ALUMNI RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES:
A FUNDRAISING MANAGEMENT MODEL

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ABSTRACT

Community colleges are increasingly turning to fundraising to fill the financial gaps created by declining federal and state appropriations. Thus, community colleges are looking to expand their financial coffers through entrepreneurial partnerships and efforts such as targeting alumni. Typically, community colleges have very small alumni programs focusing their fundraising efforts in other areas.

This study outlines effective elements for an alumni resource development program through a four-step managerial decision-making process and the Flexible Leadership Theory (FLT). Strategic elements include leadership commitment, strategic planning, institutional collaboration, staffing, foundation boards, and garnering alumni engagement and community relationships. One key component of leadership in developing the alumni resource development program is recognizing and balancing institutional needs with alumni needs. FLT offers leadership the opportunity to combine innovation with the process of adapting the alumni resource development program. Community colleges in 2011 raised close to $200 million from their alumni community, which is not a large amount compared with the $7.8 billion that four-year institutions raised from alumni. This study breaks ground for future research on alumni-giving in the community college arena, including strategies to promote alumni as advocates and volunteers for community colleges, and for community college leadership to view their alumni as a financial resource that can help close the fiscal gaps that community colleges face in continuing their mission of access.
DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my beautiful wife Natalie and my two glorious children, Isabella and Massimo. Their support and patience over the term of completing this endeavor was never wavering. This testimony of their family faith, love, and benevolence gave me the strength to endure. Muchas Gracias, mis seres queridos.
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S. M.
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Chapter 1

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

As budgets shrink due to state government and local municipalities pulling back on financial support to community colleges, many institutions have begun to search for alternative sources of revenue to increase their coffers. A simple solution would be to raise tuition, but most community colleges adhere to a mission of serving the community through open access and affordable tuition; therefore, significantly raising tuition would compromise mission goals. As a result, many community colleges are looking for alternative strategies to increase institutional resources. Among these is the concept of private fundraising. Alumni fundraising, though in its infancy in most community colleges, offers a viable option for enhancing the institutional resources needed to support important institutional objectives. Thus, a literature is beginning to develop in the area of community college fundraising.

According to Ryan (2003), scholars have recently conducted a number of studies that survey those responsible for fundraising on their campuses. A number of these studies discuss challenges development offices face, practices that are most successful, and issues emerging within the field (p. 95). Research conducted by Jackson and Glass (2000) targeted the resource development practitioners at a North Carolina community college, revealing five challenges faced by community college development offices. The first challenge is image; the perception is that the district in which the community college operates is fully funded by state and federal funds. The second is leadership; the community college president needs to be an engaged partner in the resource development process. In the third challenge, management brings
accountability and provides good stewardship in the process. The fourth is the development officer position, which needs to be senior-level and part of the strategic planning of the institution. The fifth and last challenge is technology; as software and social media platforms evolve, so must technology. Combinations of these challenges are part of the emerging trends that alumni resource development at community colleges is facing. According to Ryan, Jackson and Glass, and others, the importance of this aspect of institutional fundraising is becoming a pertinent ingredient for success at two-year institutions.

This chapter describes the need to fill the fiscal gaps that community colleges have experienced because of declining financial support from state and federal sources. In most cases, community college districts that serve taxpayers struggle with increased taxes and tuition; therefore, the alumni model for fundraising is of critical importance to meet the institutions’ needs in serving their communities. In addition, Strout (2006) mentions that community colleges are realizing how fundraising from private individuals is mandatory. Thus, many community college development officers are targeting or want to target alumni for support as the catalyst in locating private donors.

Many community colleges recognize this need and some have positioned themselves to garner alumni support. Monroe Community College (MCC) in Rochester, New York has developed one of the more successful combined alumni program and fundraising initiatives in the country. One element that MCC has effectively developed is its foundation board, which is comprised of 25% alumni. The foundation board has an alumni council targeting alumni representation to be included in many of the institution’s activities. This type of engagement and collaboration from the institution provides a sense of purpose for the alumni. According to Pastorella (2003), “fundraising studies relating to alumni giving have shown a significant
increase in the giving rate among alumni who have been recently engaged…” (p. 76). New ways to develop and solicit alumni resources through eventful alumni engagement such as bringing alumni onto the foundation board as active members or developing distinguished alumni recognition programs and using social media platforms to keep alumni abreast of their institution’s continuing successes are all avenues of alumni engagement.

In another example of alumni engagement, Michael Wall, Director of Alumni Relations at Anoka-Ramsey Community College, states, “Alumni relations are about connection” (Currents, 2007, p. 36). Anoka-Ramsey Community College displayed its commitment to alumni by showing them that the college was in the business of fostering relationships. The institution offered a variety of specific events that not only were aimed at alumni but also included the institution. Collectively over time, alumni were interacting with students at events such as business networking lunches and career mentoring events. This example illustrates that through connecting with campus resources, alumni can become engaged with the college. Given the financial uncertainty many institutions see on the horizon, there is a critical call for development offices to plan ways to cultivate and engage alumni in the fabric of their community college.

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this dissertation was to design an alumni development model that can be adopted by community colleges across the country. Drawing on research conducted in four-year college alumni fundraising and on the more limited literature of two-year college fundraising, the model can be incorporated into alumni resource development for community colleges. The elements of best practices, the decision-making management process, and leadership theory were identified during the development of this model. However, the limited body of literature and
research regarding community college alumni resource development did not pinpoint any one set of success factors that fits all community colleges (Durino & Loessin, 1993; Glass & Jackson, 1998). While financial needs are perpetually changing for community colleges, research needs to be updated and reflect these changes.

Some research based on successful fundraising activities from the four-year sector can be adapted by community colleges and implemented to mirror similar successes (Dowd & Grant, 2006; Fluharty & Scaggs, 2007). Milliron (2007) illustrated community college fundraising as follows: “[the] five points of the institutional advancement star...include: (1) private fundraising, (2) alumni development, (3) grant writing, (4) legislative relations and (5) entrepreneurial partnerships” (foreword). Therefore, it is important to understand the relationships between effective alumni fundraising, leadership and institutional collaboration, and the way these elements can affect community college success. According to Pray (1981),

the colleges that are most productive in terms of their potential simply spend more money on total institutional advancement, including fundraising…. However, it is not merely the total effort but also the methods…the use of the four essential means of fundraising: annual giving, capital giving, and deferred giving and prospect research. Colleges that lack one or more of these miss some critical financial resources. (p. 12)

As community colleges adapt to the four-year model, the first critical step is to interpret fundraising characteristics and methods that can effectively result in increased dollars. For example, one of the characteristics that alumni resource development should recognize is that the growth of alumni is outweighing alumni who are dying. This increase should be of particular interest to fundraising offices that have to calculate and project financial models concerning planning. According to Melchiori (1988),

such growth in alumni numbers means that the database is expanding.... [S]econd, it means the institution’s public relations and communication efforts from the president’s letters down to departments curricular announcements, will require larger budget
Thus, the purpose of recognizing the fundraising characteristics of alumni is to interpret and develop them into effective elements. This will assist in the planning and decision-making process for a successful alumni resource development program.

This study organized and described the effective elements of an alumni resource development program. The effective elements will be part of the initial plan of developing a decision-making process or a tactical plan to guide leadership in committing to the essentials of decision-making plan outcomes. For leadership to commit and grow a new business model within a community college, it would be practical for leadership to adapt the Flexible Leadership Theory (FLT). FLT allows leaders to adapt their behavior, internal values, and external relationships while finding a balance to enhance the effective elements into a performing model of efficiency or best practices.

**Context**

In today’s economic climate, alumni resource development provides a relatively untapped opportunity for community colleges to broaden their funding base. “Fundraising has long been a central activity in four-year institutions, whereas community colleges have only recently begun to see the necessity for such efforts” (Glass & Jackson, 1998, p. 715). According to Gose (2006), community colleges historically have not put much effort into tracking their alumni. Until approximately two decades ago, very few community colleges did much private fundraising. However, some excellent alumni programs have been integrated into the fundraising efforts of some community colleges. For example, Northampton Community College (NCC) in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania started an alumni effort back in 1975. As one of the
oldest community college alumni associations in the country, NCC has a database of over 30,000 members. The NCC alumni association classifies a person as an alumnus if that individual has participated in over 30 hours of credits. This institution also offers an on-campus resident experience along with a quarterly alumni magazine and maintenance of an alumni directory as part of their successful elements of engagement. The NCC alumni association continually works in collaboration with resource development and the college community to advance fundraising opportunities.

According to Haire and Dodson-Pennington (2002) of Southwestern Community College, community colleges are looking to garner alumni donors by reviewing other types of private fundraising because government funds cannot support institutions (p. 65). In this case, many development officers are looking toward alumni as an avenue for support. For example, according to Gose (2006), Valencia Community College in Orlando, Florida had the Walt Disney organization on their radar for a major gift. A 1974 alumnus of the college was the president of the Disney division that oversaw resorts and hotels. The Walt Disney Company donated a $1 million gift, which the state matched. Although this example may be isolated, the fact illustrates that efforts to reach alumni can be successful, if cultivated properly. Accordingly, Gose (2006) also describes the phone-a-thon at Holyoke Community College in Holyoke, Massachusetts as an event that raised $30,000 in 2000, the year that it was started. The college reaches about 5,000 alumni annually, and from 2000 to 2006, total contributions from this committed effort reached $230K. These concerted efforts were successful because of institutional commitment in finding financial alternatives to support the community college mission of access.
Actions that engage community college alumni in giving have been propelled by the decline in federal, state, and community fiscal support. Community colleges educate over half of all students in the U.S., and this vast population of successful community college alumni is a part of every community. According to Melchiori (1988), “there are more students graduating today than there are alumni dying. This cumulative increase is of particular interest to...fundraising strategists, because they will find themselves rapidly dealing with the ever-eroding budget base” (p. 51). Therefore, it makes sense to utilize alumni as donors and community constituents. This growing population of community college alumni can be used in every two-year institution to further institutional awareness in the community and deliver donor support for future alumni in the community college system.

**Theoretical Base**

Community colleges need a strategy for helping alumni resource development programs complement the institution. This type of private fundraising from individuals is a necessity to engage the community and survive financially. The potential benefits derived from a collaboration between institutional leaders and alumni are unlimited. Thus, collaborating and engaging illustrate the positive ways an institution can consider how it relates to its external donors: alumni and community. The cohesive blend of marketing and fundraising along with strong institution support (efforts) to engage this community (alumni) will lead to the potential for raising financial revenue. The essentials of a community college alumni development program are effectively connecting alumni (community) with a value (institution). These essentials need to be managed by a committed leader who can adapt Yukl and Lepsinger’s (2002) “Flexible Management Theory,” which can assist the leader to adapt “to changing
situations and find an appropriate balance for tradeoffs and competing demands...[which] are guided by relevant internal values” (p. 376).

As Drucker (1990) states, “[B]ut don’t forget one thing: everything new requires hard work on the part of true believers-true believers are not available part time” (p. 20). In the corporate management model, integration of departments can achieve revenue gain. The same must be implemented at the community college level. The integration of an alumni resource development campaign into the institution’s foundation and leadership vision of the college will bring true believers to the forefront. As Weerts and Hudson (2009) note, “the potential benefits of collaboration between leaders of engagement and advancement are enormous: however, these connections remain largely unexplored…. [I]nstitutions [should] reconsider ways in which they relate to important external stakeholders” (p. 73). Weerts and Hudson add that there are more opportunities for fundraising when an institution’s marketing and fundraising efforts are cohesive in engaging all constituents. As strategies develop within the internal and external community of the college, effective links will start to connect the internal and external community. As Bryson (2004) states, “the purpose of a strategy formation and a plan development step is to create a set of strategies that will effectively link the organization (or community) to its environment and create public value” (p. 39).

For an alumni resource development plan to make a strong contribution, the president must coordinate and facilitate implementation with the college’s support to include faculty, staff, and trustees. Additionally, leadership must continue to develop community relationships. Cohesive planning efforts should organize successful alumni fundraising strategies and maximize the effectiveness that is linked to the institution’s marketing and branding activities. Therefore, using the “four-step managerial decision-making” process and incorporating the
Flexible Leadership Theory (FLT) are imperative management tools in developing the alumni resource development plan and incorporating this plan into the strategic direction of the institution. Better understanding community college alumni and their relationship to the college could prove essential for all community colleges during the current constrained economic environment.

**Research Questions**

The following questions may assist in measuring a successful alumni resource development program.

1. Can an alumni resource development program be an effective tool for supplementing the public resource base for community colleges?
2. What elements of an alumni program help ensure its effectiveness?
3. What barriers do alumni programs face in community colleges and how can a model address these barriers?
4. How will a community college assess the effectiveness of its alumni resource development program?

**Definition of Terms**

In fundraising, a variety of terms to used to describe departments and activities that generate funds for institutions of higher education:

**Fundraising:** The generation of funds through solicitation of the private sector.

**Resource Development:** A planning process that “takes resources to create resources”; as Glass and Jackson (1998) state:

[This is a] term more often used in community college settings…begins with the academic plan, identifying resources needed to accomplish the institution’s objectives; proceeds through an exploration of possible funding sources:
culminates in the submission of a grant application or private solicitation; and, if successful, includes reporting back to the funder or donor. (p. 716)

**Institutional Advancement:** A broad umbrella encompassing both resource development and fundraising and may include any combination of all of the following functions: community relations, public relations, media advertising, public sector and government relations, internal and external communication, alumni programs, planning, staff and program development, marketing, use of facilities by community groups, student recruitment, institutional research, special events, public and private grants, contracts and fundraising (Glass & Jackson, 1998, p. 716).

**Community College Alumnus:** While colleges have different variations in how they define an alumnus, for the purpose of this dissertation an alumnus is a student who attended and completed course work at the institution. For example, Southeastern Community College in Iowa defines an alumnus as a student who successfully completed 3 credit hours (Haire & Dodson-Pennington, p. 64).

**Development:** “a continuous process committed to the long-term financial and physical growth of an institution” (Glass & Jackson, 1998, p. 716).

**Significance**

Efforts by community colleges to hold steady their commitment to quality and affordability have become increasingly difficult. The topic of this study is significant because it offers an opportunity for community colleges to continue developing and expanding their services in times of declining public support while maintaining a quality and affordable solution. According to the Illinois Community College Trustee Association (2011), 1,200 community
colleges nation-wide enroll 46% of all U.S. undergraduates. Of this 46%, 47% are African American, 47% Asian, 55% Hispanic, and 57% Native American. This accounts for a large and diverse student population. Additionally, on a national level, community colleges certify about 80% of all first responders, such as police officers, firefighters, and emergency medical technicians. Community colleges also produce more than 50% of all health care workers including nurses. These data illustrate the significance of community colleges to the national economy and reflect the magnitude of the number of alumni who have benefitted from the programs that community colleges provide.

