the knowledge-based in regard to fellow team members. Furthermore, a helical model of trust development was affirmed by participants who recounted their respective team’s positive development.
There is considerable controversy in both psychology and theology concerning the topic of the advancement of moral maturity. This issue continues to be the topic of inquiry as theories of adult moral maturity are increasingly seeking answers to this perplexing topic. The purpose of this study was to investigate the pathway from moral knowledge to moral action as it relates to educational purposes. Education has been found to have a profound impact on moral maturity. Included in this study was an investigation into the nature of the effect of educational programs and related social factors relevant to moral growth. The point of interest for this research study was the complex nature of these various educational experiences and their relevance to the pathway from moral knowledge to moral action. The target population for this research study was relatively small Bible colleges who primarily function is the training of students for ministerial purposes. The sample used for this research study was comprised of 200 students from 3 Bible colleges. The subjects were administered a student questionnaire and the DIT-2. The data generated from these indexes provided the basis for the quantitative portion of this study. In addition, 9 students from the 3 Bible colleges were interviewed concerning their perceptions about their own moral development during their college years. Multiple regressions analysis was used to determine the nature of the relationship between the subjects’ P scores as indicated on the DIT-2 and a number of educational experiences. An attempt was being made to determine the frequency as well as the effect of the educational experiences on the subjects’ P scores. The finding of this study indicated that 84% of the subjects had moral reasoning skills below their current educational level, with no significant relationships indicated on the multiple regression analyses. The students who were interviewed acknowledged that a number of the educational experiences had a compelling effect on their own moral maturity. This disparity between student perception of their own moral maturity and the P scores as indicated on the DIT-2 was an interesting factor of this study.
This phenomenological study presents the experiences of seven undergraduate students on a five-week short-term mission (STM) trip to Vietnam. The data collected included journals, a signature photograph, and an extended interview. Primarily, to fulfill the goal of phenomenological research, the data were presented as a full description of the experience. Secondarily, the data analysis continued to address the research questions: 1) What are the components of an effective STM trip? 2) What impact did the STM trip have on the participants? The findings included emergent themes in the areas of learning facilitation, team training, and general STM components for the first research question. Themes also emerged for the second research question under the areas of Vietnamese cultural awareness, spiritual development, and personal development. In addition to the emergent themes that were developed from the participants, the principle researcher identified the following policy recommendations, along with practical examples: 1) Establish purposeful relationships with cultural guides in the host country, 2) Adopt student learning objectives and a learning-centered paradigm, 3) Provide substantial pre-trip training, and 4) Establish a clear program for post-trip reflection and assessment.
Within the 105 member institutions of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU), women continue to be underrepresented in high-level leadership positions, where overall they hold 16.5% of the cabinet-level positions. Researchers have spent considerable time studying the prejudices, stereotypes, negative perceptions, and barriers women face in obtaining high-level leadership positions in organizations, but little research exists regarding the barriers women might face as they pursue high-level leadership roles in evangelical Christian higher education. The purpose of this study was to identify gender and positional effects on individuals’ perceptions of ideal leadership qualities. The study utilized Eagly and Karau’s (2002) role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders as a theoretical framework to assess whether participants’ perceptions of characteristics attributed to ideal CCCU leaders differ by the leaders’ gender and position and by the participants’ gender and position. A total of 1,032 faculty, staff, and administrators equally divided between men and women, five from CCCU member institutions were asked to rate perceptions of relationally-oriented, task-oriented, and other leadership characteristics that are most desired for ideal leaders in the CCCU. Utilizing a 2 x 3 x 6 between-subjects multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), this research explored the extent to which the gender of the participant, the position of the participant, and the target leader type impacted perceptions of qualities that are desired for ideal leaders in CCCU member institutions. There were two major findings in this study. First, faculty, staff, and administrators rated desired leadership characteristics of effective female leaders similarly to effective male leaders. The role congruity discovered in this sample indicated that, at least on these campuses, there was no social-cognitive explanation for prejudice to exist toward women in leadership and therefore there is likely to be an acceptance of women in these roles. Second, transformational and relational leadership styles were the desired models of leadership for these participants, regardless of the gender or position of the leader. Discussion of the findings, limitations, and recommendations for actions and further research are provided.
DEFINING AND MEASURING FACULTY ENGAGEMENT: VALIDATION OF THE FACULTY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

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Much of the current research on the faculty experience has focused on the frequency of faculty behaviors and interactions to explore productivity and the influence on positive student outcomes (Astin, 1984; Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995; Kuh, 2003; Kuh & Hu, 2001). However, the personal experience, or the faculty member’s psychological engagement, has received much less attention; yet, it is a potential contributor to faculty longevity and effectiveness (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007; Huston, Norman, & Ambrose, 2007; O’Meara, Terosky, & Neumann, 2009). Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi’s (2005) preliminary definition of faculty engagement incorporates enjoyment in the challenge of one or more of the areas of teaching, research, and service, as well as experiencing congruence between one’s values and those implicit in the demands of the task; however, their definition has not been empirically tested. The purpose of this study was to fill the gap in research created by an overemphasis on behavioral engagement by developing a richer definition of faculty engagement, as well as to refine and validate the Faculty Engagement Survey (FES), an instrument based on Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi’s conceptual framework that was designed to measure the components that encompass faculty engagement in the areas of teaching, research, and service. Data collected from 522 full-time undergraduate faculty members employed at ten 4-year colleges and universities across the United States were analyzed using structural equation modeling. The final first-order, 6-factor model of faculty engagement that emerged from the confirmatory factor analysis fits the data well (CFI = .948; RMSEA = .051) and indicates that faculty engagement is not a higher-order construct. The model suggests that faculty members experience psychological engagement in one or more roles but may not be equally engaged in teaching, research, and service. Given the importance of faculty longevity and effectiveness in influencing positive student outcomes, the results of this study suggest several changes may be necessary in faculty workload and expectations, hiring practices, faculty development, and the doctoral preparation of the next generation of faculty.
This research uses the Defining Issues Test-2 (DIT-2) to investigate the cognitive moral development of college seniors in adult degree completion (ADC) programs and traditional undergraduate (TU) programs at three Council of Christian College and University institutions. Overall, TU students had significantly higher scores on the DIT-2, TU students in the West and Midwest scored significantly higher than those in the South. Volunteerism did not correlate with DIT-2 scores. There was an inverse correlation between religious orthodoxy and DIT-2 scores for the sample and TU students; the same two groups also demonstrated a significant correlation between religious orthodoxy and self-reported conservatism. Finally, the sample did not score significantly higher on the DIT-2 than the 42.3 average for American university students.
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF STRENGTHS-BASED CURRICULA IN PROMOTING FIRST-YEAR COLLEGE STUDENT SUCCESS

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Initial research supports the use of strengths-based models as a way of nurturing student success, but existing studies have not assessed the relative effectiveness of various types of strengths-based approaches in promoting desired outcomes. The current research examined the impact of 2 separate strengths-based models, referred to throughout the study as the talent identification and strengths development interventions. This investigation utilized an experimental pretest-posttest waiting list control group design to compare the relative impact of these strengths-based curriculum types to each other and to a traditionally-implemented curriculum in a first-year seminar course, which serves as the control condition. Student assignment to curriculum type was randomly determined, and the study included data from 388 undergraduates enrolled in a required first-year seminar course at a private liberal arts institution. The dependent variables in this investigation included academic engagement, hope, perceived academic control, achievement goal orientation, and mindset. A one-way MANCOVA conducted to examine the effect of the 2 strengths-based approaches on academic engagement, hope, and perceived academic control indicated that these variables differed significantly across treatment condition such that the strengths development group had the highest adjusted posttest mean scores across all of these variables. Univariate ANCOVAs conducted on each depended measure to determine the locus of the statistically significant multivariate effect found that treatment condition significantly affected perceived academic control but not academic engagement or hope. Students in both strengths-based groups had significantly higher posttest levels of perceived academic control than did those in the control group. An ANCOVA comparing posttest mindset scores found that students in the talent identification group reported significantly lower posttest mindset scores than did those in the strengths development and control groups, indicative of a heightened tendency toward a fixed mindset for students in the talent identification condition following exposure to this curriculum. A chi-square analysis revealed that the strengths development condition has more students with a learning goal orientation at posttest, while the talent identification condition had more students with a performance goal orientation at the posttest than could be attributed to chance alone. Achievement goal orientation remained stable for the control group.
Despite increased access to higher education for previously underrepresented ethnic groups, the graduation rates of African Americans and Latinos in higher education pale in comparison to their Caucasian and Asian peers (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010). In contrast, Asians are graduating at rates higher than Caucasians; however, the literature reveals the Asian student college experience as isolated and disconnected from the campus community (Bowman, 2010; Ying, 2001). In the next 40 years, people of color will become the majority within the American population (Passel & Cohn, 2008), yet few interventions seem to be resolving the apparent disparity in success across ethnic groups in higher education (McWhorter, 2005). Researchers have suggested that the psychological experiences of students may provide a new means for understanding why students persist to graduation (Bean & Eaton, 2002). Students’ psychological processes have been explored in the literature as they relate to the academic, social, and emotional success of students; that is, the ways students thrive on campus (Schreiner, 2010c). Thriving students demonstrate high levels of interpersonal, intrapersonal, and academic well-being. The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which student demographic characteristics, campus environmental characteristics, student spirituality, and psychological sense of community explain the variation in thriving among students of color. The *Thriving Quotient*, a reliable and valid instrument that measures thriving across five factors (Schreiner, McIntosh, Nelson, & Pothoven, 2009), was utilized to explore the pathways to thriving in a sample of 7,956 students attending 59 institutions. Using structural equation modeling (SEM), unique pathways to thriving for Caucasian, African American, Asian, and Latino students were explored in this study. A psychological sense of community emerged as the primary predictor of thriving among all student groups, and spirituality emerged as the largest single contributor to a sense of community among students of color, yet structural invariance across the four ethnic groups indicated that the pathways to thriving differ by ethnicity. Implications for practice are highlighted that can help students of color thrive in college.
Despite more than 35 years of research and programming related to student satisfaction with college, today’s academic community faces increasing pressure to bolster institutional performance metrics at the likely expense of resources that could otherwise be invested in improving the quality of student life. The current study was predicated on the literature establishing college satisfaction as a meaningful psychological correlate of beneficial student behaviors (Alves & Raposo, 2007; Edens, 2013; El Ansari, 2011; Gaier, 2003; Schreiner, 2009) and sought to explore relationships between the satisfaction outcome and other behavioral and psychological variables. Using data from 2,704 undergraduates at 13 North American colleges and universities, structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to identify unique class-level pathways to overall satisfaction with college. Each of the models significantly predicted variation in the satisfaction outcome, explaining from 51.4% of the variation for juniors to 61.8% for first-year students; models for sophomores and seniors accounted for 59.5% and 51.8% of variation, respectively. The construct of thriving (Schreiner, Pothoven, Nelson, & McIntosh, 2009), which comprises five factors representing intrapersonal, interpersonal, and academic domains of positive functioning in college students, has provided researchers a valuable tool for exploring psychological motivators of student behavior (Bean & Eaton, 2000). This study extends existing research on thriving and college satisfaction (Schreiner, Edens, & McIntosh, 2011) by disaggregating the five scales of thriving—Engaged Learning, Academic Determination, Social Connectedness, Positive Perspective, and Diverse Citizenship—to examine their individual contributions to satisfaction across academic class levels. Distinctive class-level models indicate that well-crafted interventions aimed at specific student groups have the potential to meaningfully influence the satisfaction outcome. The study’s recommendations include suggestions for programming that recognizes and responds to differences in the predictors of satisfaction among students of each academic class level.
BUILDING A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF ACADEMIC EFFORT FOR TRADITIONAL FIRST-YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS

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With retention and persistence-to-graduation rates showing little improvement in previous decades, institutions of higher education continue to seek ways to encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning in order to achieve. The primary purpose of this study was to examine the roles and relationships of selected psychological and social variables in predicting effort behaviors and semester GPA of traditional first-year students at six private residential institutions. Secondarily, this study’s purpose was to develop a theoretical model that would test the complex interplay of these variables related to student effort and semester GPA through the use of structural equation modeling (SEM). The research questions were: To what extent do psychological capital, hope, optimism, resiliency, self-efficacy, academic control, mindset, and institutional commitment predict first-year students’ levels of effort, after controlling for gender, high-school grades, and ethnicity? How well do conceptual models of academic effort and semester GPA that are based on these variables fit the data collected from this sample of first-year students, after controlling for gender, high-school grades, and ethnicity? The data for this correlational study were collected from 627 first-time freshmen at six different private residential colleges/universities located around the United States. The theoretical framework for this study was expectancy-value theory which assumes that choices are influenced by specific beliefs about ability, perceptions of task difficulty, individual goals, and by self-schema (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). SEM was used to analyze the data, allowing the exploration of relationships between multiple variables and indicators within a hypothesized model. Of the original eight independent variables, only hope, academic control, and mindset remained as predictors of effort. Together, these three constructs helped to explain 87% of the variance in the validated effort model with hope as the strongest indicator. This study adds to the literature by confirming the value of psychosocial constructs in explaining student achievement above and beyond prior academic performance. These findings provide higher education professionals the opportunity to strategically influence students’ personal responsibility for their learning which may offer increased opportunities for their success.
STILL MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE PERSON I AM BECOMING: A STUDY OF STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF A FACULTY WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THEIR LIVES