Although community colleges produce a record number of alumni, the continued lack of government funding has created three major problems that will stifle the community colleges’ mission of access and the future growth of their alumni. According to a report by the Center for the Future of Higher Education Policy (Rhoades, 2012), the first problem is that even though there is student demand, community colleges are closing their doors due to insufficient capacity. Second, when enrollment is capped, typically the underrepresented, financially challenged, and students of color are affected. Third, government is narrowing the focus of community colleges to a short-term workforce development role. This “narrowing” is illustrated by current high unemployment and lethargic economic recovery. This type of program educates workers for lower-wage jobs rather than obtaining four-year degrees. In a report by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC, 2011) and a 2009 report by the National Student Clearinghouse, community colleges capacity continues to be “strained,” with enrollments surging despite the enrollment decline. The AACC report defined this as “the cresting wave phenomena.” For example, in the State of Illinois that has the sixth highest community college population, enrollments are down even though they are higher than they were five years ago. Dr.
Jenkins, president of Moraine Valley Community College (IL), who has seen enrollments decrease by 2%, concluded that this is substantial as Moraine Valley Community College has an average enrollment of a full-time equivalent population of 20,000 students (personal communication, January 2013).

In July of 2009, President Obama announced a $12 billion dollar influx in community college funding, which actually was reduced to $2 billion. The President’s 2013 fiscal budget proposal includes $8 billion for the “Community College to Career Fund.” This money will support business partnerships with community colleges to train workers. The fiscal gap to keep programs and colleges operating can be affected by an alumni resource development program. These data illustrate the significant opportunity available to develop alumni into donors and its necessity for community colleges nation-wide. Erin Strout (2006), a writer for the Chronicle of Higher Education, indicates that community colleges are now beginning to realize the need to inject alumni programs and other private fundraising into their plans because government funds cannot sustain colleges in the near future. Strout also notes that a majority of development officers are focusing on alumni support to direct awareness in raising private funds.

The timeliness of the present study is critical as Geraldine Gallagher, president of Valencia Community College’s Foundation, has acknowledged “if we don’t [create] a compelling case for [alumni] support and share that story with the people who can help us achieve our vision, we will not reach our potential” (Lyons, 2007, p. 29). Additionally, according to the Council for Resource Development Executive Institute for Fundraising Leadership meeting in 2005, the top-targeted segments for college leaders to focus on were young alumni and future alumni. Therefore, with the challenges facing community colleges, the
development and creation of an alumni resource development program can build new bridges and weld financial gaps in community college funding.

In conclusion, the alumni resource development program is necessary for the future of community colleges. The remaining five chapters discuss evidence-based literature, the conceptual model of the study, its methodology and analysis, and a supporting management theory for community colleges to begin constructing an alumni resource development program.

Chapter 2 presents the literature review based on evidence that supports the need for a community college alumni resource development program. Chapter 3 offers the conceptual framework for a model and the explanation of that model to offer best practices and effective elements for a successful program. Chapter 4 includes the practice of evidence-based research and the description of the methodology used, including experts in the field of alumni and resource development. Chapter 5 offers a summary of findings and of the experts’ feedback. The final chapter illustrates a viable method for implementing a program based on the management and leadership theories discussed in this paper.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education,

Most Americans (57 percent) continue to believe almost anyone who needs financial help can find the loans and financial aid they need. Yet anxiety about the availability of financial help has jumped 10 points in the last 18 months [2009]. In 2007, about 3 in 10 Americans (29 percent) worried that financial help was not easily available for students; that number is now closer to 4 in 10 (39 percent). (Immerwahr et al., 2009, p. 16)

This outlook on financial access to higher education in America is a growing concern because of the tenuous global economy. As community colleges are gaining attention in the United States, so are the 46% of all undergraduate students enrolled in these two-year institutions (ICCTA, 2011). “The need to increase support to community colleges has never been greater. With more students, increasing demand, and greater challenges...it can be difficult for community colleges...yet they do so while providing accessible and affordable education to millions of Americans every year” (Lanning, 2008, p. 2). Thus, while national recognition of the significance of community colleges in meeting our nation’s economic challenges is growing, there is also evidence that the majority of, if not all, community colleges are underfunded. A report by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) in 2012 asserted that “aside from securing more public funding and seeking new streams of support from foundations and businesses, community colleges must reallocate the resources they already have” (para. 10).

According to the Washington-based Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), at least 30 states have projected budget gaps totaling $54 billion for 2013. As the Federal Recovery
Act of 2009 expired at the end of 2011, the options most states have for addressing the funding shortfalls are fewer. Additionally, as reported by McNichol, Oliff, and Johnson (2012), “shortfalls are the extent to which states’ revenues fall short of the cost of providing services... the shortfalls for 2009-2012 [totaling $530 billion]...have already been closed through a combination of spending cuts, withdrawal from reserves, revenue increases and use of federal stimulus dollars” (para.8). Thus, community colleges are in the midst of this economic plague. Moreover, community colleges are enrolling unemployed workers who are joining recent high school graduates to gain the skill set that will send them back into the workforce. The Higher Education Research and Development Institute (HERDI) noted in 2012 that 12 million students attend our nation’s community colleges. Therefore, there is a need to have a greater investment in seeking private funds. One option that has been slightly addressed by community colleges is connecting with alumni to garner this type of support.

Some of the literature regarding alumni resource development and philanthropy in higher education does not pertain to community colleges. Community colleges, perhaps, can learn to adapt to “the formal, highly structured institutional advancement models that focus on strong alumni support” (Keener, Carrier, & Meaders, 2002, p. 18). Additionally, very little has been written about community colleges and their alumni resource development programs in higher education journals and periodicals. The purpose of this literature review is to identify resource development strategies as they pertain to alumni and the increase in private funds for community colleges.

The literature review provides a framework for examining higher education literature to identify successful resource development practices for community colleges and includes qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research studies. The literature review begins with
a history of private financial support of two-year institutions and then provides a history of private fundraising in community colleges. This literature review also includes elements of alumni programs in four-year institutions and offers best practices of alumni programs and alumni fundraising in community colleges. Finally, this chapter describes a four-step managerial decision-making process that involves: 1) Identifying the opportunity, 2) Generating alternatives, 3) Selecting alternatives, and 4) Implementing the solution. This process also incorporates the Flexible Leadership Theory (FLT) that illustrates how leaders can develop elements of success, including some best practices for alumni resource development. These elements include “efficiency, innovation and adaptation and human resources and relations” (Yukl & Lepsinger, 2002, p. 16). These management processes will be part of the conceptual model presented in Chapter 3 to guide institutional leaders who are committed to an alumni resource development program.

History of Community College Private Support

Robert Bremner’s (1988) historical picture of educational philanthropy was written as part of the Chicago History of American Civilization; the role of philanthropy is illustrated in a historical context and includes the educational arena in his chronology. The book noted that educational philanthropy reaches back to the 1880s when the University of Chicago foundation was becoming a regular part of the University’s fiscal avenues. At this time, University officials called into question the use of the donation. This was significant because it began the practice of proper stewardship of gifts. Bremner includes a historical discussion on the evolution of philanthropy from charity and social welfare to philanthropy (p. 4). Concerning community colleges, it was not until the 1980s that the Miami-Dade College foundation became the leader in the community college arena for developing an aggressive philanthropic agenda for community
colleges to follow. This historical evidence is important because it illustrates the ties between educational philanthropy and the use of college foundations as a fundraising vehicle.

During the 1960s and 1970s, as many community colleges were being established, public funding appeared abundant. This was due to the 1947 Truman Higher Education Report that characterized community colleges as an extension of secondary schools. At this time, two-year colleges received significant funding from local taxes and the state. According to Glass and Jackson (1998), by 1980 the total percent of revenue from state coffers was up to 60%. Because of the adequacy of public support, many of the presidents and trustees did not see the need to seek private funds. Furthermore, many presidents intentionally chose not to seek out private funds for fear that state funding would be cut.

As the fiscal arena of community colleges changed over the next 40 years, most community colleges became independent from secondary schools and thus were considered public institutions. Community colleges now had to compete with four-year public institutions for state funds. Increasing completion and decreased adequacy of public funding led community colleges to begin looking for private funds. For instance, the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC) and the National Councils for Resource Development encouraged community colleges to diversify fundraising efforts through foundations, private grants, and corporate funding (Smith, 1993, p. 347). Researchers Glass and Jackson (1998) explain that community college resource development was a misunderstood entity within the system and should not only be used as an emergency funding platform. College leadership perceptions of impropriety in asking for financial support through fundraising had to change, along with the unsubstantiated apprehension that public support would wane for community colleges if they adapted fundraising as a needed financial tool.
Justifiably, community colleges were late in joining the fray of higher education fundraising. In 2002, the first national survey on resource development efforts in the public community college setting took place (Keener, Carrier, & Meaders, 2002). The survey indicated that during the 1970s and 1980s, 68% of community college foundation offices were established. However, at that time, these foundations were not actively seeking donations but were instead used as a funnel for the donors who sought out the institutions. For example, if a community member wanted to donate a used car to the local community college, the institution would establish a registered non-profit (501c3) foundation to accept the donation and offer the donation benefit to the donor. Thus, these foundations were not actively engaged in fundraising and simply waited for donors to contact the community college.

**Private Fundraising in Community Colleges**

Various researchers have tried to clarify the concept of the community college resource development paradigm. Glass and Jackson (1998) note that “[the] differences [between community colleges and universities] revolve around the sources of external funds, community ownership, organizational models for institutional advancement and fundraising, and fundraising performance and success” (p.718). In a 2012 survey by the Council for Aid to Education (CAE) that included approximately 1,000 responses from colleges and universities, the total amount raised for the fiscal year in 2011 was $30.3 billion. The survey also revealed that giving for physical buildings and endowments grew 13.6%. In this survey, 164 community colleges responded with a reported 2011 fundraising amount of $193 million. The survey data showed that the average giving ratio for community colleges dropped by 1.1%. The CAE did recognize that this sample of community colleges was small and it would need a better understanding of
community college respondents in relation to the size and location of the institution to better illustrate the data.

Director for the Council for Aid to Education Ann Kaplan (cited in Dillingham, Weiss, & Lawson, 2013) observed:

Community colleges play a vital role in North American higher education and are vital to the economic health and cultural vitality of the surrounding communities where they are located. They have an excellent case for charitable support from a range of constituencies, therefore. They are and should continue to assert that case for contributions. Essential to this endeavor is that leadership at these institutions and their supporting foundations recognize the crucial role the advancement function plays in the future of our nation’s community colleges. The advancements functions must be staffed and adequately funded as community colleges assume increasingly important role in the higher education system. (p. 4)

In 2011, the Council for Aid to Education also reported that alumni giving in the higher education sector was up by 9.9%, which equaled $7.8 billion and accounted for over 25% of the $30.3 billion collected in 2011 (see Figure 1).

![Figure 1. Voluntary support of higher education by Council for Aid to Education (2011)](image-url)
Figure 1 illustrates that alumni giving is a large part of a college’s or university’s funding base. In 2006, a research report by the Council for Resource Development (CRD) revealed that 80% of community college alumni live within an hour’s drive of the community college. However, poor alumni identification and lack of quality alumni databases hamper community colleges in their ability to access potential alumni donors. A 2011 survey from the CAE revealed that community colleges reported they received about 35% from non-alumni. Ann Kaplan, the director of the survey, noted “that some of those donors actually are alumni who haven’t been identified as such.... [T]he more data community colleges collect, the more contributions... [which] means alumni need to be identified and solicited” (Ashford, 2011, p. 5). Kaplan offered more evidence that shows fundraising from alumni is a “potential area of growth” for community colleges:

- Just .08% of alumni identified by community colleges have actually made a gift, compared to 9.8% of alumni of all higher education institutions.
- While the average gift from alumni to all colleges and universities declined about 3.3% from 2009 to 2010, the average gift from alumni at all colleges and universities rose during that period, from $67 to just under $2,000—or about $389 if one excludes two $25,000 gifts from individuals from Clark Community College (Ohio) and Minnesota State Community and Technical College (Ashford, 2011; Retrieved from http://www.communitycollegestimes.com/Pages/Funding/alumni-outreach.aspx).

The executive director of Broone County Community College (New York) acknowledges that community college alumni can bring other resources to the institution beside money. Many community college alumni are actively involved in their community as business owners and can be mentors or tutors to current students at the college.
Community colleges and four-year institutions serve different student populations (Lyons, 2007). Most community colleges serve minorities, people of lower income, and first generation students. Many community college students approach their college career as a pathway to develop a skill over a degree (Lanning, 2008). Community college students also view academics differently. For instance, 61.5% of community college students attend part-time, and of these, 41% are first generation students (AACC, 2011). This is almost reversed for public four-year institutions which show that about 2% attend part-time (NCES, 2012). It is evident that community college students come from diverse backgrounds with different expectations than four-year students. According to Akin (2005), “postgraduate alliances, earnings and contacts also differ…. Alumni who continue their education and graduate from four-year institutions usually transfer their allegiance to those institutions” (p. 68). Community colleges also do not keep accurate databases and their development offices are meagerly staffed. Accordingly, alumni giving is not considered by some to be a successful avenue for community colleges (Glass & Jackson, 1998; Wong, 2007). Despite these barriers, community colleges need to move forward with alternative resource development strategies to address the financial gaps created by an unstable economy and declining trends in government funds.

Comparing Two-Year and Four-Year Alumni Programs

Given that community colleges face significant challenges because of the diverse communities for which they operate, Glass and Jackson (1998) found that “how advancement is integrated into the organizational structure of the community college is impacted by size, location, competition, and market of the institution” (p. 721). As noted earlier, much of the research reveals that community college resource development is not as prevalent as it is at four-year colleges. Furthermore, research on effective models for community college alumni resource
development has been almost non-existent. Glass and Jackson state that the community college alumni resource development model will differ from that of a four-year institution. For instance, researchers (Jackson & Glass, 2000; Keener et al., 2002) agree that community colleges do not staff their development departments like a four-year institution and alumni relations in a community college differ greatly in scope and commitment from those at four-year institutions. The first difference noted between community colleges and four-year institutions is the number of personnel dedicated to the development office. A community college may only employ one alumni relations person. For example, Moraine Valley Community College in Illinois, an institution that caters to more students per year than many four-year institutions (20,000 FTE), employs only two staff and has only a three-person development office (S. Linn, personal communication, August 2012). In reviewing community college staffing patterns, Keener et al. (2003) found that the development staff is proportionate to the number of students the college has in its district. Their study noted that 80% of community colleges had only one person dedicated to development and the largest development department had a total of seven. The literature indicates that the capacity for community colleges to raise individual funds depends on such factors as leadership, fundraising staff experience, fundraising staff size, community and institutional collaboration, and an updated alumni database.