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The purpose of this study was to explore how faculty make a difference in the lives of high-achieving college students. Using a grounded theory qualitative method, twelve high-achieving students were interviewed about their experiences with faculty who had made a difference to them. The students defined the concept to make a difference as a positive change process created by a person. The study revealed that faculty make a difference in the lives of high-achieving students’ lives in five ways: (a) an increase in future opportunities, (b) an increase in confidence or belief in self, (c) an increase in learning and enthusiasm for subject material, (d) an affirmation of major or career plan, and (e) a change in thinking or perspective. Furthermore, the study identifies six characteristics of faculty who made a difference as perceived by high-achieving students: (a) resourceful/helpful, (b) available, (c) caring, (d) challenging/driven, (e) approachable, and (f) intelligent/knowledgeable. The most significant findings were how the faculty difference-makers influenced the futures of the high-achieving students and that students initiated the contact with the influential faculty. While this study yielded meaningful findings on how faculty make a difference in the lives of students as well as the characteristics of such faculty, more research is needed to increase faculty difference-making for all types of students. This study has several practical implications for colleges and universities in the areas of faculty recruitment and development, as well as for reducing the number of part-time faculty on campus.
The purpose of this study was to obtain data in measures of spirituality of adult students (25 years and older) in Christian non-traditional programs. One goal of the study was to develop a better understanding of adult spirituality. A secondary goal was to begin to establish baseline norms in measures of spirituality for adult students, providing comparative data for future institutional assessment. Utilizing a descriptive, cross-sectional survey approach and a causal comparative design, this study obtained data in measures of spirituality from 292 adult students in non-traditional programs and compared those data to that from 375 traditional-aged students in conventional college programs. Both samples were drawn from institutions within the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU). The independent variable was age as related to program type: adults 25 years and older in non-traditional programs and traditional-aged students 18 to 24 years in conventional college programs. The dependent variables in this study were measures of spirituality produced by the Furnishing the Soul Inventory (FSI). The FSI is a multidimensional psychometric tool developed around the theory of relational spirituality. It includes 22 measures of spirituality organized under five conceptual domains: (a) Connecting to God, (b) Knowing God, (c) Attachment to God, (d) Spiritual Tipping Points, and (e) Furnishing the Soul (Hall, 2007a). In addition to the spirituality measures, the FSI includes 19 program impact items designed to assess the extent to which students feel a particular curricular or co-curricular program has made an impact on their overall spiritual development while in college. Descriptive statistics showed that these adult students reflected a moderate to high degree of spiritual vitality based on the Furnishing the Soul model of relational spirituality. T tests results showed that there were significant differences between the adults and traditional-aged students in measures of spirituality ($p < .05$). These findings suggested a connection between the age of students and spiritual transformation.
The focus of this study is to extend the theoretical framework of Mezirow on the central phenomena of perspective transformation, specifically in the areas of triggering events and transformative learning outcomes. The purpose of this study is to explore the nature of triggering events and subsequent transformative outcomes specifically among adult graduate students. The research question asks, “What triggering events related to learning outcomes do adult graduate students experience in the process of transformative learning?” A qualitative study was conducted in order to identify and explore specific primary themes of experience in the process of personal transformation. Seven initial categories were discovered related to the student’s experience of transformational learning: (a) coursework, (b) interactivity, (c) environment, (d) self-realization, (e) visceral response, (f) integration, and (g) reorientation. The theoretical model indicates that intersecting cognitive and contextual experiences (transforming intersections) converge and interact with the established frame of reference (focused trajectory), which triggers a profound sense of self-realization (transforming awareness). The triggering event itself is understood as preceding the experience of perspective transformation. As identified in this study, the triggering event would be described as a transforming awareness resulting from cognitive, contextual, and affective experiences intersecting with the students’ established frame of reference. This transforming awareness created a perspective transformation through which a revised trajectory emerged. This new paradigm provided a lens through which the students’ prior trajectories were refined. The findings of this study indicated that the transformative outcome of these students is characterized as interrelated dimensions of personal and professional development experienced as a refinement of established trajectory. The emerging model of perspective transformation implies that students with a focused trajectory of identity, vocation, and educational goals have an effect on the nature of both transformative learning catalysts and outcomes. This observation extends the discussion of transformative learning theory into a broader spectrum of adult student characteristics and contexts, and indicates specific variations of the theoretical framework within a particular student sample population. The findings of this study contribute to the discussion of generalizability and applicability of the primary transformative learning framework to a graduate adult student context.
This study sought to examine predictors of religiosity and spirituality in the undergraduate experience of students attending the Mission 2007 Leadership Conference sponsored by the Church of the Nazarene. The questions, items, and scales for the Mission 2007 survey were adapted with permission from the College Students’ Beliefs and Values (CSVB) survey developed for the Spirituality in Higher Education project conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles. The sample consisted of 263 undergraduate college students who primarily attended seven Church of the Nazarene colleges. Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted for each of the 10 criterion variables: Spirituality, Religious Commitment, Religious Struggle, Religious/Social Conservatism, Religious Engagement, Religious Skepticism, Charitable Involvement, Ethic of Caring, Ecumenical Worldview, and Compassionate Self-Concept. A total of 16 predictor variables were entered in three blocks and consisted of seven student demographic variables, five personal goals variables, and four time-use variables. Helping others in difficulty was positively correlated with Spirituality, Charitable Involvement, and Ecumenical Worldview. The personal goal to be a community leader was positively correlated with Spirituality and Charitable Involvement and the goal to influence social values was negatively correlated with Religious Struggle. However, Religious Struggle was less likely to be evident in students who expressed the personal goal to raise a family; these students also exhibited more Religious Commitment. To be well-off financially was negatively correlated with Religious Commitment and Religious Engagement. Students who worked part-time off campus are significantly less likely to be Religiously Engaged. Conversely, the variable worked full-time while attending school was positively correlated with Charitable Involvement. Reading sacred text was positively correlated with Religious Struggle and positively correlated with Charitable Involvement. Students who are home-schooled are less likely to adopt an Ecumenical World View, and surfing the internet was negatively predictive of Spirituality. This study provides additional insight concerning predictors of religiosity and spirituality among a select group of students with an interest in missions and ministry. Implications and recommendations that emerge from the data are provided for practitioners, religious leaders, parents, and students.
Poor persistence rates at the doctoral level, combined with a dearth of knowledge about student persistence at the master’s level, continue to be one of the most intractable issues in graduate education (CGS, 2013a; Wendler et al., 2010). However, equating student success only with degree completion rates overlooks key perspectives that may address how to assist students in successfully navigating the complexities of graduate school (Gardner, 2009). Representing the intersection of psychological theories of student persistence in higher education (Bean & Eaton, 2000) and theories of psychological well-being from the field of positive psychology (Ryff & Keyes, 1995), an expanded perspective of student success called *thriving* has emerged. Student thriving is defined as optimal functioning academically, interpersonally, and psychologically (Schreiner, 2012). Student thriving is measured by a combination of five factors included in the Thriving Quotient™, an 18-item instrument that has demonstrated high reliability and validity in both undergraduate and graduate student populations. The purpose of this study was to broaden the understanding of graduate student success by exploring the relationships among department climate, student-faculty interaction, family-friend support, and a psychological sense of community, as well as how these relationships contribute to the variation in graduate student thriving in a sample of 2,918 master’s, Ph.D., and professional doctoral students from 11 public and private institutions. Structural equation modeling was employed to examine the direct and indirect relationships between the variables in this study. Group differences by gender, ethnicity, and degree level were also examined. The final structural model in this study explained 78% of the variance in thriving, with no group differences identified by gender or ethnicity in either the measurement model or the structural model of thriving. Students’ psychological sense of community was the largest predictor of thriving, followed by the support of family and friends and a positive department climate. Multiple-group analysis revealed that the magnitude of the relationship between First Choice and Family-Friend Support significantly varied by students’ degree level. The implications of these findings center on actions that departments and faculty can take to create environments conducive to graduate students’ success and well-being.
One of the most influential tasks of young adulthood is to achieve a sense of vocational calling, yet empirical research on how college students conceptualize calling is sparse. Quantitative models identifying factors that contribute to students’ sense of calling are even rarer. This correlational study extends the research literature significantly by empirically examining variables that affect sense of vocational calling in 270 college students as they near graduation. Relationships among demographic variables (gender, race, resident status, GPA, and hours worked), personal characteristics (hope, career decision self-efficacy, strengths self-efficacy, and spirituality), and student involvement variables (campus involvement, service activities, engaged learning, and psychological sense of community) were explored to assess how these variables directly and indirectly contributed to students’ sense of vocational calling. Dobrow’s (2006) theory of integrated calling provided the operational definition of calling, with its multidisciplinary approach to measure young adults’ perceptions. Structural equation modeling (SEM) (Arbuckle, 2008) was utilized to model students’ sense of vocational calling, allowing a determination of how well Dobrow’s (2006) calling theory fit the data collected from these students. SEM also provided an estimate of how well each of the designated variables predicted a sense of vocational calling. Separate models were generated, indicating that men and women conceptualized calling in distinctive ways. Although both genders perceived vocational calling from spiritual and purposeful perspectives, men interpreted calling pragmatically and cognitively, while women discerned calling from an affective perspective connected to their sense of self-esteem. There were also gender differences in predictors of vocational calling. The structural path for men was through career decision self-efficacy ($\beta = .54; p < .001$) and involvement in service activities ($\beta = .29; p < .05$), accounting for 41% of the variance in vocational calling. For women, the path was through hope ($\beta = .47; p < .001$) and engaged learning ($\beta = .34; p < .001$), and accounted for 45% of the variance in vocational calling. Implications of these findings for higher education are addressed with regard to understanding gender-related patterns of meaning making that ultimately influence college students’ sense of vocational calling.
A GROUNDED THEORY OF THE FACTORS THAT MEDIATE THE EFFECT OF A STRENGTHS-BASED EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION OVER A FOUR-MONTH PERIOD