In addition to factors of institution size and staff, there are four elements that four-year institutions review in their alumni giving plans: student experience, alumni experience, alumni motivation, and demographic variables related to giving (Xiaogeneg, Hoffman, & Grady, 2007, p. 2). Xiaogeneg et al. defined the four elements as follows. Student experience is the relation to the academic experience that students had with the institution and how their education contributed to their career success. Alumni experience is the students’ perceptions of their
relationship with their alma mater. This is essentially how alumni services at the alma mater work with alumni to be motivated to sustain a relationship. Finally, demographic variables indicate that alumni donation increases as alumni age increases. These elements may provide useful insights into community college if similar factors can be confirmed as being related to alumni giving. Since alumni relations is relationship marketing, the data used to target alumni need to be relevant (Klingaman, 2012). Therefore, community colleges should exert greater effort into research and data collection to support their alumni development efforts. Many four-year institutions are offering more tangible services beyond an alumni day or dinner (Schachter, 2010). According to Tim Pavish, vice president for university relations at Washington State University, “over time, things have changed. The alumni joining our alumni association have a love for their alma mater, but they are looking for a tangible return on investment beyond the feel good part.... [A]s state funding decreases, philanthropic support becomes more important” (Schachter, 2010, p. 61).

Additionally, many four-year institutions are already utilizing online communities to engage alumni. The online arena is an untapped resource that community colleges need incorporate into their alumni relations agenda. This engagement medium can also assist community colleges in developing a database for future fundraising campaigns. For example, Washington State has utilized “LinkedIn,” a professional networking social media website, to register 6,200 alumni where they can share interests and network with non-WSU LinkedIn members. Through web-based social networks, alumni offices can now listen to what their alumni are saying and interact with them in meaningful ways. Thus, an alumni office can tailor services or programs in response to their community proactively rather than reactively (Schachter, 2010).
Best Practices: Examples of Community College Alumni Development and Fundraising

According to Nazzaro (1992), a common theme is that community college alumni have weak ties to their institutions because of the different dynamics of social and economic situations. Most students attending community colleges are part-time and use the two-year institution as an academic catalyst before going on to complete four-year degrees. Building a strong constituency base is critical for developing the “tie that binds” in alumni relations. For example, Southwestern Community College in rural western North Carolina has demonstrated successful practices that include solid resource development strategies. This institution has built an endowment of over $15 million in just over a decade through institution collaboration through programs of engagement of future alumni. Southwestern developed a partnership with local public high schools and public universities to continue the flow of higher education and alumni engagement.

Relevant literature on alumni giving has identified variables that affect a person’s willingness to give. For example, some studies have found age to be an important factor. As noted earlier in this chapter, community colleges need to continue to connect with their alumni and to learn of the successes that four-year institutions rely on. For instance, a study by Bruggink and Siddiqui (1995) found that for every annual increase in age, a potential donor would give 5% more. As fundraising practices and knowing alumni characteristics become more prevalent, community colleges need to know “who, how and why” alumni are more likely to be donors.

The executive director of Bucks Community College (Newtown, Pennsylvania), Tobias Bruhn, is committed to an alumni capital campaign. He states “that reaching alumni is essential
to [our] success…we are still mainly focused on the business community but we’re making a targeted effort to get our alumni more engaged” (Fernandez, 2011, p. 29). Community college executive leadership continues to make strides in developing alumni as a financial resource. Although different geographical settings may contribute to the success of cultivating alumni, examples illustrate that leadership, a management plan, and a database are strong indicators for successful outcomes. An example of effective alumni resource development programs is Northwest College (Powell, Wyoming); the foundation serves over 20,000 alumni worldwide along with a board of 34 committed members who manage over $20 million in assets. Northwest College is a rural institution with about 2,500 students (www.nwc.cc.wy, n.d.). By contrast, the Valencia Community College Foundation (Orlando, Florida) has 10 staff members along with a 60-member board, all actively promoting development with assets of over $64 million. Thus, it appears from the literature that community colleges can have success in alumni fundraising in a variety of sizes and locales.

According to Kathleen Guy, now retired president of institutional advancement for Northwest Community College (Michigan), connecting with alumni takes time: “you have to build that relationship and you have to help them see the connection” (Fernandez, 2011, p. 29). She is referring to planning and engagement or, as the literature states, “relationship marketing.” These elements of success are critical in strategically developing an alumni development plan. According to Skari and Ullman (2012), “community college alumni are the largest untapped resource available…. [I]n order to capitalize on this rich pool of prospective donors, community colleges must build programs to identify, support and engage alumni” (p. 22).

An example of a community college that has seen steady growth in alumni giving over a two-year span (2009-2011) is Bronx Community College (BCC). In 2009, individual giving was
$49,000 and grew to $72,000 in 2011. The college expects individual giving to be a larger segment of the institution’s overall support in the future. BCC also grew their alumni database from 36,000 to 38,000. Robert Whelan, BCC alumni affairs officer, mentioned that their success comes from consistent communication. As he stated, “Our [friends and alumni] have probably heard more from us in the past three years than they’ve heard in the previous thirty. Cultivation just takes a long time” (cited in Council for Advancement and Support of Education, 2012). These examples of best practices demonstrate that community colleges that have utilized their resources such as commitment from leadership, relationship marketing, and a dedicated and educated staff can have success in alumni resource development.

**Application of Management Theory to Community College Alumni Programs**

In reviewing the literature on community colleges, four main elements were consistently found to be important in managing alumni resource development efforts: (1) institutional support (which includes presidential support, foundation board support, and trained and committed alumni development staff), (2) relationship marketing, (3) strategic/institutional planning, and (4) updated database.

**Presidential Leadership**

Presidential leadership is crucial to the continued relationship management process. The president advocates for the institution’s mission (Vaughan, 1989). “The president’s job is to coordinate the work of those involved in fundraising and to ensure that they present a unified message and image to external constituencies” (Ryan & Palmer, 2005, p. 45). As private fundraising becomes more vital, it is surprising that more than 57% of successful presidential candidates come from the position of chief academic officer, where they have had almost no training or exposure to resource development (Vaughan, 1989).
Research illustrates that the president plays a major role in effective fundraising. A frequent question raised in the management research literature is: how can strategic leadership actually influence the effectiveness of an organization? Yukl (2010) designed an answer to this question with his Flexible Leadership Theory (FLT). The FLT blends ideas from other leadership theories, organizational theory, strategic management, change management, and human resource management. Therefore, leadership and specific models of management are the blend that community college presidents need in the current perpetually-changing arena of community colleges. According to Yukl, “strategic [management] is facilitated by the use of specific leadership behaviors such as monitoring the external environment, assessing threats and opportunities, identifying core competencies, and evaluating alternative strategies” (p. 374). An example of Yukl’s Flexible Leadership Theory in the community college arena is presented by Brumbach and Villadsen (2002), who found that “resource development in the community’s college is an entrepreneurial operation that melds public and private resources, knowledge of college needs and operations, effective solution development, and a visionary approach to creating preferred futures for a many-faceted institution” (p. 85). They call this management blend of leadership the “edge of chaos.” Thus, the president is the visionary in the community college that should include the following in order “to achieve the ‘edge of chaos’ essential to an effective operation”:

1. Position the chief development officer and the fundraising operation at the core of the college, on par with major units.
2. Build support for the adhocracy approach needed to permit developing and rapidly dissolving teams to construct new projects and proposals.
3. Create a climate of stewardship for received funding, not only in fiscal requirements, but in the programmatic objectives as well.
4. Foster an entrepreneurial mindset within the college to leverage possibilities from multiple sources to achieve larger college goals.
5. Gamble a little. Be willing to take a risk with new ideas/ or new partners within the college’s major priorities.
6. Preserve the visionary capacity of the development office, vaulting it for its impact and keeping routine assignments to a minimum. (p. 86)

Additionally, Wenrich and Reid (2003) note, “As a visible leader of the college, the president is the person most likely to encounter those capable of giving money and establishing partnerships, and he or she must have the political and philanthropic acuity to recognize gift opportunities” (p. 30). They also identify the importance of presidential involvement in all fundraising activities that will build on the future effectiveness of community college fundraising. In addition, according to de los Santos (2011), “There is also going to be increasing pressure over the next five years for community college CEOs to spend more of their time raising funds and looking at alternative sources for fundraising” (p. 16).

In the entrepreneurial spirit, community college presidents are responsible for advocating the vision of the institution. This is the first segment of both a strategic plan and resource development programs. After all, one cannot raise any money without a clear vision of the future (Gose, 2006). Setting the stage is another important role of the president. This means creating the climate of support on how the institution functions. For example, Vaughan (1989) states that community college presidents set the tone and pace of the institution. In advocating fundraising, the president must be transactional and must convey that fundraising is everyone’s job. The president must set the precedent and lead by example. Kouzes and Posner (2002) likewise suggest that leading means going first, showing the way. Drucker (1990) acknowledges that transformational leaders are change agents who lead by example, encouraging others along the way to reach agreed-upon goals. Presidents have to accept their primary role as fundraiser and extend their leadership beyond the institution’s boundaries. Glass and Jackson (1998) and
Ryan and Palmer (2005) state that presidents who integrate institutional planning and resource development have successful development programs. Accordingly, some presidents have had the foresight to advance this concept by placing the development office in a larger institutional advancement department that includes public relations, grants management, planning, and other offices that connect the college with external stakeholders (Ryan & Palmer, 2005).

**Community Relationship Building**

Throughout this literature review, the need for private support at community colleges has been illustrated. Since the beginning, community colleges have been an integral part of the communities they serve. Collaborations are important, as Stendardi (1992) notes: “the primary characteristic of modern corporate philanthropy is that it is intended to produce a more specific, more measurable benefit in a relatively short time period” (p. 24). Collaborations are intended to nurture relationships between college, community leaders, and prospective donors.

Klein (2001) in *Fundraising for Social Change* asserts that “the purpose of fundraising then is to build relationships, or more simply put, instead of raising money; the purpose is to raise donors” (p. 13). Glass and Jackson (1998) contend that the importance of relationship building to resource development success is a key reason why the integration of resource development and strategic planning is so valuable. According to Bryson (2004), strategic planning can “facilitate communication and participation, accommodate divergent interests and values, foster wise and reasonably analytical decision-making, and promote successful implementation and accountability” (p.6). As Yukl points out in his FLT model, through indirect leadership there is a challenge in balancing short-term and long-term objectives. Relationship marketing is a long-term objective that can put more pressure on the leader to stress short-term objectives. Through the four-step managerial decision-making process, a strategic plan can be
the business model for the alumni resource development program, which in turn assists the
president in the long-term objectives as a leader, according to the FLT (Yukl & Lepsinger,
2002). Thus, it is important to develop the strategy through the four-step managerial decision-
making process to keep leadership on target with the objectives of the long-term plan.

The college and their chief resource development officer (president) rely on relationships
to further the cause in their resource development initiatives such as alumni giving, annual
giving or capital campaigns. Community college literature on resource development concerning
relationships is relatively new, but the community college is well positioned because of its
history of community involvement. As the scope of community changes in relation to social
media, so must the community college. Relationships are now open to further integration
through electronic communication. According to Pearson (2010), “social media can
complement, augment, and amplify alumni relations objectives much more than they appear to
undermine them” (p. 27). Thus, relationships can develop faster, extend further, and keep the
institution visible.

Foundations

A foundation is a 501(c)3 organization that is the philanthropic arm of the community
college. Members who are asked to join this board have the energy that makes the foundation
successful. Unlike the board members of the institution that are either politically voted in or
appointed, the board members of the foundation are selected based on their ability to contribute
either time or money to the foundation. According to Chait et al. (2005), board-appointed
members of the foundation should be staffed with individuals who have personal wealth or
business connections in the community or are business owners or professionals in banking or
law. The foundation board member must also have a key connection to the community. Board
members are typically the institution’s ambassadors and/or advocates. Board members should be recruited from the business community because fundraising is based on the platform of “sales.” For instance, businesses need sales to drive influence within their organizations for operating sustainability. Thus, foundations and community colleges need advocates (fundraising) to assist in operating sustainability. The slight difference between advocates (fundraising) and salespeople is that advocates have a mission that benefits others who are less able, while sales benefits the able (sellers) over the less able (buyers). Since both selling and fundraising embody relationship development, the board member must collaborate with the institution or foundation leader in order to cultivate (alumni) relationships. Therefore, community college foundations need to utilize their board members to connect with the community and operate like a business to support their missions.

In research undertaken by Eller et al. (1998) for the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), 631 institutions participated in a survey that was based on the “asking” levels of board participation at community college foundations. The respondents all had or were in the process of developing foundation support for their fundraising efforts. “The more powerfully community college foundations speak to the importance of fundraising and philanthropy, the greater potential to raise interest, emotion and expectations in the minds of [the] donors and prospects” (Babitz, 2003, p. 7).

**Strategic Planning/Institutional Planning**

According to Glass and Jackson (1998), “integrating resource development with institutional planning processes can help clarify priorities and solidify community support upon which successful fundraising depends” (p. 725). Bryson (2004) illustrates how strategic and action planning processes for public and non-profit entities are grounded in both rational
planning and political decision-making frameworks. According to Bryson, rational planning and political decisions are not “inherently antithetical.... [T]he way in which strategies are formulated is less important than how good the strategies are and how well they are implemented” (p. 211).

To be successful, the resource development function should be aligned with the institution’s mission and collaboratively work with all strategic planning functions and departments. The four-step managerial decision-making process assists the leadership team in making the decision to commit to an alumni resource development plan. This initial management process is vital for the institution leader to incorporate the Flexible Leadership Theory to influence constituents on the importance of value and ideology that the alumni program will have for the college.

Melchiori (1988) notes that it may take time to establish policy, such as the development of a strategic plan, before a comprehensive plan can be launched. Furthermore, as Bryson (2004) asserts, “key leaders, managers and planners can best use strategic planning as an educational and learning tool, to help them figure out what is really important and what should be done about it” (p. 16). In conclusion, the management decision-making process coupled with Yukl’s Flexible Leadership Theory should be used to create a value-oriented strategy for the alumni resource development program, the institution, and its constituents.

**Alumni Database Information**

Accurate database information is vital to any successful alumni resource development program. This database, coupled with the strategy to keep alumni engaged, is a key component and should be included in the four-step managerial decision-making process. A system must be decided on and implemented for how the database is to be updated and stored and what type of systems will be used. This will greatly depend on available resources, both financial and human. The decision will also be based on an understanding of the technological functions of computer
software and hardware that the development staff may or may not have. In addition, community colleges need to capitalize on emerging technologies. Skari and Ullman (2012) contend that community colleges should utilize social media as a platform to keep alumni engaged. An example of evolution in the use of technology is Valencia College in Florida, that started with a bi-annual alumni magazine called *Vitae*. Initially, this print forum was used to generate interest in their alumni association. Since then, the magazine has expanded to more of a marketing platform announcing information on broader issues concerning the college. In 2012, the magazine was available on iPad and other mobile devices users. This type of vehicle will extend the reach of the college’s marketing initiatives to a vast audience to include alumni, donors, legislators, staff, board members, and other groups. As innovation evolves, decisions made can be attributed to the Flexible Leadership Theory (FLT), which is about “Adapting to the external environment involves responding in appropriate ways to threats and opportunities resulting from changes in technology, economic conditions, competitor’s actions and customer needs and expectations” (Yukl & Lepsinger, 2002. p. 374). As Valencia College illustrates, from decision-making to leadership aspects, FLT is essential for how innovation can be a successful determinant of an alumni resource development program.