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The purpose of this study was to gain a rich narrative description of students’ experiences when exposed for the first time to an intervention that focuses on an individual’s strengths. Strengths-based approaches attempt to help students identify their own unique talents, and then use them to develop a strategy for utilizing such gifts in negotiating their academic progression and careers. It used a grounded theory methodological approach to ascertain a theory or identifiable construct of experiences that relates to a particular context grounded in the experience and perceptions of the participants (Creswell 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The results reveal that students experienced a range of positive emotional and developmental resonance as a result of the intervention. One of the substantive findings of this study is that students encounter a highly personalized “strengths journey” when exposed to a strengths-based educational interventions. How that journey begins is dependent on the level of resonance they experience with their strengths profiles, which is also dependent on a number of mediating factors including the ability to cognitively reframe long held beliefs about their talent and abilities. Some students experienced what the author has termed a ‘Learning Epiphany’ and in some cases this manifestation was dramatic and highly positive. These components form the basis of the key themes that emerged from the data: (a) short-team psychosocial effects of a strengths intervention, positive initial mediators of intervention effect, (b) negative initial mediators of intervention effect, (c) psychosocial effects of a strengths intervention after four-month mediators of intervention effect. This research has meaningful implications for curriculum design and delivery, and offers much potential for supporting students in achieving excellence in their academics.
PREDICTING THE RETENTION OF COLLEGE SOPHOMORES: THE IMPORTANCE OF SATISFACTION

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Research is beginning to demonstrate that sophomores are unique in their academic and developmental needs, yet little is known about how college sophomores’ satisfaction with their collegiate experience influences their persistence decisions. This study utilized logistic regression to predict college sophomores’ persistence based on student demographics, institutional characteristics, and satisfaction predictor variables. The dependent variable was persistence to the junior year. The data for this study were collected from 9,078 college sophomores at 65 public and private 4-year institutions who completed the Student Satisfaction Inventory® during 3 academic years. Of the students surveyed, 66% were female and 72% were Caucasian. Data were analyzed to determine the differences in persistence predictors between sophomores who attended public and private institutions. Further analysis was conducted with sophomores who lived on campus to determine if satisfaction with residential life was predictive of persistence. The results of the study indicated that both global and specific measures of satisfaction significantly predicted sophomores’ retention after considering the contribution of student demographics and institutional features. Students who were satisfied with their institutions’ campus climate were nearly 50% more likely to persist than their dissatisfied peers. Further, as sophomores’ grade point average increased one point, their likelihood of persisting increased about 46%. Both campus climate and grade point average predicted persistence, regardless of the type of institution sophomores attended or whether they lived on campus or commuted. Key predictors of sophomore retention differed across public and private institutions; advising satisfaction was significantly predictive of retention in public institutions, while satisfaction with variety of courses and with student voice was significantly predictive of private college retention. Residential students’ satisfaction with residence life issues did not predict persistence, however. As a result of the study findings, the author suggests that institutional leaders address issues of campus climate by attending to the campus’ sense of community. Programs designed to address advising issues specific to sophomores were also recommended, as were suggestions for improving instructional effectiveness, a significant predictor among residential students.
THE EFFECT OF A STRENGTHS-ORIENTED APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AND AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP CAPACITIES OF LEADERS IN FAITH-BASED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Academic leaders in the 21st century are required to be both organizationally competent and intentionally collaborative with those they lead to be effective in a world of disruption, change, and complexity. Two current leadership constructs particularly relevant for meeting these needs are the focus of this study: Authentic Leadership, which describes a positive and trusting relationship with followers founded on a leader’s self-awareness and values (Yukl, 2008), and Psychological Capital, which focuses on the development of four positive psychological states in oneself and one’s followers. This study utilized a longitudinal pretest-posttest control group experimental design to determine if leaders’ psychological capital (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007) and authentic leadership (Avolio, Gardner, & Walumbwa, 2005) capacity could be enhanced through an online strengths-oriented leadership intervention. Sixty-two academic leaders from member institutions of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities were randomly assigned to either the treatment (N = 30) or control (N = 32) condition. The treatment condition received a 2-hour online intervention developing the leaders’ self-awareness and application of their Clifton StrengthsFinder 2.0 (Gallup, 2009) results. The control group received an online intervention on strategic, accountability, and metrics for leaders. Utilizing the Authentic Leadership and PsyCap questionnaires, participants’ scores were compared at completion of the treatment and 30 days thereafter. A paired-samples t test indicated that leaders in the treatment group experienced a significant increase in their strengths awareness and self-efficacy, providing evidence of treatment fidelity. However, results of the repeated measures ANOVA indicated that although leaders in both groups reported significant changes in their scores over time, there was no significant difference between groups resulting from the treatment. Participant feedback after the intervention indicated a preference for face-to-face training and a need to directly connect the training content to the specific leadership outcomes implicit in the Authentic Leadership and Psychological Capital constructs. The primary implication of this study is that online leadership development is an emerging modality requiring the mentorship or instruction from a face-to-face or synchronous facilitator; thus, online training should be used with discernment in developing leadership concepts that are primarily relational in applications.
THE PERCEPTIONS OF STRENGTHS-BASED PLAY, TEAM COHESION, RELATIONAL CAPACITY AND GROUP DYNAMICS: VOICES OF ELITE ATHLETES

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This research study was designed to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions Elite Athletes have of the strengths philosophy as it relates to their athletic experience. The qualitative study used a phenomenological approach and provided opportunity for 16 Elite female softball players to take the Clifton StrengthsFinder Inventory and share their thoughts and reactions. An expert reader, gold-medal Olympian and professional sportswoman Michelle Smith, also took the inventory and contributed by sharing her experience. One of the most noteworthy aspects of this study included the remarkable group of Elite Athletes who agreed to participate in it. The Elite softball players were women who were recognized as gold-medal Olympians, professional players in the National Pro Fastpitch league, or collegiate All-Americans/National Champions. This study is unique in being the first research study designed to explore the strengths philosophy with athletes.

Four significant findings emerged from the study. Each athlete was unique. All sixteen participants, as well as the expert reader, had unique sets of strengths. No resounding pattern of strengths emerged among the participants in this study. Elite Athletes used both achieving and relational strengths. The athletes capitalized on a variety of strengths to become successful. While some used achieving strengths to excel and persist, others succeeded by using relational strengths to cultivate relationships with coaches and teammates. The Elite Athletes recognized having a base strength. The participants expressed having a “base strength” they used in order to achieve greatness. Most Elite Athletes shared that they had a particular strength that was “their core” in their lives. This base strength was most utilized in their success. Strengths were used to overcome obstacles. These obstacles included performance failure, personal crisis, and physical injury. The participants shared that their strengths were instrumental in overcoming the obstacles they faced in their sport. All participants, as well as the expert reader, perceived the strengths philosophy as having a positive impact on athletic teams. It is important to recognize that participants shared that they believed the strengths philosophy would most benefit women’s athletic teams. This study has several practical implications for both coaches and athletes who desire to capitalize on their natural talents and develop a strengths-based philosophy of sport.
A STUDY OF WOMEN IN SENIOR-LEVEL ADMINISTRATION AT MEMBER INSTITUTIONS OF THE COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

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This study sought to identify contributing factors to the success of senior-level administrative women in Council for Christian College & Universities (CCCU) institutions. This was a qualitative study that consisted of personal interviews with 12 women in senior-level administrative positions in CCCU institutions. The interviews focused on providing an opportunity for each participant to share her story and the journey she had traveled to reach the professional level of responsibility that few women in the CCCU have been able to attain. A phenomenological research approach was used. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed with member checking, offered to the participants for trustworthiness of the results. Seven themes emerged from the interviews. Those 7 themes were Deeper Purpose/Faith, Support, Mentoring, Contributing, Institutional Climate, Preparation, and Nuggets of Knowledge. Each theme offers information regarding the experience of the participants and their perception of contributing factors to their attainment of senior-level administration in the CCCU. The findings of the study indicated several common factors among the participants. Two of these were a deep personal faith in God and a belief that the role they were playing was one to which they had been called. Each participant verbalized a significant support network that she believed to be a significant contributor to her success. The source varied, but each participant reported a significant level of tangible support. For some of the participants, mentoring was additional contributor to their success beyond the social support received. Again, the types of mentoring relationships differed considerably across the 12 women. Each of the 12 women leaders described her leadership style in a manner that was consistent with transformational leadership. Although personalities among participants varied, at some level each participant described her leadership style as collaborative, team oriented, empowering, and relational. The results of this study offer insights into the needs of women in leadership in CCCU institutions and provide recommendations to facilitate a change in institutional eliminate within the CCCU so more women can advance to senior-level administrative positions. The findings of this study challenge administrators, board members, and CCCU officials to address the issue of women in administrative leadership within the CCCU. This study also challenges CCCU institutional leadership to be faithful to God’s call and to realize the role women in leadership play in that call.
THE PREPARATION AND CHALLENGES OF A NEW COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