**Summary**

As state and federal funds for community colleges are expected to decline, community colleges should continue to actively pursue all resources of revenue, especially alumni resource development. After considering the historical ebb and flow of state, federal, and local funds as they pertain to community colleges, a new direction in planning is critical for developing a source of private funds. A review of the literature has confirmed the following facts:

1. Community colleges are experiencing declines in public sector support.
2. A growing number of community colleges are engaging in private fundraising and in the development of alumni programs.

3. Community colleges face a number of barriers to alumni giving including: inadequate and poorly trained staff, lack of technology and database management systems, lack of leadership commitment, and lack of institutional support including financial constraints.

4. Although differences exist, four-year college approaches to alumni giving may provide some useful guidance for community colleges.

5. Effective fundraising incorporates appropriate management tools including: tactical and strategic planning, flexible leadership theory, and decision-making processes to incorporate best practices.

6. Committed leadership is the beginning of successful outcomes for the program.

This chapter also identified strategies to introduce alumni resource development to the community college arena. First, the four-step managerial decision-making process begins identifying the opportunity. Community colleges collected nearly $200 million from alumni in 2011, according to the Council for Aid to Education. The second function of this process is to generate alternative solutions (if available) and then select the alternative or opportunity. This portion encompasses drafting a strategy to implement a solution, which is the last step (Thompson, Petraf, Gambl, & Strickand, 2010).

By comparison, four-year institutions have already recognized the reality and opportunity of the strength of alumni. According to a study by the NAPA Group (2011), “private and public universities are recognizing the need for private support...as state and federal resources decline and educational costs rise (p.7). Another strategy is for leadership to utilize the Flexible
Leadership Theory to manage the alumni resource development plan. The FLT will assist the president with “changing situations and find an appropriate balance for tradeoffs and competing demands” (Yukl & Lepsinger, 2002, p. 2). This theory of strategic leadership and management is needed when innovation is involved because community colleges do not want innovative ideas such as an alumni resource development program to become merely rhetoric and not a reality. According to the literature, the reality is that community colleges cannot thrive without alternative sources of funding. As the gateway for higher education, career enhancement, and a comfortable middle-class life, it is evident that community colleges need to build philanthropic support with alumni.
Chapter 3
CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The proposed alumni resource development management model presented in this dissertation illustrates a simple but comprehensive view of how the elements of an effective alumni resource development program can bring about positive results in fundraising for community colleges, despite the natural and ingrown barriers most institutions encounter. The purpose of the conceptual model is to outline and illustrate elements that can lead to effective alumni resource development programs. The model recognizes the barriers and proposes methods to overcome them. It also proposes specific elements that will greatly enhance level of success in creating alumni programs that can be effective in reducing funding gaps that so many community colleges face. In this model, note that the barriers constricting alumni development can be balanced and offset by the incorporation of effective elements that emerged from the research literature. Moreover, the implementation of a managerial decision-making process and the Flexible Leadership Theory will be determinants in developing an alumni resource development program. See Figure 2 for the Conceptual Model.

Thesis

The conceptual model presented is based on the premise that public funding for community colleges across the country is declining; therefore, community colleges need to seek alternative funding sources to support their missions. In supporting community college missions, alumni resource development programs can effectively fill fiscal gaps for sustainability and provide funds to expand programs and facilities to better enhance their college’s communities.
Figure 2. A conceptual model for alumni resource development programs
The Barriers

The model highlights five barriers that were revealed in the literature review. The first barrier community colleges contend with is the lack of leadership commitment. The second barrier is the financial constraints on the institution. The third barrier is the lack of institutional support. The fourth barrier is the lack of alumni records or a database to be used as a tool to develop an alumni fundraising program. Finally, the fifth barrier in the model is the inadequate and poorly trained development staff that is needed to harness an alumni resource development program.

One of the most critical barriers all community colleges face is leadership commitment. The commitment from the president and his/her executive staff and board is so essential that all other barriers in the proposed model are moot if this commitment is not present. According to Wenrich and Reid (2003), the “ultimate responsibility for college resources rests with board of trustees and the president…. [P]resident commitment to fundraising, donor development, and partnerships…are paramount for college success” (p. 29). Furthermore, the president of River Valley Community College, Steven Budd, adds current insight into overcoming the barrier of leadership commitment by stating, “it is also the president’s job to create a philanthropic culture within the institution…. [T]he president sets the tone. Creating a philanthropic culture requires involving faculty and staff in the development process...legitimizing the role of faculty and staff, via encouragement from the CEO or president” (American Association of Community Colleges [AACC], 2012).

As the conceptual model flows through the initial barriers of poor institution support, inadequate staffing, and inefficiently trained staff, it continually relies on the element of leadership. As Yukl (2008) states, “a challenging situation is one that involves unusual problems
to solve, difficult obstacles to overcome, and risky decisions to make” (p. 81). The aspect of developing an alumni resource development program could be a risk and an obstacle to be overcome by the institution. The model proposed here suggests effective elements to overcome risks and obstacles. The continued process of developing an alumni resource development program depends on effective leadership, planning, and implementation. Effectiveness is determined by how well the Flexible Leadership Theory is utilized by the president in a challenging situation. Thus, the risk of resource development is nullified by a strong plan and barriers are eliminated by effective outcomes that begin with a committed leader and institution.

As the alumni resource development model moves down the path toward successful outcomes, the application of necessary resources will enable the program to succeed. The first resource is a “champion” who can take that role and lead the effort. Such a leader can “synthesize” the various parts of the plan, institution, and constituents and create positive perceptions about the fundraising program. These perceptions from the institution and external constituencies will enhance collaboration and the continued growth of the program. Steven Budd, president of River Valley Community College, supports this:

"presidents must embrace their role…. [T]he president need not be an expert on fundraising strategy but should ensure that such an expert exists on staff…. [R]esource development is best led by a dedicated, well-placed professional within the organization…. [W]e call this individual the chief development officer. (p. 2)

**Barrier One: Leadership Commitment**

The conceptual model requires that institutions understand and overcome existing barriers to alumni resource development. Without leadership commitment, a resource development program cannot be effectively launched in an institution. Therefore, overcoming barriers to securing strong leadership commitment is the first step. Glass and Jackson (1998)
note that more than half of all newly appointed community college presidents lack any significant fundraising experience. In identifying this, these authors also advise that presidents should develop a climate for support from others within the community college.

Glass and Jackson (1998) also contend that community colleges will not be able to successfully compete for private donations without strong leadership. A better understanding of resource development, its significance to the institution, and the specific roles of presidents, trustees, and foundation directors in raising private funds is essential. “Presidential commitment to fundraising, donor development, and partnerships signals that these activities are paramount for college success” (Wenrich & Reid, 2003, p. 29).

Community college presidents are the gateway to either stifling or broadening the financial coffers of their institution. Many presidents do not realize the power of their position as their daily institutional activities may take precedence over finding the needed funding. “The president’s job is to coordinate the work of those involved in fundraising and to ensure that they present a unified message and image to external constituencies” (Ryan & Palmer, 2005, p. 45).

According to research by Durino and Loessin (1993) which included community colleges, both qualitative and quantitative studies concluded that no one particular combination of elements is necessary for success. However, institutional commitment to fundraising, presidential leadership, entrepreneurial activities, and the leadership of the chief development officer are consistently present. Durino and Lessin’s “studies looked at the impact of planning, goal setting and evaluation on effective fundraising, speculating that these elements were critical because of the role of fundraising in setting and fulfilling an institutions mission” (Glass & Jackson, 1998, p. 4).
Triton College in River Grove, Illinois is now delving into alternative avenues of funding, including alumni giving, and the president’s leadership has proven critical. According to President Granados, “in headier times, this lack of alumni relations was deemed a regrettable reality. Today, connecting with potential [alumni] donors is a must” (Murry & Orr, 2011, p. 32). As of 2011, Triton College is just starting to realize the benefits of stronger alumni relation efforts. Presidential commitment in community colleges must include institutional planning, involving departments such as student services, career services, workforce development, alumni programs, and other social organizations. Presidential commitment must include institutional planning and involve departments such as student services, career services, workforce development, alumni programs, and other social organizations.

**Barrier Two: Institutional Support**

According to general research in resource development, relationship building and development are key to institutional support. The same holds true with new and existing alumni programs. The conceptual model follows the progression of utilizing all community, business, and current foundation relationships that can gather the support of the institution. Gose (2006) illustrates a common scenario that many community colleges forget: know one’s customer (community). In 2000, when the Valencia Community College (Orlando, Florida) was seeking a major gift from the Walt Disney Company to establish a center for hospitality and culinary arts, the college contacted a 1974 alumnus who was president of the Disney division that oversaw resorts and hotels. The alumnus was instrumental in working with his company and the college. Eventually, the Walt Disney Company came through with a $1 million gift, which was matched by the state.
Relationships can and, in most cases, do begin with the foundation board members. Critical to the advancement process, board members have traditionally been held responsible for fiscal planning and policy. In today’s environment, board members should explore new sources of revenue generation. If board members are not committed to giving time and/or resources to alumni development efforts, the efforts will highly unlikely be successful.

Many of the earlier foundations were established as social organizations with little or no fundraising experience among any of its members. In today’s very competitive philanthropic arena, board members are needed who are inherently committed to the community college. As ambassadors, the board members must be willing to take leadership and personally invest in the college and its programs. For the foundation to be productive, it must have a viable plan and structure for board activities. According to Bolman and Deal (1991), this type of framework encourages the development of leadership and shared goals, which is what the Flexible Leadership Theory exudes—all essential for effective determinants for an alumni resource development program.

**Barrier Three: Lack of Alumni Database Information**

Another element that stands in the way of successful alumni programs is the lack of database information. Although not much literature is associated with community college database management, research does show that building the database is a grass-roots effort. In support of database gathering, Glover and Krotseng (1993) note “that development requires current records on alumni, donors and gifts and must process an enormous number of transactions efficiently…. [D]evelopment does need monthly and quarterly and annual summaries of the various activities…. [T]hey also tend to demand customized software” (p. 34). As these researchers illustrate, community colleges should consider investing in software
applications designed to manage campaigns. For example, if a database application were
available, a development volunteer would have clearer information during solicitation and thus
not accept a smaller donation from potential alumni who could give larger amounts.

In support of the conceptual model, the need for an updated database or database
management was noted by Pastorella (2003), who suggested that engaging affluent and targeted
alumni can lead to a small group that can begin effective alumni giving and spread the word on
how the college has contributed to its personal and professional success. This group needs to be
included and recognized by the college. The bottom line, according to Pastorella (2003), is that
“engaged alumni give, then ask what more they can do to support the alumni program and the
college” (p. 78).

**Barrier Four: Inadequate and Poorly Trained Staff**

In exploring different organizational fundraising models for community colleges,
Brumbach and Villadsen (2002) conclude, “with a typical small staff of one to two individuals, it
is impossible for the resource development office to take advantage of the numerous
opportunities available to the college” (p. 81). Additionally, at many community colleges, the
vice president of institutional advancement oversees a few different departments such as
development, alumni relations, public relations, and marketing. The idea of integrating all these
functions in a collaborative way is ideal, but not feasible (Stevich, 2010). The literature review
supports researchers (Ryan & Palmer, 2005; Stevich, 2010) that suggests that the leadership of
the president can pool the different departments together to connect with external stakeholders.
Successful elements in alumni resource development often relate to the quality of leadership at
the institution and to the skills that the staff possesses. These elements are the action items that
help get the process going.
Barriers to alumni resource development, as illustrated in the model, often center on insufficient resources, such as inadequate staffing. Community colleges must understand that these barriers are present. In fact, these barriers will assist community colleges in utilizing a planning process, such as the four-step managerial decision-making process, so that the barriers can be transformed into successful elements for the alumni resource development program. According to the model, these barriers will ultimately be squeezed out by the weight and success of the effective elements. Thus, producing best practices that work within the specific community college culture will be revealed through the decision-making process. The combination of successful elements and best practices will eventually deliver the final product—an increase in alumni donors.

**Effective Alumni Resource Development Elements**

**Presidential Commitment**

As the fiscal responsibility of the community college falls upon the president, so does the responsibility of fundraising and understanding basic philanthropic principles. The president should know that philanthropic relationships are based on an exchange of values. Moreover, the president will realize that donors give to see opportunities that will assist the institution in making a change for the good of the college community and the community as a whole. Thus, the success of fundraising for community colleges will depend on the president and the leadership he/she must institute in the advancement arena.

As state and federal funds continue to diminish, community colleges will experience tighter budgets. According to Wright Lassiter, Chancellor of the Dallas County Community College District, the number one issue facing community colleges today is the “funding at the state level...embracing the concept of a ‘culture of evidence’ within the college structure...
preparing for changes in funding patterns from access-orientated to outcome-orientated”
(SOURCE on Community College Issues, Trends and Strategies, 2011). This type of leadership
puts presidents in a position to defend criticism for developing or growing the advancement
office at their institutions. To defray any type of criticism, the president must be highly active in
the community, be at the call of the public, and engage with individuals and groups that have an
interest in the college. In the words of de los Santos, “there is also going to be increasing
pressure over the next five years for community college CEOs to spend more of their time
raising funds and looking at alternative sources for fundraising” (SOURCE on Community

**Tactical Management Planning**

According to Bryson (2004), “effective strategies have effective linkages with the
organizations environment, even when their purpose is to change that context” (p. 184).
Therefore, every community college may already have a strategy or pattern. At times, the pattern
or plan is good, but sometimes it needs to be redefined. For instance, as environmental elements
infest a community college, such as a shortage of government funding, redefining plans is an
effective way to navigate beyond this type of obstruction. Leadership needs to make decisions
that pilot the community college toward calmer waters. As the stressed financial environment of
the U.S. continues, it will become increasingly more difficult to keep community colleges afloat.
Tactical plans need to be made to include alternative funding resources. One logical alternative
is an alumni resource development program. By creating an alumni resource development
program as a link or extra source to itself, the community college will enhance its overall
community value (power).
Institutional Collaboration

The environment for institutional collaboration also is enabled from the top. The president has a duty to create a philanthropic culture within the college. To initiate the process, the president must first endorse the chief development officer or the office of advancement. Second, the president must include the faculty and staff in the development process by asking employees to give to the college foundation. The contributions from the community college departments, academic programs, and any external contributing entities must be recognized. Bryson (2004) notes the president’s action of legitimizing the role of college constituents is working the “theory of collaborative advantage” (p. 376). This theory “is the synergetic outcome gained through collaboration in which something is achieved that could not have been achieved by any organization acting alone” (p. 378). Additionally, collaboration alone cannot exist without the practice of trust. Therefore, all community college departments must be in alignment with the philanthropic culture and the president in order to realize successful outcomes presented in the strategic plan.