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The study uses a qualitative design to explore the leadership transitions on a college/university campus when a new president is selected from outside the institution. Specifically, the purpose of this study was to examine the transition period of new presidents at Baccalaureate Colleges, as classified by the Carnegie Classification system, and to explore the perceptions of these new presidents regarding their preparation for assuming a college presidency. To accomplish this purpose, nine new college presidents were interviewed. These presidents have been in their positions for at least one year but not more than three years. This allowed a fresh perspective from their view of the presidential transition period.
PREDICTORS OF PERSISTENCE FOR FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS ATTENDING CHRIST-CENTERED BACCALAUREATE COLLEGES

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This study presents the results of a study of first-generation college student predictors of persistence at Christ-centered baccalaureate colleges. Data were obtained from 5 institutions that administered the CIRP Freshman Survey from the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA and were matched with persistence data. Multiple regression analyses were performed on data grouped by parent education level, yielding 4 unique models of persistence, including the total sample of 1,638. Results showed selected motivational variables such as degree expectations and financial concern predicted persistence in first-generation students, along with precollege preparation variables such as high school GPA and number of mathematics courses. Personal demographic characteristics and faith identity were not found to significantly predict persistence for first generation students, but faith identity was found to be predictive of persistence in continuing generation students.
This study explored the college experiences of first year, first-generation students. Participants included eight students representing two universities. Two focus groups consisting of 4 students were created. Two interviews were conducted with each group, and the participants submitted responses to an online blog. Participants candidly shared stories about their journey to college and their first semester. Reflections illustrated participants’ self-efficacy and determination. Findings indicated participants’ desire to experience diversity in their college experience, their need to define academic success for themselves on their own terms, and a continued struggle with maintaining financial aid.
This study explores the transformational leadership experiences, intentions, and practices of exemplary chief student affairs officers (CSAOs) serving in institutions of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU). A qualitative research methodology was employed, adopting a multiple-case study design and phenomenological approach. Eight exemplary CSAOs were nominated by a panel of experts to participate in the study. Multiple data sources were collected for review, including in-depth interviews, written philosophies on leadership, a Self-Anchoring Scale Activity, and a researcher’s log. An inductive analysis process was conducted over multiple reviews of the data sources. First iteration findings identified twenty patterns or categories regarding transformational leadership characteristics. A second iteration analysis looked for emerging themes and corresponding practices. Four themes and sixteen leadership practices emerged from the review. These findings provide actionable information and instruction for student affairs practitioners serving in Christian higher education. Implications and recommendations for practices are discussed. The study contributes to the body of literature where it is otherwise quite silent on the topic of transformational leadership and student affairs within the context of Christian higher education.
Increasing the effort students invest in academic experiences is an important component for improving their academic achievement. Previous research demonstrates that helping students view intelligence as malleable promotes constructive behaviors and leads to higher attributions of success and failure to effort. However, existing studies have not assessed whether implicit theories of intelligence directly affect actual levels of effort, and these studies do not examine academically high-risk students, who may be especially susceptible to a fixed view of intelligence and low levels of effort. This study utilized an experimental pretest-posttest control group design to determine if changing the way academically high-risk college students view intelligence affected their academic effort and achievement when compared to students in a control intervention. The study included data from 105 undergraduates who were enrolled in a remedial course at a private research institution and randomly assigned to either the treatment ($N = 60$) or control ($N = 45$) condition. The treatment condition received a 4-week online intervention encouraging the development of a malleable view of intelligence, or a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006). The control group received a 4-week online intervention bolstering students’ study skills. Dependent variables were academic effort and academic achievement. Academic effort was defined as academic discipline, academic self-confidence, commitment to college, general determination, goal striving, and study skills. Academic achievement was defined as grade point average. A paired-samples $t$ test conducted to establish treatment fidelity demonstrated that students in the treatment group had a significant change in perception to a more malleable view of intelligence, but no significant change in mindset was evidenced in the control group. A one-way MANCOVA was conducted to examine the effect of the treatment intervention on academic effort. Results indicated that students in the growth mindset treatment group reported higher levels of academic effort than those in the control group, after controlling for pretest levels of effort. Univariate ANCOVAs indicated that the treatment condition only significantly affected study skills, with students in the treatment group reporting significantly higher levels of study skills than the control group. An ANCOVA comparing semester GPA between the groups found no significant difference.
The continuous change characterizing 21st century society has significant implications for higher education. Educators and business leaders increasingly recognize that education within and preparation for a context of change requires learning environments fostering openness, flexibility, and engagement with other ideas and people. Such environments promote learning and leadership that transcend immediate context, serving students and society well across time and change. However, many college environments, and thus graduates, do not reflect these characteristics. This investigation proposed that a mindful strengths development intervention would foster an environment conducive to the development of critical learning and democratic outcomes. It utilized a quasi-experimental, pretest-posttest, non-randomized control group design to determine if the intervention would significantly affect engaged learning and socially responsible leadership (SRL) values (DVs). Leadership efficacy’s role as mediating variable was also examined. Participants included 45 undergraduate students enrolled in 4 leadership courses at a single institution. Students enrolled in 2 treatment condition courses ($N = 23$) received 10 in-class hours of a mindful strengths development curriculum over a 4 week period, while students in 2 control condition courses ($N = 22$) received a 4-week, 10-hour, in-class traditional leadership curriculum. A paired sample $t$-test assessing mindfulness scores before and after the treatment group’s intervention indicated no significant increases in mindfulness, failing to confirm treatment fidelity. However, due to small sample size, effect sizes were calculated and demonstrated that the intervention accounted for 8.9% of posttest mindfulness score differences. Effect size analyses of posttest scores also revealed that the treatment condition explained 10.3% of the variance in consciousness of self and 5.9% of the variance in controversy with civility, but only trivial amounts of variance in other SRL values and none of the variance in engaged learning. These findings were relatively small, perhaps due to limited strength of the mindfulness portion of the intervention. Incorporating the components of a mindful disposition may strengthen future interventions and generate more substantial results. Leadership efficacy emerged as a significant mediating variable contributing to SRL values, explaining 13% to 33% of the variance in overall SRL and the purpose and controversy with civility subscales.
FACTORS AFFECTING THE RETENTION AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF BLACK AMERICAN MALE, FOOTBALL AND BASKETBALL PLAYERS AT DIVISION I-A, REVENUE PRODUCING INSTITUTIONS