Alumni and Community Relationships

Community college alumni are more of an idea than a reality. This is because college advancement offices need to define who an alumnus is. It is obvious that graduates of the institution are defined as alumni. However, because many community college students attend for purposes other than a degree, a community college will probably will want to define an alumnus in terms other than just graduation. Therefore, community colleges need to define who is an alumnus of the institution. Developing methodologies to engage alumni is also important. Alumni who are engaged can be recruited for volunteerism and philanthropy and can also create an on-campus presence in developing future alumni. Alumni relations or friend-raising are
important to the alumni resource development program. According to Bender, Kerns, and Witter (1988):

> since many two-year colleges have not maintained contact with their alumni over the years, it is important to renew acquaintance with alumni before soliciting them in fundraising campaigns…. [A]lumni need to be involved in things other than development well before any broad fundraising efforts are undertaken. (p. 5)

Community colleges were built on relationships within each of the community districts they serve. According to Whissemore (2012), one advantage community colleges have in reaching alumni is that many remain in the community, “so they are more aware what’s going on at the college and can more easily attend events” (para. 11). This is one advantage that community colleges have over their four-year counterparts.

Relationships and relationship building are not new elements for community colleges, but they have not been as carefully considered as they need to be as tools for connecting alumni to their institutions. Understanding the characteristics and relationships that create new opportunities can refine and strengthen the alumni resource development program. Through these relationships, a standard for measuring the type of relationships that a community college has can be an influential tool for stewardship and cultivation. For example, in efforts made at Kirkwood Community College (KCC) in Iowa, the institution decided to reach out to 70,000 alumni. A survey was issued on how the alumni felt about their college experience. KCC developed a newsletter and started to engage their alumni based on that research. Three years later, the college began asking for money. Whissemore emphasized, “it wasn’t only the money that was given. Some alumni have since offered their time and talents” (para.6).
Institutional Market Branding

Market branding can utilize the stories of alumni to further the story of the community college mission. Alumni can be spokespeople for the college and market the college to constituents and companies in the district of the community college. According to Sevier (2005), “the goal in the brand creation process, just like any change initiative, is to build enough support to make things happen” (p. 24). This type of acceptance would be part of the culture that the president of the community college creates. The president needs to be a marketing-oriented person who expresses the unique qualities of the institution to all stakeholders. These product qualities need to motivate and inspire the educational dreams of influential constituents. For example, over 100 years ago, Woodrow Wilson developed and enhanced Princeton’s public image; the marketing initiatives were driven chiefly by a concern for the “quality of the university” (Hesel, 2004, p. B9). Thus, community colleges need to focus on the product and develop a strategic process to incorporate what the college can do for the community it serves, along with a marketing commitment for the long haul into their branding strategies.

Institutional Approach for Success

The leadership component in any successful organization is critical. In the case of developing or sustaining an alumni resource development program, the president and his team must embrace what the internal and external communities offer the institution. In some cases, the financial base of the college may be in a precarious position, and resources to create and implement a new model may be limited. For example, in 1995, Broward Community College in Florida had one of the oldest foundations in the country, but its activity from a financial perspective was minimal. The foundation was $1 million in debt and had assets of $800K (Budd, 2012). Thus, the institution had to work toward resurrecting the foundation and
developing new programs to further the foundation’s financial growth. Thus, how does one begin to develop an alumni resource development program? One starts with a plan—a plan of strategy utilizing the resources available and then, through execution, achieving the objectives set forth in the plan. According to Thompson et al. (2010), all organizations must execute five interrelated managerial strategic points to develop a process for success.

1. Developing a strategic vision of the company’s long-term direction, a mission that describes purpose, and a set of values to guide the pursuit of the vision and mission.
2. Setting objectives and using them as yardsticks for measuring the company’s performance and progress.
3. Crafting a strategy to achieve the objectives and move the company along the strategic course that management has charted.
4. Executing the chosen strategy efficiently and effectively.
5. Monitoring developments, evaluating performance, and initiating corrective adjustments in the company’s vision and mission, objectives, new ideas, and new opportunities. (p. 21)

Figure 3. Flow of strategic management
Clearing the Barriers

Building on these five strategic managerial points develops the alumni resource development program by pooling the actions into successful outcomes. These successful outcomes call for a multidirectional manager—in other words, a leader who has to be task-oriented and who can instill a culture that promotes good strategy execution. Although the president provides the leadership to motivate, reward, and instill the discipline required in accomplishing the initiatives, the management side of the president has to define and accomplish the tasks of the program. Accordingly, leadership comes in the guise of a manager who can “convincingly communicate a new strategy and the reasons for it...secure the commitment and enthusiasm of key personnel, gain agreement on how to implement the strategy and move forward to get all the pieces into place” (Thompson et al., 2010, pp. 329-330).

In executing the strategy for an alumni resource development program, the president must look to the resources in human talent that are available within the institution or from the community. It is essential that the president assemble a strong manager or management team to assist in nurturing the plan. Thus, staffing for the initiative is paramount for an alumni resource development campaign to provide the outcomes outlined in the strategic management plan.

The urgency in defining an effective strategy is highlighted by a survey undertaken by the Council of Aid to Education, a New York-based non-profit, which found that less than 1% of community college alumni donated to their college, compared to 20% at the top 10 research universities. As the leader of the community, the president’s commitment to development, particularly to the development of alumni as donors, is becoming more critical to the financial success of many institutions. Director of the Washington-based Council for Advancement and Support of Education Paul Heaton noted that “many community colleges are just now taking the
first steps: finding and reaching out to [these] potential donors” (cited in Gordon, 2012, para. 8). For example, in 2010, Bakersfield College received a $14 million donation from an alum who was an dermatologies alum after he learned of the college’s needs (Ashford, 2011). This type of gift may exist in the many communities that community colleges serve. If the president or fundraising director does not establish the asking relationship, then the needed funds will never be found.

**Fundraising Staff and Foundation Board Members**

As community colleges advance into the fray of fundraising, they need to enter with a staff who is committed to the cause for development. As public four-year institutions realized that funding from government entities was not declining, the *Chronicle* (2008) noted in 2007 that the 10 public universities which raised the most private funds expanded their fundraising staffs by 25% (Masterson & Wolverton, 2008). In addition, community colleges in general do not engage their alumni as well as they should. Many four-year institutions emphasize alumni relations, and transfers from community colleges are said to have more allegiance to their four-year institutions. However, research has not documented this fact and many community colleges are locating alumni who are intensely loyal. They are deeply appreciative of the fact that community colleges offer access to higher education to all who have the desire to further their quest for education and recognize the role of the community college in changing their lives. However, many community colleges are still leaving alumni relations on the lower levels of immediacy in the grand scheme of community college programs. If community colleges do not give their alumni the opportunity, how will they know how much alumni loyalty, commitment, and donations they can generate?
Not all community colleges have put alumni development and staffing issues on the lower rung of their strategic plan. The Valencia Community College foundation (Orlando, Florida) has a staff of 10 and a 61-member board dedicated to all aspects of development. These numbers and dedicated commitment can translate into revenue; since March 31, 2007 until March 31, 2012, the college endowment rose from $52 million to $64 million (Budd, 2012). Valencia College has been the exception and not the rule in the community college arena. Community colleges need to engage their alumni and develop a sense of ownership as a means of assuring that they are doing all they can to raise resources to support their missions. Ultimately, community colleges need to communicate a unified message to their alumni and potential donors. Community colleges need to remember that alternative funding like alumni resource development keeps the continued pathway open to a brighter future for those who otherwise could not afford higher education.

Since the alumni development program would likely begin and strategically develop through the community college foundation, foundation board members also play a huge role in overall institutional support. For example, I am a current foundation board member at a large Midwestern community college. Although board members have a passion for their leadership roles, many feel ill equipped to begin the solicitation process of fundraising, especially in a niche segment such as alumni development. In my role as a foundation board member, I am honored and privileged to be a part of an organization that works toward the success of student achievement, but there was no guidance in the who, what, and how to deliver the community college message to alumni or community constituents. Klingaman (cited in AACC, 2012) stated, “volunteer fundraising begins with commitment. Every board, and every member of the board, must commit to engaging in the organizational process that leads to gifts” (para 10). The values
of process and leadership commitment are key elements in effective outcomes. The foundation board and the institution have to make a serious commitment to the process of an alumni development program. A continuing emphasis in this area will not only lead to gifts, but also to alumni engagement and advocacy on behalf of the organization.

The conceptual model for alumni resource development for community colleges should look like that presented in Figure 4. The effective elements are now present, limiting the barriers that would stall innovation and advancement for the alumni development program as Figure 2 illustrated earlier.

*Figure 4. Conceptual model for effective outcomes*
Summary

Higher education literature has revealed that, historically, four-year institutions established alumni resource development programs over 50 years before community colleges started to take hold in the U.S. The effort of developing effective community college alumni programs does not only rest with the president or fundraising professionals; as the model develops, it also involves a community college effort which includes faculty, administration, foundation, technology, and community leaders.

Pokrass (1989) stated that “alumni serve as a valuable resource in fundraising, student recruitment, job placement, and volunteer programs” (p. 55). As this chapter reviewed the barriers, one particular barrier that stands out is the lack of commitment from leaders of the institution. According to Klingaman (2012), “without a significant leadership commitment on the part of the president, the leadership team and the foundation board, you end up even under the best circumstances, with a staff-driven program that raises perhaps 50 percent of your potential” (para. 10). Funds and alumni engagement will continue to provide that educational value for the underserved. Community colleges need to recognize this and approach this alternative way to infuse funds as part of their mission that will not only benefit the institution but also the community they serve.

Once the alumni resource development program develops, it will require the patience and tenacity of all involved for the program to become a major asset to the community college. The result or outcome will bring about the positive change that should be consistent with the mission of the college. Community college leadership that can instill creative and entrepreneurial elements will garner increased institution support and awareness along with community brand
identity. The inflow of financial support from alumni donors will also trigger additional giving, as alumni become advocates for the community college within the government and business community.
Chapter 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research methods used in conducting this study. The primary methodology employed in this study is evidence-based research. In addition, this study incorporated a review of its purpose, literature review, and conceptual model by a panel of experts, a technique that is frequently employed as part of evidence-based research. This chapter discusses the use of the Web of Science as the main research methodology for the evidence-based approach, the research outline/design, research findings based on scholarly literature, and the expert panel participants.

This study was designed to synthesize the findings of both quantitative and qualitative research relating to the research questions and supporting the development of the conceptual model. The goal was to employ quality research studies to develop a model and recommendations to guide community colleges in the creation of quality alumni programs. The research also investigated management and leadership approaches that support the development of well-implemented alumni programs. This discussion is divided into three sections: 1) examination of the research literature, 2) document analysis approach, and 3) expert panel participants’ review.

Examination of the Research Literature

The purpose of this study was to examine the effective elements in alumni resource development in the community college system. The literature review was used to illustrate and develop an understanding of how alumni and resource development are pertinent in today’s
community college setting. Additionally, the literature review was used to align and support the conceptual model illustrating the effective elements, barriers, and management processes related to alumni program development. The literature review examined previous studies in alumni development; because the community college literature in this area is limited, the studies mainly examined alumni development programs at four-year institutions. As references were first selected, the researcher read a diverse collection of articles in higher education and community college journals and books.

The University of Maryland University College (UMUC) library was used to conduct the research for the study. Because the literature related to alumni development in a community college was limited, alternative databases were used, namely Ebsco, Abi/Inform, Chronicle of Higher Education, ERIC, and Google Scholar.

To effectively examine the relevant literature, it was important to identify key search terms. Key words were developed by reviewing the four research questions:

1. Can an alumni resource development program be an effective tool for supplementing the public resource base for community colleges?
2. What elements of an alumni program help ensure its effectiveness?
3. What barriers do alumni programs face in community colleges and how can a model address these barriers?
4. How will a community college assess the effectiveness of its alumni resource development program?

Table 1 reveals a list of key words used in the search.
Table 1

List of Keywords

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keyword Language</th>
<th>Context of Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alumni Fundraising</td>
<td>Roles of Institutional Giving Relating to Alumni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Advancement</td>
<td>Definitions and Historical Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community College</td>
<td>Historical Data</td>
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<td>Donations</td>
<td>Giving and Programs</td>
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<td>Philanthropy</td>
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<td>Alumni in Higher Education</td>
<td>Alumni Programs</td>
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<td>Fundraising Programs, Definitions and Approaches</td>
</tr>
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<td>Charitable Contributions in Higher Education</td>
<td>Components and Programs of Donors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Costs and Finance</td>
<td>Financial Aid, Scholarship and Programs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The use of the keywords and combinations of keywords resulted in finding over 725 documents from a variety of sources. For example, the keyword combination “alumni fundraising” revealed 578 entries from the ERIC database. To review this literature and pinpoint the relevant articles, the following three criteria were used.

**Criterion 1: Relevance to the Topic.** Does the article list/include the keywords that reveal a direct connect to the study? Does the paper add to the study’s purpose?
Criterion 2: Research Methodology Used for the Scholarly Work. Was a quality research methodology used with adequate sample sizes, lack of bias, and appropriate analytical approaches?

Criterion 3: Accessibility. Are the documents, books or articles available from the UMUC library or partner libraries?

Once the scholarly material was retrieved from the databases, the researcher conducted a brief review and analysis of the abstracts and categorized the material into six topical areas: 1) community college leadership, 2) alumni programs, 3) alumni fundraising, 4) community relationship building, 5) college foundations and boards, and 6) market branding/reimaging.

As the scholarly articles, books, and research studies were grouped into the above-noted categories, 200 documents were narrowed down for a more detailed review after they were scrutinized in accordance with the following questions:

1. **Purpose of the Study:** Does the information clearly and directly relate to the research questions? Does the study provide relevant information from two-year college or four-year college alumni development programs?

2. **Method and Level of Study Analysis:** Does the research use well-designed qualitative, quantitative, and/or mixed methods research? An example of one of the quality studies included was research conducted by Esters, McPhail, Singh, and Sygielski (2008) entitled “Entrepreneurial Community College Presidents: An Exploratory Qualitative and Quantitative Study.” This study interviewed and surveyed 23 community college presidents on nontraditional fundraising behaviors and entrepreneurial activities. The end result of the study revealed that “the presidents’
engagement in certain specific entrepreneurial practices do result in increased nontraditional funding” (p. 347).

**Literature Analysis Approach**

Approximately 200 scholarly materials reviewed for this research. The process included developing a chart that helped to determine how the evidence-based scholarly works fit into the literature review and which ones would be used to further the study. The following process was undertaken for the systemic review analysis:

1. Development of an annotated bibliography for the articles that adhered to the study and outlined sufficient information regarding adequate research. The bibliography kept the organization of the research findings available for further review, if needed.

2. Definition of the methodology. In reviewing the substantial amount of material, this category helped define how the material should be used in the research. Much of the literature reviewed was of scholarly opinion from development practitioners, but many articles were of mixed research to include both qualitative and quantitative methodology.

3. Level of analysis. Once the methodology was categorized, a deeper review of the findings in the scholarly material was undertaken to determine exactly which elements of the research pertained to the questions of the present study.

4. Validity and credibility. Since this study was evidence-based research, the material found in the UMUC library needed to be valid from a scholarly perspective.