Mark Taplette

This research focused on the factors that contribute to the retention and satisfactory academic performance of a group of Black American male student-athletes who competed in the sports of basketball and football at Division I-A, revenue-producing institutions. Black American males who participate in these two sports have historically and consistently demonstrated the lowest graduation rates of all Division I varsity sports programs. However, some Black male Division I-A basketball and football athletes counter these trends. This study presents an in-depth exploration of the external and internal factors that contribute to this resilient population’s retention and graduation rates. The NCAA has indicated that Black American Division I-A men’s basketball and football participants have performed lower academically than their white cohorts. This phenomenon is significant in higher education because of the already low number of Black American males that attend Division I-A institutions. At the beginning of every academic year many Black American young men who are not interested in attaining a degree enter into institutions of higher learning to participate in athletics. Educational researchers agree that commitment to receiving a degree is one of the strongest predictors of retention. Thus, the purpose of this study was to understand the internal and external influences that contribute to young Black male student-athletes at Division I-A, revenue-producing institutions who remain until the completion of their degrees. We as educators, college administrators, and coaches need to ensure that our student-athletes are given every opportunity to be successful in the classroom as well as on the playing court or field. The method of data collection was questionnaire, followed up by in-depth interviews. The questionnaire and interviews focused on the academic, and social preparation that these student-athletes had prior to coming to college as well as when they came to campus. Based on the findings, I discovered flaws in the preparation of these student-athletes for the rigors of academics while competing as a Division I scholarship athlete. Also, suggestions have been made that include strategies that coaches, athletic administrators, and parents could adopt to better assist these students so they can stay in school not only to compete but to attain their degrees.
The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine and identify the nature of sustainable, cross-border partnerships between Christian liberal arts institutions of higher education. The study was conducted using a comparative case methodology consisting of two partnerships. Individuals involved in the development of the partnerships were interviewed and partnership documents examined. This process provided the data which was analyzed for the study. Each partnership involved one institution in the United States and one in Eastern Europe. The Eastern European institutions were located in Lithuania and Russia. The literature indicated that cross-border partnerships are just one method of many to internationalize a higher education institution. According to Andringa (2001), the best institutions will be involved in such partnerships. North American Christian higher education institutions can provide operational and academic program knowledge to their cross-border partner that assists them in developing an effective institution. The study determined that the cases followed the phases of the relationship development model identified by Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh (1987). These 5 phases are: (a) Awareness, (b) Exploration, (c) Expansion, (d) Commitment, and (e) Dissolution. At the conclusion of the research, neither partnership had dissolved; but both were operating at reduced levels for different reasons. Additionally, the data indicated that there were 7 themes involved in creating effective cross-border partnerships: (a) Mission Congruence, (b) Individual Relationships, (c) Trust, (d) Communication, (e) Social Capital, (f) Presidential Leadership and Champions, and (g) Finances. The development of a cross-border partnership should focus on these 7 themes.
INTEGRITY IN PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP: PRINCIPLES RELATED TO MAINTAINING INTEGRITY FOR COLLEGE PRESIDENTS IN THE COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

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This qualitative study, utilizing a grounded theory methodological approach, focuses on how former Christian college and university presidents maintain their integrity over the course of their lives and their time in office. Eight participants from a variety of theological backgrounds were identified by using purposeful sampling methods; the institutions in which they served were located all over the United States. Semi-structured interview protocols were administered during the first and second round of interviews. In between, the participants were asked to respond via email to four questions pertaining to leading with integrity. The data analysis found one overarching central theme (transparency) and three major themes (protection, reflection, pitfalls). The former presidents created protective accountability networks that assisted them in avoiding leadership pitfalls. The accountability networks were divided into three levels or spheres. The participants also utilized reflection strategies to inform their networks of account-ability and help avoid the potential pitfalls of leadership. A model was created from this research explaining how the former presidents in this study maintained their integrity.
GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERISM AND SERVICE-LEARNING: WHO’S SAVING WHOM?

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Western institutes of higher education are gaining prominence as agents for global development in the 21st century. Along with contributions to social capital, economic advancement, and interdisciplinary research collaborations, colleges and universities bring another burgeoning resource: student volunteers and service-learning participants. Although universally accepted as a positive tool for global development, the actual impact of these students on host communities remains unexamined. This study focused on assessing overall impacts of international volunteerism and service-learning (IVS) on participatory development initiatives in host communities.

Comparative case study methodology was utilized along with document analysis, participant observation, and 91 interviews and follow-up interviews with 61 participants in 3 rural Costa Rican communities. The overarching theory that emerged is defined as an Economic Circle of International Volunteerism and includes 2 categories to describe development impact – Direct and Indirect impacts. First, direct impacts of IVS come through Homestays as Participatory Development and include 3 subcategories – Empowerment, Sustainable Livelihoods, and Adaptive Strategies. Second, indirect impacts fuel Volunteerism as an Emerging Industry by making volunteers more comfortable and building capacity for maximizing revenue through future short-term homestays. Finally, the unintended consequences of the Economic Circle and implications for practice are discussed. Despite common claims that volunteers advance the community development process, findings suggest that reciprocity in IVS programs must be redefined given the economic circle that benefits both the host community and student volunteers. Because universities remain in a position to broker these immersion experiences, fee structures and timelines, power hierarchies, and student selection and preparation processes must elevate host partners to the role of co-educators in the IVS exchange.
HOW DO CHRISTIAN STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC, EMOTIONAL, SPIRITUAL, AND
SOCIAL EXPERIENCES IMPACT THEIR SPIRITUAL IDENTITY AND
DEVELOPMENT AT A SECULAR INSTITUTION: A GROUNDED THEORY
APPROACH

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This study explored and sought to understand the factors that lead to students’ spiritual development at a secular institution. I focused on examining the perceptions of the students in determining the factors that facilitated individual spiritual growth. The rationale behind conducting this research was that colleges and universities desire for students to have a transformative and holistic experience. Knowing the factors that facilitate growth might enable university officials to intentionally create environments that stimulate growth for all students.

Using a qualitative research design, I utilized methods for establishing a grounded theory because I sought to explain how students use their social, spiritual, and emotional experiences to impact their spiritual development. I interviewed 18 upper-division, Christian students of two regional secular state-assisted universities. All interviewed students were involved with local chapters of the nationally established parachurch college student organization. The data displayed a distinct difference between the first year of a student’s academic career and subsequent years. The students detailed the first year being a time of confusion and turmoil while the upper-division years were calmer for them a period in which context is important during a time of disruption. Choices consisted of the themes of involvement and authenticity, or aligning behaviors, because of opportunities for reflection. Finally, the change category provided rich data about triggers or internal dialogue that followed from students’ experiences with disruptions to their routine thinking. Relationships, mentoring, or reading created disruptions in routine thinking. The data suggested that for students to experience growth in their spiritual identity, they must undergo a trigger that disrupts their normal thinking patterns.