Tables 2 and 3 illustrate how the organization of the literature was formatted and evaluated. This structure assisted in making decisions about critical evidence for this paper.
Table 2

Classifications and Coding of Literature

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<td>Relationship Building</td>
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<td>Foundations and Boards</td>
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<td>Community College Fundraising</td>
<td>CCF</td>
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Table 3

Literature Evaluation Table

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<th>Peer Review Y/N</th>
<th>Sample Size of Study</th>
<th>Quality of Research</th>
<th>Frequency of Citations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Closing doors of opportunity? Trends in enrollment, college costs, and direct aid at community colleges in the United States, 2000-2001 to 2005-2006. (2010, Jan./Feb.). Community College Journal of Research &amp; Practice, 34(1/2), 7-24, 18.</td>
<td>Kennamer, M. A., Director of Workforce Development, 2 Northeast Alabama Community College Katsinas, S., Hardy, D. E., Professors in the Dept. of Educational Leadership, UAB Roessler, B., Director of Admissions, Tarrant County Community College District</td>
<td>Academic Journal</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The authors reviewed data from two different time periods in relation to federal and state aid. They mixed research-reviewed tuition at 4- and 2-year institutions. They wanted to learn if significant difference exists among two variables—enrollment growth and a brief recession contracted by state investment in community colleges.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article</td>
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<td>Taking the road less travelled: A journey in collaborative resource</td>
<td>Haire, C., Dodson-Pennington, L. Administrator at Southwestern Community College</td>
<td>Academic Journal</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Qualitative findings of the strong partnerships that collaborative efforts of</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>development. (2002, Jan.). Community College Journal of Research and</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>success are based on four elements: meaningful partnership, solid resource</td>
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<td>Practice, 26(1), 61-75.</td>
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<td>development strategies, support college culture, and creative ideas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resource development in community colleges: a national overview.</td>
<td>Keener, B. Faculty at Capella U. Carrier, S., Associate VP of Alumni Relations at</td>
<td>Academic Journal</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>60-item survey with 373</td>
<td>The authors’ survey consisted of detailed info on college profile, grants</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2002, Jan.). Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 26(1)</td>
<td>Rollins College Meaders, S., Dean of Academic Affairs at Kieser Univ.</td>
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<td>community colleges responding</td>
<td>office, and foundation. The mixed research analysis revealed that resource</td>
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<td>development efforts are resulting in external revenue for institutions.</td>
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<td>Engagement and institutional advancement. (2009)</td>
<td>Weerts, D., Asst. Professor, Dept. of Education Policy &amp; Administration, U. of Minn.</td>
<td>Academic Journal</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Analyzed applications from a sample of U.S. colleges and universities receiving the Carnegie Foundation’s elective classification in engagement and partnerships.</td>
<td>Qualitative examination of how institutions allocate funding for engagement and develop marketing/fundraising campaigns to support engaged activities.</td>
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<td>New Directions for Higher Education, 2009(147), 65-74.</td>
<td>Hudson, E., Graduate Student</td>
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<td>Alumni giving to elite private colleges and universities. (2003, April)</td>
<td>Clotfelter, C. T. Prof. at Terry Sanford Inst. Public Policy; Duke University</td>
<td>Academic Journal</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Two cohorts of former students from private colleges.</td>
<td>Pulled together mixed research on economic references on importance of income and tax deductibility from 34 institutions. Also included students’ experience as a social structure to giving.</td>
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<td>Economics of Education Review, 22(2), 109-120.</td>
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<td>College relations and fundraising expenditures-influencing the probability of alumni giving to higher education. (1995, March) <em>Economics of Education Review, 14</em>(1), 73-84.</td>
<td>Harrison, W., Professor at Commonwealth University, Dept. of Economics.</td>
<td>Academic Journal</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>A study of three years of costs of fundraising from 17 colleges.</td>
<td>Qualitative data to reinforce the importance of commitment to alumni resource development from a management view.</td>
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**Systematic Analysis Approach**

Conducting a systematic analysis for this study was appropriate because of the combination of evidence-based research model combined with an expert panel of reviewers. As Petticrew and Roberts (2006) note, “systematic reviews are simply another research method, and in many respects they are very similar to a survey, though in this case they involve a survey of literature, not of people” (p. 11). This approach also provided fewer costs except for the author’s time. This type of analysis correlates to the categories that were helpful in reviewing the
scholarly documents. Additionally, information gathered from documents is often more credible than data obtained from interviews, questionnaires or observations because the data are historical and often viewed as objective evidence (Petticrew & Roberts, 1998). The literature review provided the basis for the conceptual model, which illustrates how the effective elements of presidential commitment, strategic planning, proper staffing and foundation member support, and alumni and community relationships are strategies to manage in order to achieve the effective outcome of an increase in alumni donors. The conceptual model underwent significant flow and pattern changes as the research from the literature review offered different perspectives based on qualitative and mixed methods information.

**Expert Panel Participants**

Petticrew and Roberts (2006) recommend the use of an expert panel when a research study uses evidence-based techniques. A review by experts is a tool in validating the research methodology and in helping the evidence-based researcher assure that all relevant research has been located. For the present study, five experts were asked to provide input. The panel consisted of two experts with doctoral degrees, two with master’s degrees, and one with a law degree. Collectively, two experts have 50 years of combined community college resource development experience; one has 20 years of university experience in alumni resource development, and another has 10 years of student engagement in both academic and student affairs. The final expert panel participant is a doctoral candidate in the Doctor of Management in Community College Policy and Administration program at the University of Maryland University College, with over 25 years in legal education. The five experts were contacted to review the drafts of the first three chapters of the study. In their review, they were asked to analyze the subject matter and its relevance to the community college arena; examine the
comprehensiveness of the literature review; and determine the relevance of effective management in community colleges. Additionally, they reviewed the initial conceptual model. Moreover, they offered their insights into whether the model incorporated the appropriate elements to support the effective outcome of an increase in alumni donors. The last task for the expert panel was to critique the writing quality and determine whether the essence of the research was a valid topic for community colleges.

The following section describes in detail the panel of experts and their general background.

**Expert Panel Participant One:** Ed.D., Director of Education. Expert One has been involved in higher education administration for the past 10 years, more specifically providing educational opportunities at a two-year and certificate-granting institutions. This expert offered insight into some of the effective elements in this study, such as relationship building, administrative leadership, and institutional marketing. Additionally, the perception this expert added was how engagement of current students can bring former students back to campus. The knowledge and experience of engagement is essential in connecting with alumni.

**Expert Panel Participant Two:** Ph.D./CFRE, Retired Executive Director of a Midwestern community college foundation. Expert Two has over 30 years of private and public fundraising experience as an executive. She is past president of the Washington-based Council for Resource Development (CRD) and has led campaigns that have raised over $30 million in the community college arena. This expert currently consults to community colleges in the area of community college resource development. Her insight into community college fundraising was valuable in adding to the literature and redefining the conceptual model.
Expert Panel Participant Three: Executive Director of Development, College of Liberal Arts and Science at a large four-year university in the Midwest. Expert Three has over 20 years of combined alumni relations and fundraising development at the higher education level. This expert is also on the “CASE” District V Board of Directors. The four-year alumni perspective from this expert panel participant offered alternative views on engaging alumni.

Expert Panel Participant Four: Executive Director of a Midwestern community college foundation. Expert Four has over 20 years of development practice in the community college arena. The expert is a member of Council for Resource Development, The League for Innovation, and the Institute for Community College Development. As the executive director for a community college foundation, this panel expert is developing an alumni development program for the foundation.

Expert Panel Participant Five: Doctoral Candidate at the University of Maryland University College. Expert Five holds a law degree and is the editor of a higher education journal dedicated to the issues and practices of management. His experience in higher education as an adjunct, administrator, and higher education consultant is valuable.

Summary

The research methodology in this study was exploratory evidence-based review and involved the analysis of scholarly literature relating to alumni and resource development in higher education. The research study used a number of databases to locate material relevant to this study. The materials retrieved were from keyword indicators. The evidence-based review screened over 700 pieces of information. Upon further review of these 700 materials, 200 scholarly works were determined to be relevant to this study and its research questions. This was used to support the development of the conceptual model.
This evidence-based methodology was coupled with a review by a panel of expert participants who were selected based on their involvement in higher education, and more importantly, their knowledge on alumni relations and resource development both in community colleges and four-year institutions. All five experts have been involved in the administration of students (future alumni), alumni relations, and community college fundraising.

This research structure illustrates the effective use of the systematic research and review process to evaluate the research questions and thesis. Additionally, the evaluation and opinions of these experts were used to structure the community college alumni resource development management model developed in this study.
Chapter 5

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Based on a careful examination of relevant research literature and expert opinion, a variety of elements that correlate with effective alumni development programs has been identified. The elements that the literature defines as important include presidential commitment, strategic planning, institutional collaboration, foundation support, staffing, alumni, community relationships, and institutional market branding. The literature and model also recognize that barriers do exist. The barriers that have been identified and included in the model are lack of leadership commitment, financial constraints (as they pertain to an alumni budget), lack of institutional support, lack of alumni records and/or database, and inadequate or poorly trained staff. Based on the findings of the systematic review, the conceptual model proposes methods to overcome these barriers so that effective alumni programs can be created as a financial tool to fill the fiscal gaps that are prevalent in today’s community college arena.

As community colleges continually feel the impact of a decrease in funds from government entities, many are looking for ways to close the fiscal gap. In the State of California, almost $400 million in proposed cuts for the 2011-2012 budget years have been targeted at community colleges. The Center for Budget and Policy, a non-profit, reported in 2012 that 44 states and the District of Columbia are looking at cutbacks totaling $125 million, with a large portion coming from the education sector. To keep pace with the changing fiscal landscape, innovation needs to be instituted to identify new sources of financial support for increasingly financially-strapped community colleges. This study, Alumni Resource Development for
Community Colleges: A Fundraising Management Model, is relevant and pertinent for the future of community colleges. The NAPA Group (a leadership consulting firm) completed a report for the University of Tennessee that detailed further emphasis on the importance of alumni for institutions of higher learning. The recommendations of the NAPA Group study focused on organizational structure and integration of alumni for successful outcomes within prescribed programs at four-year institutions. While the NAPA report focused on four-year colleges, the recommendations seem relevant to community colleges as well. For community college alumni development to be effective, it will be through “strategically driven [alumni] practices and funding models [which] are more important than ever” (The NAPA Group, n.p.).

**Expert Panel Participant Findings**

To validate the model for this study, a panel of expert panel participants was assembled to analyze the drafts of the Introduction, Literature Review, and Conceptual Model chapters. Five experts in the field of higher education administration, fundraising, and alumni relations were contacted to provide feedback from a nine-item template (see Appendix A).

The review process consisted of a structured evaluation form. The expert reviewers were asked to complete the form along with rating each question from 1 (poor) to 5 (high). Comments were also requested to enable the experts to provide additional information related to their ratings. The questionnaire included nine questions pertaining to the research, writing, and topic relevance to the community college arena, as follows:

*Question 1:* Contributions to the understanding of a significant issue in community colleges?

*Question 2:* Contribution to the practice of management in a community college environment?
Question 3: Quality of topic or approach?

Question 4: Quality of the references?

Question 5: Validity of assumptions?

Question 6: Rigor (Theory/Argument)?

Question 7: Thoroughness of presentation?

Question 8: Validity of conclusions/propositions?

Question 9: Writing quality?

Summary of Comments by Expert Panel Participants

Question 1: Contributions to the understanding of a significant issue in community colleges? The five expert panel participants rated the study with high marks; none were lower than 4. Each expert panel participant commented that the topic would contribute to the community college environment, while two indicated that the study was timely. Expert panelist three, Executive Director of Development at a four-year institution, noted this study was timely and pertinent. These remarks validated the need for this study in the community college arena for the author.

Question 2: Contribution to the practice of management in a community college environment? Four of the panel experts rated this question 4 and one rated 3. The comments from the expert panelist with the rating of 3 suggested uncertainty about whether this particular study contributes to the practice of management. Another expert noted that this study could be a “guidepost” for community college professionals.

Question 3: Quality of topic or approach? All five respondents ranked this a 4. Comments from an expert panelist used the word “original,” while another used the term “innovative.” Accordingly, because the literature for community colleges regarding alumni and
fundraising is limited, the comments from the expert panelists conclusively regarded this topic as original.

**Question 4:** Quality of the references? Four of the five experts rated this question 4.

One of the expert panelists (a past vice president and a 30-plus year expert in the field) rated this category 1-2. A noted comment was to update to more recent literature. A helpful suggestion was to review material from leading fundraising associations pertaining to community colleges and fundraising. The author conducted further review of the literature as a result of these suggestions.

**Question 5:** Validity of assumptions? Two of the four experts ranked this 3, with one panelist ranking 4. Additionally, one of the experts rated 1, with recommendations to further the author’s knowledge in resource development from a practical as well as an academic perspective. In another comment, the expert noted this to be a “best practices” model instead of assumptions. The best practices comment is, in fact, the reason the study model was designed. The need for community colleges to engage and manage alumni donors is critical based on the systematic research and literature review findings.

**Question 6:** Rigor (Theory/Argument)? Four of the five expert panelists ranked this 4. The panelists believed that the arguments related to the impact of reduced public support on the need for alumni development were strong. One expert did rank this question 1. The research does show that alumni resource development is a financial avenue for community colleges. One expert thought that the alumni resource development program was the only innovative avenue for community colleges to follow. According to the literature, this model for alumni fundraising and the management process can fill fiscal gaps for institutional needs if all the effective elements are used.
Question 7: Thoroughness of presentation? Four of the five experts provided a ranking of 4, while one of the expert gave a ranking of 1-2. One expert noted that the literature review needed to synthesize the information to better illustrate the study model. Again, this allowed the author to improve on the thoroughness of the study over the course of the program.

Question 8: Validity of conclusions/propositions? An array of comments and ranking from the panel experts were noted: two of the four experts ranked 4, with one expert noting 3 and the remaining expert giving 1. The systematic review process assembled the model on which this study was based. The diverse responses from the panel experts illustrated the varied perceptions based on the literature and expert panelist knowledge as it pertained to the subject of this study.

Question 9: Writing quality? Most of the experts generally agreed the writing quality was good. The majority commented on the need for additional editing. Four of the five experts rated a 4, with the remaining expert rating 3. As a result of the recommendations, the final product received additional editing.

Based on the expert review, it appears that the study is relevant and timely. The experts provided several suggestions for improving the work that have been addressed. These include further literature review, synthesis, and editorial improvement. All of the experts articulated that as the study moved forward, they would continue to comment and provide feedback.

Review of Research Questions

The expert feedback and literature added insight into answering the initial questions of this study:

1. Can an alumni resource development program be an effective tool for supplementing the public resource base for community colleges?
2. What elements of an alumni program help ensure its effectiveness?

3. What barriers do alumni programs face in community colleges and how can a model address these barriers?

4. How will a community college assess the effectiveness of its alumni resource development program?

Research Question 1

Can an alumni resource development program be an effective tool for supplementing the public resource base for community colleges?

The literature review provided evidence that alumni resource development can be a tool for supplemental income if approached and cultivated effectively. For example, a $1 million donation was received by an alumnus of Kirkwood Community College (Iowa). Kirkwood Community College began the process of cultivation through a survey to 70,000 alumni. Over the course of three years with bi-annual newsletters and alumni events, alumni like the $1 million donor were being identified. To identify alumni activities in community colleges, a study by the Council for Resource Development (CRD) was completed in 2006, in which 173 community colleges participated. The survey included presidents and chief advancement officers of community colleges. The study found that 72% of the survey respondents noted that more than half of their alumni lived within 50 miles of the college. However, among the respondents, only 16% had over 20,000 reliable alumni contacts. This information offers evidence that community college alumni can be potential supporters, but insignificant alumni information has created a barrier reflecting inadequate database management. Once this barrier is corrected (Figure 4), the institution will garner greater fiscal rewards from the alumni.
Research Question 2

What elements of an alumni program help ensure its effectiveness?

According to Ryan and Palmer (2005), “the president’s job is to coordinate the work of those involved in fundraising and to ensure that they present a unified message and image to external constituencies” (p. 45). The model reflects the following elements retrieved from the literature review:

- Presidential commitment
- Strategic planning
- Institutional collaboration
- Foundation support
- Staffing
- Alumni and community relations
- Institutional market branding

Each of these elements is supported in the literature. Successful implementation can also be enhanced by applying the elements of the Flexible Leadership Theory. Following the elements of this theory will allow leaders of the community college to “enhance the determinants of organizational performance, which includes efficiency and process reliability, innovation and adaptation” (Yukl & Lepsinger, 2002, p. 2). This theory of leadership is supported by Heather Van Sickle, executive director of the National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship, who emphasized that “the promotion of community college entrepreneurship begins to address our expanded economic development mission by developing new strategies” (Orchowski, 2006, p. 4). Thus, the elements above combined with a flexible leadership approach
Research Question 3

What barriers do alumni programs face in community colleges and how can a model address these barriers?

The lack of leadership was highlighted in work by Ryan and Palmer (2005), Gose (2006), and Vaughan (1989). Dowd and Grant (2007) and Strout (2006) also note the lack of database collection. As Strout states:

Few community colleges keep databases of their alumni, employ full-time staff members dedicated to...securing major donations, or ever conducted a full-scale capital campaign. And while the seasoned fundraising practices of four-year colleges can serve as good role models...the needs and resources of most community colleges are often far different from theirs. (p. 25)

In 2011, the president of CASE, John Lippincott was asked what were the commonly missed opportunities (barriers) in alumni relations. He answered with seven:

- Failing to balance institutional needs with alumni needs
-Ignoring the academic side of the institution
-Not partnering with other administrative units
-Not engaging students early enough
-Wasting valuable volunteer resources
-Not seeing oneself as part of the fundraising team
-Not seeking true innovation (Shaindlin, 2011)

These variables were incorporated into the alumni resource development model created in this dissertation to help community colleges become aware of the barriers so they can
aggressively address them. The historic background of innovation that community colleges once revealed in must be fostered again to circumvent barriers and achieve success.

**Research Question 4**

*How will a community college assess the effectiveness of its alumni resource development program?*

The community college needs to analyze both the external and internal environments of their institution. A decision-making process needs to be employed to spark the innovation of bridging the financial gaps that directly affect students’ goal for success. According to Klingaman (2012), “fundraising costs should not exceed 25 percent to 30 percent of gross fundraising revenues, and it doesn’t matter if the college is paying the foundation program expenses” (para. 4). The alumni resource development program must be a top priority for the community college to measure its effectiveness, which is the development and sustainability of best practices in connecting with alumni and the community college community. To assess the effectiveness of the alumni resource development program, a database of alumni along with marketing relationship initiatives need to be continued through the committed leadership of the president and support of the institution. For example, Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) set out to reach more alumni and donors by targeting alumni to connect with smaller donations of only $10.00. The result of this community outreach to alumni was a 500% increase in the number of donors to the college foundation (Greengard, 2009).

Thus, effectiveness can be measured by improvements in the number of accurate alumni records the community college has, by the number of alumni involved in alumni activities, and by growth in number of alumni contributing to the college and the magnitude of alumni contributions to the institution.
Summary

This chapter described the findings that the evidence-based research revealed about how alumni resource development can become a strong element for harvesting additional finances for a community college. The literature provided answers for the research questions of the study and assisted in identifying important elements for inclusion in a community college model for alumni resource development. The Flexible Leadership Theory and managerial decision-making model of developing entrepreneurial culture contributed answers to these research questions. This study pooled the recommendations of expert panel participants, literature, surveys, expert opinion articles, and case studies. The findings from the systematic research provided guidance on how to create a best practices model for the successful engagement of alumni in the achievement of advancement and fundraising goals for community colleges. For many community colleges, alumni resource development is a new frontier to be discovered, but with innovative approaches, committed leadership, and a strategy to engage alumni, this program will be an asset to the community college in the ongoing achievement of its mission.
Chapter 6

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

A systematic review of the literature documented the need for alternative financial and funding resources for community colleges. Alumni resource development for community colleges is an alternative financial resource that can be developed. As funding from federal, state, and local government continues to decrease and community colleges look for other forms of revenue such as raising tuition, the “mission of access” banner that community colleges wave throughout their communities is at risk. Lisa Skari, vice president of institutional advancement at Highline Community College (Washington), noted that “a 2010 study of community colleges showed that 55 percent of colleges were not engaged in any alumni efforts” (cited in Whissemore, 2012, para. 6). Thus, the potential for community colleges to utilize the alumni sector to further the value of the community college product is significant, and given the reductions in public funding, it is probably imperative.

This chapter cohesively brings together the concepts of developing a community college alumni resource development program, utilizing the management model from Chapter 3. In the long run, community colleges are looking for an effective outcome, which is to increase alumni who give financially to support the institution.

**Business Management Approach:**

*Tactical (Strategic) Planning and Decision-making Managerial Planning*

In many instances, community colleges are the lead revenue-generating business for the district or community they serve. Additionally, these colleges are typically the lead employer in
the community, lead supply purchaser, and holder of large monetary deposits at local banking institutions. This type of activity is overseen by the president and is assisted by his leadership team, which includes the chief financial officer. When a business makes a decision to develop a new entity or product within its organization, it goes through a management planning process. The community college must do the same when leadership decides to launch and commit to a program, such as an alumni resource development program. All new entities need a plan, which includes goals and objectives, budgets, physical and human resources, and the commitment of the president.

Chapter 3 highlighted the fact that an effective planning process is an important element of alumni fundraising. The four-step managerial decision-making plan is an ideal methodology for devising an alumni resource development program. In the case of community colleges that may have one person for all private fundraising, a tactical plan such as the four-step managerial plan may work well. For instance, a strategic plan is a broad-based plan “developed as a guide for major policy setting and decision making...[while] a tactical plan is a smaller scale plan developed to implement a strategy” (Pride, Hughes, Kapoor, 2011, p. 163). Therefore, if a college’s strategic plan is written for a five-year period, it will give a smaller alumni resource development department an opportunity to develop five tactical plans, one plan covering each year of the strategic plan. This will offer more flexibility to the leadership team as the limited scope of the tactical plan permits easier change than if it were a strategic initiative. This also promotes the Flexible Leadership Theory that the president needs to find the appropriate balance between the demands of the program and alternative forces.

Since the alumni resource development program will be its own separate entity within the community college, it should coexist with the values and vision of both the community college
and the foundation’s strategic plan. In many instances, the strategic plan of the community college does not have a contingency for an alumni resource development program. In this case, the tactical plan for the management of the resource development program should be explicit enough to address the following:

- **Value**: What are the guiding principles that will guide the program with the consistent value of the institution?
- **SWOT**: What are the college’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and how can these elements be used to develop and sustain an alumni resource development program?
- **Mission**: What will be the alumni resource development department’s mission?
- **Vision**: What is the five-year vision for the program and what will be the defining characteristics of the program?
- **Budget and Funding**: What financial resources are needed and how will the “Return on Investment” of these funds procure the successful outcomes needed for sustainability of the program?
- **Action Steps**: Based on the above, what will be the steps to secure an alumni resource development program and then bring about successful outcomes?

The planning process will need to incorporate several steps. First, who should be a part of developing the program and who should be a part of developing the plan need to be determined. There must be an agreement on who will manage the planning process. Next, a general outline of the process, timeline, roles, responsibilities, and resources will be needed, including a financial budget and physical resources. Also included in the planning process is the
organizing of the resources noted in the previous paragraph. The grouping or organizing of resources will yield the result of effectiveness and efficiency.

**Leading and Motivating**

As the effective elements of the business model unfold, leadership is another component of delivering successful outcomes for an alumni resource development program. The leader of the community college is the president. As the leader of the institution, he/she has the power of influence and can use it to affect the actions of those who serve the mission of the institution. It should be made clear that there is a distinct difference between a leader and a manager. An example of a leader is Ernest Shackleton, the great Antarctic explorer, who used and accepted leadership that gave him the authority to coordinate critical decisions within his group. These actions and his power of influence over his team of 27 men strongly influenced the group’s success. Thus, the leader strives for voluntary cooperation for the good of the organization. A manager alternatively relies on coercion to guide a group’s behavior toward the good of the organization (Pride et al., 2011).

According to Conrad and Poole (2005), “leaders have three options: [in the decision-making process] they can make the decision themselves, they can consult with the group, and then make the decision themselves, or they can have the group make the decision” (p. 137). In the case of developing an alumni resource development program, the president needs to focus on the institution’s goals and the role it will play in meeting those goals. Thus, the leader has to initialize the planned strategy and make an inclusive decision for the benefit of the college community. Leaders are not actually creators but rather facilitators and collaborators, and as such they build cohesive consensus with a community. As stated in study by Esters, McPhail, Singh, and Sygielski (2008), “current and future community college presidents in this academic
climate are challenged to be aggressively entrepreneurial in securing new sources of revenue in order to keep [their] institution viable” (p. 346). For example, in 2009, the president of Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) was looking at a $1 billion dollar state deficit and knew that it would ultimately affect his institution. The president of Northwestern Michigan College began focusing the fundraising efforts with the leadership of the college and set a goal of $1 million dollars a year. They have been on target ever since. Tony Zeiss, president of Central Piedmont Community College, also acknowledged the need for leadership and entrepreneurial activities to guide and sustain programs that financially benefit community colleges. He stated, “Colleges that embrace the opportunity to seek new avenues of revenue will find that doing so affords them additional flexibility as well as rewarding them with greater control over their own destinies” (cited in Milliron et al., 2003, p. 61).

Entrepreneurial style is aligned with management role in the decision-making process. The decision to develop an alumni resource development program is tied to the management model of a systematic approach. The development of the new alumni resource development program and the commitment to lead and manage it may be met with opposition. The entrepreneurial president will require the support of the college, which can be illustrated by the four-step managerial decision-making process (see Figure 5). The utilization of this process will guide the president and the constituents in building the support based on the data of the decision.

*Figure 5. Four-step managerial decision-making process*
Four-step Managerial Decision-making Process

Identifying the Opportunity

The president has to articulate that an alumni resource development program is an opportunity for the common good of the institution, community, and all related constituents. The first step in the managerial process is to identify the problem, thus the opportunity. For example, a problem is typically connected with a negative circumstance. In the case of a community college, which realizes that financial gaps are widening because of diminishing state and federal funds, the need to further the revenue stream for future years is a problem with a positive connotation. The positive is the opportunity that this circumstance creates for innovation.

Generating Alternatives

Now that an opportunity is realized, the flow chart points to the next item on the agenda: generating alternatives. What exactly is encompassed in generating alternatives? This is the process of brainstorming, thereby encouraging the constituents of the institution to offer innovative ideas such as an alumni resource development program. The technique of trial and error is useful during this stage of the decision-making process. According to Conrad and Poole (2005), “leaders should avoid acting like advocates, especially early in the groups’ history; they should adopt a participative style” (p. 137). This segment of the four-step process may take time to build a consensus alumni program approach.

Selecting the Alumni Resource Development Program

The third segment in the four-step managerial decision-making model is selecting the final idea from the previous task of generating alternatives to the solution. Data that reveal financial considerations, human and technical resources, timelines, and legal barriers typically influence the decision. The president and the group select the alumni resource development
program as an effective and practical alternative to furthering the mission and financial coffers of the institution.

For example, 85% of alumni at Virginia Western Community College live and work in the region, making them highly accessible to the college. Additionally, the college is engaging alumni to connect with the businesses in the region (Whissermore, 2012). This kind of data will assist the leader in guiding the decision-making process in support of the next step, which is the implementation of the opportunity.

**Implementing**

The final step in the decision-making process is implementation. Implementation encompasses planning (financial and personnel) and evaluation of outcomes over specific periods. The evaluation for best outcomes and effective decisions is reviewed at this stage. The alumni resource development program should illustrate the desired condition of why the program was first implemented. The level of commitment to this final stage is the difference between an effective program and a failing one.

Although the four-step managerial decision-making process does provide for a conclusive decision process based on collaborative ideas from involved participants, the leader must look at effective strategies that can carry the implementation process to completion. The flexible leadership model is ideal for the community college president to review in order to decide whether to adopt the alumni resource development program. The design features of the Flexible Leadership Theory suggest that systems (through leadership) must adapt to internal and external conditions in order to survive. The decision to integrate a program that generates revenue, which will flow into the financial coffers of the community college, is a decision to survive.
Collaborating with Institution

The significance and commitment to the development of the alumni program need to be communicated from the top, utilizing the power of influence. Although many community colleges believe they have a collaborative environment, this may not actually be true. As an element for effective outcomes in the alumni resource development model, institutional collaboration needs to be encouraged and enabled by the CEO. A recent Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) survey (Spring 2012) uncovered gaps in perceptions between CEOs and chief fundraisers at community colleges. Seventy presidents and 137 chief development officers responded to the survey, which revealed that there is a 25% gap between the CEO and fundraiser on being informed on donors, resource development, and institutional support and the role each should play. According to Goldsmith (2012), “although 89 percent of presidents responding to the community college survey say they understand the fundraising process, just 63 percent of fundraisers say their presidents understand the process” (para. 10). As an element for effective outcomes in the alumni resource development management model, institutional collaboration needs to be recognized by the CEO. A first step in collaboration is a quality relationship between the CEOs and the institution’s fundraiser.

Another important step is communicating the importance of private fundraising to the constituents of the institution. For example, in the fall of 2012, this researcher interviewed a newly-appointed Manager of Alumni Relations and Development at an urban Midwestern community college. This manager was four weeks on the job and had never been introduced to faculty or many of the administrators. An effort on her behalf to communicate with faculty and staff in the college regarding the potential of the new program went unanswered. The support and collaboration from faculty and staff, which represent a part of the institution, were not
available because they had not been fully informed by the institution’s leadership of the importance of private and alumni fundraising. Although the alumni development manager was hired to resurrect an old alumni development program at the college, there seemed to be minimal support for the program.