The reflective disruption model emerged from the vertical structure that was built from the bottom to the top with the themes of context, choice, and change. The four areas comprising the matrix’s four concept horizontal matrix are relationships, authenticity, involvement, and spiritual actions. The reflective disruption model provides a foundation upon which future research may be built.
This dissertation presents the results of a narrative study of the experiences of 9 Black men attending 3 types of predominantly-White institutions (PWIs): a private 4-year institution, a public 4-year institution, and a public 2-year institution. Participant narratives and individual vignettes were used to examine the relevance of 3 major themes identified in Howard-Hamilton’s (1997) Afrocentric Black Male Identity Development Model (BMIDM). The themes of community, achievement and attainment, and faith and purpose were identified in the BMIDM. Afrocentric Emancipatory Research Methods (AERM) was used in conceptualization, conducting, and analysis of the narratives. AERM promotes the active involvement of participants in the analysis of data. Participant narratives revealed that these 9 Black men valued community and faith and purpose and spoke less about achievement and attainment in their narratives about their experiences in college. The findings determined that these 9 Black men had values consistent with those exposed in BMIDM.
THE 21ST CENTURE ANDRAGOGUE:
THE SEARCH FOR MEANING AND MISSION IN THE ADULT CLASSROOM

Robert L. Waltz

The purpose of this study was to conduct a cogendered analysis of how both women and men learn, and to continue the dialogue begun by Peters and Jarvis (1991) on what the definition of an andragogue ought to be. The current literature identifies several ways in which the precepts of andragogy have been deployed separately or in various combinations. Taken as a whole, however, tremendous controversy surrounds andragogy. The empirical base, which is now approximately 30 years in the making, is confusing, contradictory, and inconsistent. Using a mixed-methods approach for meaningful classroom experiences by creating a model based upon Malcom Knowles’ (1980) definition of andragogy. Social responsibility, as linked to adult learning, was added to this model. To bring practical application to andragogy’s theory-based precepts, four cornerposts were introduced—facilitation, coaching, courage, and a strengths-based learning focus. The person-focused teaching methodology of Jesus Christ was adopted to bond the model. By viewing these bonded cornerposts as a singular, new framework for the adult classroom, it was anticipated that style would facilitate, not override content. During a one-year period, the researcher conducted qualitative research that included student journals and participant observations of how adult learners’ gender, age, and level of maturity related to classroom preferences; quantitative research through a specially-designed questionnaire that further measured adult learner preferences in the classroom; and an adult learner focus group. Findings indicated that adult learners have specific classroom preferences as follows:

- Male students enjoy contributing to classroom discussions more than females. However, female students enjoy classroom opportunities to think on their own more than males.
- The effect of gender on dependent variable Identify was greater among women.
- No age group reported that gender had an effect on how they learned or why they learned.
- Student preference to speak their minds in classrooms increases with each level of academic year.
- The relationship between learning and social responsibility indicates a decreasing trend with each academic year of higher education.
- Age as a barrier to learning decreases with student age.
As many higher education institutions strive to help their students become effective leaders, student leadership development models have begun to emerge from transformational leadership theories which emphasize relational leadership. While these models suggest that awareness of one’s strengths contributes to effective leadership, they do not provide substantial evidence to confirm this claim. This study sought to corroborate the assertion that strengths awareness contributes to leadership effectiveness. The study investigated the degree to which strengths ownership, psychological capital (PsyCap) qualities of hope, self-efficacy, optimism, and resiliency, and demographic characteristics of gender, college class level, leadership experience, and strengths experience are predictive of effective leadership practices as defined by the Leadership Challenge model. Participants included 153 students in leadership positions in student development programs in five colleges and universities. All participants had completed the Clifton StrengthsFinder earlier in their college experience. Participants completed the Self-form of the Student Leadership Practices Inventory (SLPI), the PsyCap Questionnaire, and the Strengths Ownership scale. In addition, Observer-forms of the SLPI rating the effectiveness of the student leader were completed by an organizational advisor and at least two peer “followers.” Criterion variables consisted of student leader, organizational advisor and peer scores on the SLPI and each of its five scales. Hierarchical multiple regression was utilized to analyze the contribution of psychological capital variables and strengths ownership to student leader ratings of effective leadership. Findings indicated that Hope scale scores most strongly predicted effective leadership ratings on the total SLPI score and all but one of the SLPI scales. Self-efficacy and Optimism scores were each significant predictors on two of the SLPI scales. These psychological capital qualities emphasize goal-directed thinking similar to the goal-oriented practices emphasized in the Leadership Challenge Model. Strengths ownership did not significantly predict student leadership effectiveness ratings. Gender was a significant predictor on two SLPI scales. Limited variance in organizational advisor and peer ratings of student leader effectiveness resulted in minimal ability to explore predictors of varying responses. The results of this study demonstrate the importance of impacting the growth of hope and goal-directed thinking in college students through leadership development programs.
This study was conducted to identify characteristics, behaviors, and attitudes that are related to successful leadership of evangelical collegiate institutions. More specifically, the study explored the extent to which presidents at member institutions of the Council for Christian Colleges (CCCU) share the leadership characteristics of effective presidents as described in previous research conducted by James Fisher, Martha Tack, and Karen Wheeler (1988). Sixty-four of the 105 CCCU presidents participated in this study by completing a replica of the Fisher/Tack Leadership Inventory (Fisher et al). The data suggest that CCCU presidents were less likely to have followed a traditional academic career path into the presidency and more likely to have come to that position from external relations or non-academic roles. They were also less likely to have published in scholarly journals or to be actively engaged in professional higher education organizations. CCCU presidents tended to be older and to have served as presidents longer than the Effective presidents in the comparison study. CCCU presidents were more likely than the Effective presidents to exhibit some of the desired characteristics within the Management and Leadership, Human Relations, and Confidence indexes and less likely to exhibit some of the desired characteristics on the Social Reference Index. Among CCCU presidents, those with doctorates in philosophy from public universities were more likely to exhibit some of the characteristics of Effective presidents than were those with doctorates in education or from private universities. The longer CCCU presidents had served in their positions, the less likely they were to exhibit the characteristics of Effective presidents. The study presents implications for both aspiring and current presidents within the CCCU as well as for governing boards and consultants who work alongside CCCU presidents. Recommendations are made for future research on presidential leadership in Christian higher education.