In this case, the president had the initiative to find an opportunity and select the alternative, but she failed to provide the necessary leadership to implement the program. The president was leaving the program to flounder in its beginning month of implementation. Therefore, it is imperative that leadership take responsibility for the managerial decision, work with and for the program in the beginning to build understanding that the program is a priority, and continue to advocate for and support the program through periods of evaluation to achieve successful results. As Steven Budd, president of River Valley Community College (2012), stated, “creating a philanthropic culture requires involving faculty and staff in the development process. The contributions of college departments and academic programs must be recognized and honored, legitimizing the role of faculty and staff, via encouragement from the CEO or president” (para. 15).

**Foundation Support**

The non-profit 501©3 entity created by many community colleges is the community college foundation, which typically supports all other related fundraising in the college. When the presidential decision is made to develop an alumni resource development program, the foundation director will oversee this portion of the institution’s fundraising. In larger community colleges, a chief fundraising officer will take a leadership role in the process as well. Ultimately, the foundation and its board members can be utilized as effective elements in the program model.
Community colleges have greater challenges than four-year colleges in attracting alumni to donate. One of the main reasons is that the community college experience is shorter, and most often the student does not reside on the campus. Thus, the student has fewer college engagement opportunities. In this instance, foundation support from its members who are highly connected to and recognized in the community can be a tool in building much needed connections with local alumni. According to David Bass (2003), ex-president of CASE, “an independent foundation board can provide a long-term perspective on a college’s relationships with external constituents, their shared priorities and prospects for preferred futures” (p. 25). Community college foundations typically comprise a diverse mix of business and community leaders. These groups of individuals volunteer to the community college foundation for meaningful service. Typically, all members are local and represent the district in which the college serves. A community college board is effective when, as a unit and individually, they take a sense of ownership in their membership. This means they are board members because they care and are dedicated to the mission of the foundation and institution.

Foundation support is almost as critical as leadership support for the alumni resource development program. The community college president, advancement officer, and foundation director need to seek and utilize their alumni as board members not only for the support of programs like the alumni resource development program, but also for the further identification of the institution in the community. Smith (2000) states that successful boards and CEOs need to create an “environment that encourages college administrators, faculty, and staff to do their utmost to meet community needs” (p. 167). In 1999, the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) adopted the definition of effective boards. Effective boards are those that ensure that the missions of their institutions are achieved and they do so by:
• Focusing on the overall mission and long-range plans.
• Working closely and interactively with the chief executive.
• Establishing broad governing policies.
• Fulfilling basic legal and ethical responsibilities.
• Monitoring the institution’s programs.
• Ensuring that their organizations are linked with the social environment and appropriate publics and institutions.
• Continually engaging in self-appraisal (Smith, 2000, p. 169)

The essentials of an effective foundation board and CEO collaboration will strengthen the alumni resource development program. Many difficulties are associated with becoming a successful team, but they can be rewarding. For example, an executive director of a large urban Midwestern community college recognized the importance of alumni, but the foundation did not have any alumni programs in place. In 2011, the college and the foundation saw a need for a strategic plan. Thus, leadership and board members began developing the strategic plan for the foundation. An item that repeatedly came up from the board members was alumni development; they wanted to know how to solicit this untapped market. The executive director asked the board for assistance, and they promptly agreed. One of the results was to erect an alumni recognition wall. This action alone resulted in more engagement—thus more donors. The developing success from the teamwork of the college and board membership took over 12 months, but the successful outcomes were realized according to the strategic plan. In summary, teamwork between the foundation board and institutional leadership will have a positive impact on the creation of the alumni resource development program.
Staffing

A matter of no small importance to a prince is the selection of ministers, for their competence or incompetence will depend upon his capacity to judge; and the first estimate of his intelligence will be based upon the character of the men he keeps about him. (Machiavelli, 1533/1966, p. 67)

As Machiavelli advised, the selection of personnel is a crucial element of leadership effectiveness. In the case of staffing, the leader who hires and brings the personnel to foster the program will ultimately be accountable for the success of the program. Thus, an important job of a president who wants to create a quality alumni program is to hire experienced, talented fundraising personnel.

A second important job is the ongoing development of these personnel. It is imperative that the staff be educated not only on the implementation of the alumni resource development program and the duties involved for success, but also on the institution which they serve. A communal effort has to be made by the president and his/her leadership team to assure that the alumni resource development program has the resources needed to be a success.

A further concern of the leadership is having an adequate number of fundraising personnel. In 2006, a survey was conducted on the number of staff in resource development offices at Texas community colleges; of the 49 respondents, 34 indicated that their institution had 0-4 members on their staff, including full-time, part-time, and volunteers. Additionally, according to a report by the Council for Resource Development (2003), “eighty-two percent of the 336 foundation offices reported having at least one full-time professional” (p. 7). Both of these surveys have similar findings and suggest the need for more resource investment in fundraising, especially if the community college concludes that a new alumni resource
development program is a viable alternative to support the institution financially. Colleges need to be willing to spend money to make money.

Some community colleges are already capitalizing on their investment in fundraising personnel. For example, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, in 2011, Saddleback College (Mission Viejo, California) received its largest gift: $2.2 million came from an unsolicited estate. This prompted the institution to expand its fundraising staff to seek alternative sources for development. The president of Saddleback College mentioned that he and others should have been taking the necessary steps to garner alternative funds years ago; otherwise, the school would not be in the fiscally tight situation it is today (Gordon, 2012). As current community college presidents admit the need for alternative sources of funding, the alumni resource development program needs the support of a dedicated staff to support the president in overcoming barriers to effective outcomes.

**Institutional Market Branding**

Several barriers that community colleges face to fundraising may be addressed through appropriate branding efforts. Typically, overall fundraising outcomes have been marginal partly because alumni do not feel a connection to the college and partly because the community college suffers from an image problem. Are alumni of community colleges so disconnected that the image of their experiences at the community colleges are never remembered, shared or engaged? Or is the problem that community colleges have not really made a serious effort to connect with their alumni and remind them of the positive impact that the community college experience had on their lives? If the second question is the more likely case, then community colleges may be able to improve their alumni programs through quality branding efforts.
In 2007, the president of the Council for Resource Development acknowledged that “many community college leaders conceded they lose some of their alumni base when their graduates pursue a bachelors…but we are finding that many alumni have a…sense of connection …we were held back because of our own self-image” (Lyons, 2007, p. 26). The challenge that community college leaders have is in not effectively communicating the impact that the college has had on changing the lives of its alumni or the impact that the college has on the economic well-being of the community and its businesses. Effective marketing is an avenue used to communicate the impact a product has on a community or targeted audience. This impact must be illustrated to the constituents of the college. Community colleges need to alter perceptions that since they have a mission of access for all to experience higher education and the price of tuition is more affordable than at four-year institutions, this does not mean that the quality of education is less than that of pricier higher education options.

Leadership needs to keep in mind that marketing and fundraising are like brothers and sisters, all in the same family but of different genders. An investment by a community college in a branding effort may provide a hefty return on investment. A cohesive relationship between marketing and resource development will become an effective ally to the alumni resource development program. Therefore, as an effective element in the path toward the effective outcome of increased alumni donors, market branding, proper staffing, institutional support, strategic planning, and committed leadership play significant roles in this fundraising management model.

Alumni and Community Relations

The alumni resource development management is inherently a model about building relationships. The literature review revealed that fundraising for two-year institutions has been
around since they first existed. However, early donors were expected to find the college rather than the other way around, and relationship building was not a priority. However, if a college wants to build an effective alumni program today, it must focus on relationships, as recent relevant literature confirms. Philanthropy is also about connecting, developing relationships, and building a stewardship of relationships for the benefit of a cause.

The first step in the creation of relationships is developing a clear definition of an alumnus. Alumni are defined under different criteria from institution to institution. To move a program forward, the tactical plan must define and identify the product. The product is the alumnus. This researcher interviewed a variety of foundation directors over the course of completing this dissertation. Everyone had a different answer on how his or her institution defines an alumnus. Some included non-credit alums; others included only those who had completed 30 or more credit hours. Then, other institutions defined alums that attended and completed at least six credit hours. There was never a set matrix for number of hours completed, credit or non-credit, or graduates only. While institutions may come up with a variety of definitions to fit their particular circumstances, it is absolutely critical that they have an operational definition of who they will include in their alumni base.

The definition needs to be formally injected into the tactical plan of the alumni resource development program. Once this is set, the first place to start cultivating alumni is from among the students who are currently taking classes. For example, if an institution has 10,000 students per year experiencing the programs, faculty, and the community of the college, then these future alumni need to be engaged and developed. The marketing department, foundation, and student services need to collaborate to help students understand the value of their community college educational experience. This is how the effective elements of institutional support and
institutional marketing can coalesce toward the final effective outcome of a (future) increase in alumni donors. Again, alumni relations are about connecting, and connecting begins on the day that students enroll in the college.

Developing alumni at a community college is much like building a structure. The research and model are simply a blueprint and layout of the essential designs of a new structure and on the materials to be used in its construction. Where does one begin to renew the engagement of alumni? According to Beha (1970), “the two principles which pre-eminently determine renewed community structures are those of subsidiarity and collegiality. According to subsidiarity, decisions must be made at the lowest level so the individual must decide what affects the individual” (p. 45). In essence, a student who attends a community college and experiences the higher education dynamics of that institution makes personal judgments about how that community experience will affect his/her future. This is why when trying to engage alumni that current students and alumni should be involved in discussions about how to foster and renew alumni commitment to the college. Stewardship will result in eventual consensus about how to create an effective alumni resource development program.

To say that the blueprints for this structure or program are people-oriented is to suggest that the renewal of people will aid in building that structure. Research findings support the fact that leadership and a team of concerned and dedicated people are the columns for this structure. In this case, the alumni resource development program constitutes the rest of the structure. The alumni are the people who will occupy the structure. Therefore, the structure will only be effective as long as there is renewal or reengaging of people for whom the structure has been created. The alumni resource development program is a structure designed to engage a segment
Conclusions

While the effective elements of an alumni resource development program were reviewed in this paper, the sub-elements that are connected to the success of the alumni resource development program also need to be defined or identified. The first element that needs to be defined for community colleges is the term *alumni*. According to Polly Binns, executive director of the Council for Resource Development, “community colleges haven’t defined what they mean by alumni, so that should be the first their first step toward creating an alumni giving plan” (Ashford, 2011, para.2). This portion of the decision-making process would be part of the tactical plan outlined by the community college. This outline should consist of credit or non-credit programs, program completion, certificates earned, degrees earned, and hours completed. After alumni are defined, an alumni database needs to be created and updated regularly with alumni information.

The issue of staffing is also a concern for success. It is noted that on average, about 80% of community colleges have less than four people committed to fundraising. This author found no evidence of specific staffing number for community college alumni resource development programs. It is imperative to the implementation process that a number of staff be dedicated to the success of this specific program. The marketing and branding of the college are other formative elements that will enhance the college, thus affecting the engagement of alumni and community members with the college.
In addition to efforts in creating an alumni program, it is essential that the program be well managed. This requires presidential leadership, the creation and implementation of a tactical plan, and an effective approach to evaluating the effectiveness of the alumni program.

**Implications for Practice**

The implications of these findings and experiences for practice are related to the seven effective elements in the management model for initiating an alumni resource development program for community colleges. The primary implication illustrates the need for leadership of the college to examine alternative fundraising issues and determine how to implement this entrepreneurial program. Leadership also needs to determine how this method of engagement and fundraising will enhance the overall image of their institution. According to Kouzes and Posner (2002), transformational leadership “ultimately becomes moral in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both the leader and the led, and thus it has transforming effects on both” (p. 153). The community college CEO has to deliver the inspirational message to his constituents if the program is to engage the institution. Engagement is part of the process of implementation. The other part of the implementation process is for the constituents to be the leaders themselves. Mary Parker Follet, a pioneer in the field of organizational behavior during the 1920s, recognized that followers had a very active role in leadership (infed.org, 2012). Their role is to keep the leader in control of a program or a specific process. Thus, the term “followership” is associated with leadership in the management process. In the case of a community college CEO, once he/she motivates the process, then the community constituents or followers foster interpretation and growth.

The community college foundation board must also be active leaders for fundraising efforts. The board member needs to offer financial support to the institution. More importantly;
there needs to be a collaborative effort between community college administrative leaders and staff to support the board members’ fundraising efforts. The board member needs a better understanding of fundraising operations specifically designed for the community college arena. This type of empowerment will foster the leadership necessary for furthering the initiatives of the alumni resource development program.

Further implications center on the importance of marketing and branding as an element of the alumni program. A cohesive blend between the resource development and marketing areas of the community college needs to be encouraged. This will further develop opportunities for alternative fund management programs and positive identification of the institution. As Hesel (2004) explained, “the reality is that marketing and branding efforts in higher education have to compete…with other colleges for the attention of other students and other constituencies…[thus] intelligent, highly coordinated, tightfisted management of marketing activities is essential” (para. 19).

The tactical plan and decision-making process to institute an alumni resource development program need to be a part of what leadership tends to and controls. Integration of an alumni program into the goals of a college strategic plan will result in fundraising that is tied to institutional priorities.

Finally, leadership must provide their fundraising and resource development operations staffing and tools to bring about effective fundraising efforts. “Presidential effort to organize fundraising…will become increasingly important as diminished state support leads to ever rising tuition costs, which may pose a threat to student access” (Ryan & Palmer, 2005, p. 47).
Recommendations for Further Research

The research literature on community college fundraising and alumni programs is extremely limited. More research is needed to determine how community colleges can create the most powerful relationships with their alumni and determine reasonable expectations in alumni giving for this sector of higher education.

The current research can provide a foundation for conducting a variety of primary research studies. These studies can be valuable if they focus on the following elements: clarifying definitions of community college alumni; surveying community college presidents regarding their interest in alumni programs; surveying foundation directors about community college alumni programs; and surveying marketing directors of different sized community colleges (i.e., number of students) representing a diverse demographic community population (urban, rural, inner city, tribal) on their role in creating brands that facilitate alumni engagement. Qualitative case studies on the actual roles of the leadership (CEO), foundation board members, marketing personnel, and staff solely associated with the institution’s fundraising and alumni development could also provide useful information. These studies could help to validate the elements incorporated into the conceptual model of this dissertation.

Summary

This chapter described the findings as they related to the management model and decision-making model for instituting an alumni resource development program in a community college. This final chapter also illustrated the implications of the findings, identified further areas for research, and discussed management and leadership theory that could prove useful in implementing an alumni resource development program. Community colleges, their leadership, and their constituents need to provide a structure for the development and growth of an alumni
resource development program. Inside this structure or management process, the effective elements of presidential commitment, strategic and tactical planning, institutional collaboration, college foundation support, alumni and community relationships, and the institution’s presence or market branding all need to be utilized in a step-by-step process to achieve a best practices outcome.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A

Sample Evaluation Form

Community Colleges: Optimizing Institutional Effectiveness through Performance Appraisal

*Alumni Resource Development for Community Colleges: A Fundraising Management Model*

By Steven Meneses

Please rate each of the following questions on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being low, and 5 being high. In addition, for each question we request that you prepare a written response.

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<th>Q. No.</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<td>Contribution to the understanding of a significant issue in community college?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Contribution to the practice of management in community college environment?</td>
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Comments:

Name of Evaluator: